'I am a woman. But in addition, I am a mother.' –
Women Navigating Politics, Conflict and Uncertainty in Zanzibar

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To mothers all around,

those who bear us, those who raise us, the ones who find and guide us later in life, the ones that we may become ourselves.

And to those struggling for lasting peace, justice and reconciliation in Zanzibar in small and big ways. May your struggles be fruitful one day.

Acknowledgements

At the time of my writing these acknowledgments, the world is battling with the impact of a global pandemic that will probably shape and change our lives in the months, if not years to come. Numerous people, myself included, now experience a (minute) degree of the uncertainty and anxiety about the future that has been so familiar to many inhabitants of the Global South for years, and for them, in turn, insecurity will most probably grow immensely. What this global crisis will mean for all of us remains yet to be seen. My hope is that, just like the Zanzibari women and mothers who are the protagonists of this thesis, we will be able to find innovative

ways to not remain paralyzed in the face of crisis, but to navigate in and out of it, possibly finding novel ways to interact with each other in our interconnected world in the process.

Lüneburg, 23-04-2020

Abstract

Political conflict and polarization in Zanzibar have been examined by different scholars and from different (inter)disciplinary angles, often, however, to the exclusion of female voices. Trying to mend this bias by exclusively exploring women's perspectives, using mainly qualitative, in-depth interviews, I was able to identify the centrality of motherhood and mothering to the gendered standpoint of Zanzibari women, also in connection to their attitudes towards 'the political'. Consequently, this thesis explores the roles the institution of motherhood and mothering as practice play in women's navigation of (political) uncertainty and conflict in the islands.

To establish the context in which this navigation takes place and to mend misconceptions about female (non-)participation in Zanzibari electoral politics, the active roles women have filled in the island's political history are highlighted. To be able to understand the 'maternal standpoint', my respondents spoke and navigated from, local ideologies and experiences of motherhood and mothering are explored. The Swahili terms *uchungu* (bitterness) and *kuhangaika* ('to roam about and struggle') are central here, expressing the sacrifice that is often expected and performed by mothers.

I develop the concept of 'maternal navigation' which takes into account the practices of actors who not only strategize to *'get by'* and *'get on'* as individuals but navigate uncertainty *on behalf of* and *through* others. This helps to make sense of my respondents' practices as they consider risks and vulnerabilities while negotiating prevalent social, cultural, economic and political circumstances, for the sake of bringing about the best possible results for their children and families.

In the political context, motherhood and mothering are shown to have a variety of sometimes contradictory influences, e.g. in connection to the promotion or dismissal of political peace-building. Mothers are also shown to develop specific maternal strategies in face of the risks of politics in the islands to safeguard themselves, but – most importantly – their families and children against political dangers and exposure. Overall, the complex and ambivalence force motherhood and maternal subjectivities represent in the political sphere and in relation to the navigational activities of Zanzibari women is highlighted.

Key words: Zanzibar, political conflict, gender, motherhood, mothering, uncertainty, navigation

Abbreviations

ACT-*Wazalendo*	Alliance for Change and Transparency – Patriots
ASP	Afro-Shirazi Party
CCM	*Chama cha Mapinduzi* – Party of the Revolution
CHADEMA	*Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo* – Party for Democracy and Progress
CUF	Civic United Front
GNU	Government of National Unity
HoR	House of Representatives
JKU	*Jeshi ya Kujenga Uchumi* – 'Army of Building the Economy'
LegCo	Legislative Council
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
SMZ	*Serikali ya Mapinduzi Zanzibar* – 'Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar'
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
UWT	*Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania* – 'Tanzanian Women's Union'
VP	Vice President
ZEC	Zanzibar Electoral Commission
ZNP	Zanzibar Nationalist Party
ZPPP	Zanzibar and Pemba People's Party

Glossary

akina mama	women, mothers
baraza, mabaraza (pl.)	veranda; council, assembly
hangaiko	anxiety, worry, restlessness
heshima	honour, respect, dignity
kanga	patterned fabric with an imprinted proverb
kadhi	Islamic judge
kitenge, vitenge (pl.)	colourful, patterned fabric
kuhangaika	be anxious, be busy, be restless; *'to roam about and struggle'*
mabadiliko	change
maridhiano	reconciliation
mwanamke, wanawake (pl.)	woman
mzungu, wazungu (pl.)	white person, European

sheha	chief, leader
shehia	ward
siasa	politics, political activities; policy
Zama za Siasa	the 'Era of Politics'

(1) Introduction: *"I am a mother, who has a family, so I fear these problems."*

'Zanzibar' is a name that many people immediately associate with peaceful sandy beaches, sleepy old town alleyways, and quiet villages in-between swaying palm trees. In fact, the most common response I got from people when I mentioned that I would do the research for my master thesis in Zanzibar, was a variation of *'Oh, well that is going to be some nice 'fieldwork' then!'* – tongue-in-cheek air quotes included. However, beneath the surface of the tranquil island paradise lies another Zanzibar, which can be a place of trouble, problems and almost unescapable uncertainty to its inhabitants, as my research assistant Saida expressed very well:

> *[E]ven me personally, I can say [that] I am a bit apprehensive about CUF taking a position because I fear that there will be trouble maybe. You see, eh? Because I don't know. Because – will CCM really agree to leave from power just like that? You can ask yourself that. It is not something that is easy. So, me myself, I will be saying [that] I fear CUF taking a position because it can cause problems. And I am a woman. But in addition, I am a mother, who has a family, so I fear these problems. So, I feel if it will be that there is peace, well, they [CCM] should just continue. But I also have [these] thoughts, I say [to myself], on the other hand, some day really, this situation that every day CCM wins, CCM wins, will it not maybe happen one day, that those of the opposition will also come to bring trouble?[1]*

The risks and dangers Saida acknowledged here to exist in Zanzibar mainly relate to electoral politics and the contest between the incumbent party CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi* – Party of the Revolution) and the oppositional camp – up until recently dominated by CUF (Civic United Front) (cf. ICG 2019: 8-9; Nassor & Jose 2014: 248). Even though the linguistic, religious and cultural set-up of the Zanzibar archipelago offers many potentialities for forging unity, as a majority of Zanzibaris share a common language (Kiswahili), religion (Islam), history and culture, electoral issues regularly and bitterly divide the populace (cf. Moss & Tronvoll 2015: 91-92; Sheriff 2001). Since the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1995, political contest has more often than not led to tension, division and, at times, violence (ICG 2019: 1, 4-5; Minde et al. 2018: 165). Regional disparity between the archipelago's main islands Unguja – the tourist hotspot and island with most of the important (government) infrastructure – and Pemba – the, in many ways, marginalised 'opposition island' – has also played a role (Bakari 2001: 145; Moss & Tronvoll 2015: 94). In any given general election, Zanzibaris vote for their own president and representatives in the Zanzibari House of Representatives (HoR), as well as for

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[1] *"[…] hata mimi binafsi naweza kusema nachelea CUF kutake position kwa sababu naogopa kutakuwa kuna vurugu pengine. Umeona eh? […] Eh, kwa sababu sijui. Eh, kwa sababu- kweli CCM itakubali kwamba itoke tu madarakani hivyo hivyo? Unaweza kujiuliza. Si kitu ambacho kiko rahisi. Kwa hiyo mimi kama mimi nitakuwa nasema naogopa CUF kutake position kwa sababu inaweza ikasababisha matatizo. Na mimi ni mwanamke. Lakini vile vile ni mama ambaye nina familia, kwa hiyo naogopa matatizo hayo. Kwa hiyo naona kama kutakuwa kuna na amani, basi na waendelee tu wao. [….] Lakini vile vile napata mawazo nasema upande mwengine, baadhi ya siku, kweli situation ya kwamba kila siku inashinda CCM, inashinda CCM haikikitokea pengine siku moja hawa wa opposition wakaja wakaleta vurugu pia?"* (Interview 1 with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

the president and Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania, that they have been a semi-autonomous part of since 1964 (Minde et al 2018.: 164-165; Nassor & Jose 2014: 248).

Overall, the Zanzibar archipelago is characterized by its complex society and culture, having evolved over centuries of contact with various groups, often traders from the Arab world and elsewhere. Its position as a hub of the East African slave trade in the 19th century under the rule of the Omani sultanate, as well as increasing immigration from mainland East Africa in more recent times, added to its unique multicultural profile. (Boswell 2008: 296-297; ICG 2019: 2-3; Minde et al. 2018: 164) Abdul Sheriff writes in this respect that,

> […] [Zanzibar] is a cultural mosaic that has a pattern and a meaning that would be lost if the pieces were separated and identified individually as African, Arab, Indian, etc., it can only be identified as Zanzibari. (Sheriff 1995; cited in Bakari 2001: 47)

However, certain pieces of this mosaic, as well as episodes of some of Zanzibar's more painful history, have indeed been severed from the whole and manipulated for political purposes in the past (ICG 2019: 2-4). If one stays in Zanzibar long enough and is attentive to subtle (or not so subtle) signs and symbols, one will certainly notice the impact of political polarization and 'troubles' on everyday life and the public space, even if 'election season' isn't currently ongoing, as during my fieldwork stay. Certain quarters or street corners in the island's capital Zanzibar City, for instance, are known and clearly marked to symbolize their belonging to either one of the two main political parties[2] (cf. Bakari 2001: 180-181; Loimeier 2007: 27):

Fig. 1: CCM-'Agitation Board' and party flags at Maskani ya Kisonge, Zanzibar City; see Annex 1 for a translation of the inscription (Photograph by the author, 19-02-2019).

Fig. 2: CUF flag and poster at Jaw's Corner, Stone Town, Zanzibar City (Photograph by the author, 13-12-2018).

Oftentimes, even families are internally divided over political and electoral issues (see e.g. Cameron 2002: 318). Many Zanzibaris are thus faced with the task of navigating political

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[2] To me, this observation was also reinforced by some respondents' claims to live in either an 'opposition' or 'incumbent' area (cf. e.g. Interview 1 with Bi Farida, Unguja, 31-10-2018; Interview 2 with Bi Pili, Unguja, 14-11-2018).

tensions – and the uncertainty of whether, when, and in which circumstances they will flare up again – in their daily lives; just as Saida outlined above.

I first became interested in the intricacies of Zanzibari politics after witnessing the 'election drama' of 2015/2016 during a semester abroad at the University of Dar es Salaam. On that occasion, the October 2015 general elections on the Zanzibari side of the union – allegedly clearly won by the opposition – were controversially cancelled and repeated in early 2016 (ICG 2019: 5-6), leading to the current 96,55% majority for the incumbent party in the House of Representatives (cf. SMZ 2019: 16). Reading up further on Zanzibari elections, politics and the associated 'troubles', I noticed that the voices of a particular group were underrepresented in most of the scholarship: Zanzibari women were only seldomly included in the samples of different authors, and if so, in vanishingly low numbers[3]. Planning the fieldwork for my master thesis, I set out to start to close this research gap by speaking exclusively to 'ordinary' Zanzibari women (i.e. non-politicians/non-party activists) about the state of politics. I intended to gather personal stories going beyond the often mentioned, but somewhat generic symptoms of political polarization in the archipelago – the 'not greeting, not visiting people from the other side, not attending weeding and funerals etc.' (cf. e.g. Moss 2017: 177-179) – to find out how individual women experienced political tensions in their everyday lives in inter-election times. I also asked myself whether women had any distinctly 'female' strategies of managing political polarization, and – given that women are often seen as 'natural peacebuilders' (cf. Eastmond 2010: 10; Helms 2010: 17) – whether they were in fact acting as such. Could it even be that Zanzibari women held the secret key to finding a way to sustainable peace in the islands?

Arriving on Zanzibar's shores in September of 2018, however, I quickly noticed that the task that I had so confidently set myself was not half as easy as I thought. Not only was I faced with obstacles imposed by the Zanzibari government – a lengthy and non-transparent process of gaining research permission – but also challenged in understanding how to best approach the sensitive topics of polarization, political conflict and interfamily and -community discord in a manner that would elicit more than taciturn, evasive or generic answers from the women I approached. To add to this, the state of civil rights and freedoms on both sides of the Tanzanian union was on a downward spiral all throughout my stay (and beyond) (cf. e.g. ICG 2019: 6-10). Political uncertainty prevailed, and people seemed even more apprehensive than usual to share their perspectives and opinions with an outsider like me. This seemed to be especially true for those 'ordinary' women I had originally wanted to talk to: in informal conversations and

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[3] Out of the few authors who explicitly specify the gender of their respondents in more recent studies, both Moss (2016: 322) and Bernhof Olsen Kildal (2016: 93-94) record only around 10% female informants respectively.

interviews some stalled whenever I tried to steer talk towards '*siasa*' (politics), while others outright refused to be interviewed at all (Fieldnotes 22-10-2018).

Meeting and talking to Faiza, a young working woman who would later become a good acquaintance of mine, gave me some indications as to why this was the case. Sitting together in a café in Stone Town's Forodhani Gardens, she disclosed that '*[w]omen fear politics. They want to take care of their affairs in peace.*' (Fieldnotes, 17-10-2018). Having just gone through my own decidedly un-peaceful *'affairs'* at the office responsible for issuing research permits (Fieldnotes, 08-10 to 17-10-2018), I believed to understand what she was hinting at: In Zanzibar, the decision to become openly involved in party politics, 'exposing' one's political leaning in a different way, or simply being perceived to be opposition-friendly, can have dire repercussions in terms of the delivery of government services. The state's institutions are deeply entangled with the incumbent party (Bakari 2011: 251; Moss & Tronvoll 2015: 96-97), which can make '*taking care of affairs*' such as applying for an ID or a birth certificate extremely tedious or even impossible at times. This holds equally true for Zanzibaris of both genders, but Faiza was clearly implying that Zanzibari women had specific fears in this regard.

Our conversation that day gave me a first important impulse in thinking about the complex decisions Zanzibari women must make in the current political context of the islands from their specific gendered positions in society. The more interviews I conducted and transcribed, the clearer it became to me what constituted a large proportion of the distinctiveness of my respondent's standing: many of them highlighted the centrality of motherhood and mothering to their self-definition, when identifying critical issues in their environment that needed political attention, as well as in their assessment of the political situation and their positioning in it. The quote above from my interview with Saida –also lending inspiration to the title of the thesis – expresses this specific standpoint perfectly: 'I am a woman - *and in addition I am a mother*.' Within this thesis, I will argue that this maternal stance is the position from which a majority of my female Zanzibari respondents thought, spoke and navigated politics in the archipelago. These insights led me to draft up the following research question to guide this thesis:

> *How do Zanzibari women navigate (political) uncertainty and what role do motherhood*
> *as institution, and resource, as well as mothering as practice, play in their navigation?*

(1.1) Structure and Main Objectives of the Thesis

The objectives of this thesis are two-fold and result from different circumstances and contexts: first of all, it is important to me to re-establish the due place of women in Zanzibar's political past and present, in order to understand the context of my respondents' political actions or

inactions, thoughts and perspectives. Past publications often have had an androcentric focus[4] and tended to overlook female contributions – as do many male politicians and commentators. As Susan Geiger so aptly argues in her study on female activism in the struggle for independence in Tanganyika,

> [t]he marginalization of women in [the] historiography of [nationalism in Africa] reflects a now-familiar pattern: the accumulation of androcentric bias in the written record – both primary (produced by colonial officials, missionaries, and travelers) and, more recently, secondary (produced by Western as well as African scholars). *Women's political actions and history are 'disappeared' in a cumulative process whereby successive written accounts reinforce and echo the silence of previous ones*. (1997: 9-10; my emphasis)

This is certainly equally true for the scholarship on Zanzibar's distant and close (political) past (cf. e.g. Alpers 1984, 677-678; Fair 1994: 15; Stiles & Thompson 2015: 9-10). Even female scholars may fall victim to this trend: studying Marie-Aude Fouéré's analysis of the circulation of, and debates about YouTube clips allegedly depicting the mass-killings of Arab Zanzibaris during the Zanzibar Revolution in 1964, I was quite annoyed to read that "[…] the ethnographic material presented here reflects a specific viewership made up of urban, educated, computer-literate, middle-aged *men* residing or working in Stone Town and its close vicinity […]" (Fouéré 2018: 321, my emphasis). Had I not had an insightful conversation about these clips with one of my primary informants, Bi Rehema, and her young niece during a visit to their home, in which they included knowledge of these images in their considerations of what an outbreak of violence would mean in Zanzibar today (Fieldnotes, 11-12-2018)? As other authors before her, Fouéré – who does not give her readers an overview of the gender distribution within her sample, and only cites evidence from conversations and interviews with men – effectively silences women's voices and perspectives; whether inadvertently, because of the difficulties in talking to Zanzibari women that other authors also faced (see Keshodkar 2013: 89; Moss 2016: 321, 326) or because she purposefully did not approach them, cannot be known. Assuming however that the audience of these clips is exclusively male just because the majority of one's respondents were, is a grave mistake in my opinion and representative of the androcentric short-sightedness of many works on Zanzibari history and politics. In Chapter 2, I thus set out to re-establish women's *active* participation in Zanzibari politics in different roles and functions since their onset in 1957.

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[4] Exemplary are for instance Mohamed Bakari's unreflecting constant use of male pronouns throughout his 2001 work (cf. e.g. pp. 6, 108 fn. 24, 251), or Jonathon Glassman's discussion of teacher's attitudes (read: *male* teacher's attitudes) towards the rural population and their influence on the development of nationalist thinking in colonial Zanzibar (2011: 80-83), without ever taking into account the markedly different behaviour and mindset of female teachers (cf. Decker 2014).

My second main objective is connected to the theme of motherhood and concerns the similarly harmful trend in scholarship to silence, distort, oversimplify and sentimentalize the voices and thoughts of women as mothers (cf. Bush Trevino 2010: 1005; Ruddick 1989: 127). Susan Lyn Schalge – analysing mothers' actions and practices in the dire circumstances of Dar es Salaam's informal settlements in the late 1990s – put it well by arguing that "[w]hat women as mothers do, how they do it and how they define themselves are complex issues that must be untangled and investigated, rather than assumed […]" (2004: 152). To that end, and to understand the 'maternal standpoint' my respondents acted and thought from, feminist ideas about terms like motherhood as institution and mothering as practice are discussed and clarified in my theoretical framework in Chapter 3. Since the economic, social and political context of motherhood and mothering is considered vital to their analysis (Abbey & O'Reilly 1998: 14-16, 24-25; Bakare-Yusuf 2003: 5; Collins 1994: 45, 62; Glenn 1994: 3-4, 26; Jenkins 1998: 210), I establish 'uncertainty' as the overarching background against which mothering practices and experiences in Zanzibar are to be read. Using Henrik Vigh's concept of social navigation (2009, 2010) as a steppingstone, I develop the concept of 'maternal navigation' to make sense of some of the (political) actions and considerations of my respondents. Chapter 4, giving insights into my methodological orientation and struggles, especially regarding government intervention and the 'loud' silences that permeated my fieldwork experience, adds to an understanding of the context of uncertainty in which my female respondents made decisions to speak out or stay silent. In the last two chapters, I focus on my empirical data, exploring and analysing local notions of motherhood, 'good' mothering and concrete mothering practices, as influenced by the overarching political and economic context of uncertainty. In the final chapter of this thesis, I examine what role motherhood as institution and mothering as practice played in some of my respondents' navigation of 'the political', showing the ambivalent and complex force this part of their gendered identity represented.

Overall, by allowing women of different ages, degrees of political involvement and different backgrounds 'to speak for themselves' – staying close to their utterances in interviews and informal conversations in my analysis – I hope to be able to portray the complexity of their experiences, and to further deconstruct simplistic notions of the silenced, othered, and victimized (Muslim) woman in Western writings (cf. Hirsch 1998: 2, Demovic 2007:48). Being strongly committed to conducting research from a feminist standpoint, wanting to explore an already investigated phenomenon from the viewpoints of women, interpreting and understanding social realities based on their experiences (cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 238-239), I hope to bring a fresh perspective to the body of literature that already exists. Introducing

the novel angle of motherhood and mothering, I believe to be adding a truly innovative element to the study of Zanzibari politics.

While composing this thesis, I have come to realize that, although I set out on fieldwork in order to close 'gaps of knowledge', this feat might, in fact, be impossible to accomplish. As James Clifford writes: "There is no whole picture that can be 'filled in,' since the perception and filling of a gap leads to the awareness of other gaps." (1986: 18). My account of motherhood, mothering and politics in Zanzibar can only ever be the partial snapshot of a dynamic and ever-changing practice, institution and context, and the humble beginning of further scholarly examinations of Zanzibari women's experiences and perspectives – as mothers, but also in countless other functions and roles. At the same time, questions about fatherhood, fathering, and male gender identity began suggesting themselves to me stronger and stronger the more I wrote about the significance of motherhood and mothering to women – this could be a possible area for future research on gender and gender relations on the Swahili Coast (and elsewhere). The empirical material introduced and analysed here, need thus to be seen "[…] as an argument in efforts to make a case for a particular way of understanding social reality, *in the context of a never-ending debate*." (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 304; my emphasis).

(1.2) Some Notes on Terminology, Pseudonyms, and Translations

Zanzibar is an archipelago, consisting of three different main, inhabited islands – Unguja to the South, Tumbatu just off Unguja's Northern coast, and Pemba to the North. When I refer to 'Zanzibar' or 'Zanzibari', I usually mean to make more general statements about the entire archipelago (insofar that is possible), while I otherwise try to take care to differentiate between Pemba and Unguja[5]. Another important terminological differentiation is that between Zanzibar City/Town and Stone Town – the former denotes the whole urban centre and capital of the archipelago on Unguja, while the latter stands for the old town at the Westernmost tip of the city.

All the names used in this thesis are pseudonyms which I assigned to my respondents after my return to the Netherlands. As common in Zanzibar, I refer to most of the married women amongst them as 'Bi' (Mrs.; e.g. "Bi Rehema"), as I also would when addressing them in real life. Some women however, like Faiza and my research assistant Saida, although married, were

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[5] Although parts of the family of one of my main respondents hailed from Tumbatu, and certainly more research is needed on this part of the Zanzibar archipelago, time restraints prevented me from travelling there myself.

close to me in age, and the nature of our relationship was such that it would have been strange to address them as 'Bi' – both in writing and in real life.

All translations from Kiswahili, if not marked otherwise, were undertaken by me with reference to a number of standard monolingual (Murungi 2013; Wamtilia 2016), Kiswahili-English (TUKI 2001, Mohamed 2011, Knappert & van Kessel 2010) and Kiswahili-German dictionaries (Lazaro 2017, Höftmann & Herms 2010). Furthermore, Kiswahili is a language which is often abridged, with frequent omissions of certain parts of the grammatical structure. In my translations, I have thus often made additions in squared brackets for better readability and comprehension. The original quotes can always be found in the footnotes, and any translation errors are strictly mine.

(2) The Emergence of Zanzibar's Political Sphere and Women's Places in it

As mentioned in the introduction, modern Zanzibari electoral politics have been tarnished by tensions and conflict, periodically arising around multiparty-elections (1957-1964 & 1992-present) since their onset in 1957; occasionally even leading to deadly violence and violence specifically targeted at women (e.g. in 1961, 1964, & 2001). Several attempts at reconciliation and power-sharing have failed or have not been sustainable: the most recent example being the discontinuation of the initially successful Government of National Unity (GNU) after the contested 2015/16 electoral stalemate on the islands (ICG 2019: 1-2, 4-5; Minde et al. 2018: 165).

In the following, I will spell out the historical emergence of the political sphere in Zanzibar since the beginning of electoral politics in 1957, in order to establish the broader context of current political instability and uncertainty in the archipelago. By integrating women's active involvement into the narrative at different points in time, I hope to reinstate their due place in these developments. This chapter thus serves as a background against which my respondent's experiences with and navigation of 'the political' in Zanzibar will be read.

(2.1) The Stage is Set: Electoral Politics from 1957 to 1961

The onset of electoral politics in Zanzibar lies within the colonial period: After the Zanzibar sultanate became a protected Arab state under British colonialism in 1890, a Legislative Council (LegCo) was established in 1926 – as a law-making and advisory body with limited powers. At first, only European, Indian, and Arab men[6] could be appointed as representatives for their own 'race'. In 1946, the first 'Shirazi'[7] member joined. (Bakari 2001: 54-55; Glassman 2011: 43)

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[6] There are several claims that in 1949 a woman, Christabel(la) M(a)jaliwa, joined the LegCo (cf. Annex 2; Zanzibar Kwetu 2008). Decker (2014: 132-133) and Loimeier (2009: 334) mention Majaliwa as a member of a committee formed by the Department of Education in 1953; they do not make mention of her being a LegCo representative. Aboud and Shamte (2019: 4) assert that Majaliwa was an 'unofficial' LegCo delegate from 1960 onwards. Notwithstanding these inconsistencies, it is evident, that she was deeply involved in the public and political life of Zanzibar at the time. In January 2018, the website of the President's Office announced that Majaliwa posthumously received a "Revolution Medal" (SMZ 2018).

[7] Terms denoting racial or ethnic belonging, like 'Arab', 'Shirazi', 'Swahili' or 'African' need to be treated with caution in the Zanzibari context. In the past, a number of authors have tended to assume undue essentiality here, while in more recent times, the inherently flexible, context-dependent and ambivalent nature of such terms of self-identification has been highlighted (see e.g. Fair 2001: 28-29; Larsen 2004: 123-124). Due to widespread practices of intermarriage and the relative prestige – or stigma – attached to certain labels (which also shifted over time), island inhabitants may define themselves as belonging to several different identity groups at different points in time, or in different contexts (Fair 1998: 75). 'Shirazi' is a term that is especially contested. It originates from the practice of coastal inhabitants to claim ancestry from Persia. In Zanzibar, 'indigenous' islanders of mixed heritage used this autonym to distance themselves from (labour) migrants from the mainland, especially in the 1920s and 30s when Zanzibar saw a surge in migration. Similarly, labelling oneself as Arab enhanced (and enhances) status, while it was however never "[…] the clearly bound category that many islanders would later imagine it [to be]." (Glassman 2011: 38; see also Bakari 2001: 63-71; Glassman 2000: 405; Glassman 2014: 234-235; Loimeier 2018: 40, fn. 5; Larsen 2004: 127). During my fieldwork, few people identified as 'Arab', no one as 'Shirazi' and most

In 1957 the system of racial representation and appointment was abolished, and the first direct LegCo elections took place in June. This marked the beginning of nationalist, multiparty politics in Zanzibar which initiated a turbulent phase of strong political competition and confrontation; mostly between the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP, founded in 1955) and the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP, founded in 1957), commonly remembered as the *Zama za Siasa* (Time of Politics). Members, leaders and ideologues of both parties used racializing and exclusionary rhetoric – the ZNP invoking an ideal of *ustaarabu* (civilization, literally: *becoming Arab*), and the ASP employing idioms of race and autochthony ('alien Arabs' vs. 'indigenous Africans') – to determine who should *not* be part of the Zanzibari polity after independence: the '*washenzi'* (savages) from the African mainland (mostly recent labour migrants), or the 'Arab internal aliens'. Much of this rhetoric predated the first election, developing roughly in the inter-war period; Jonathon Glassman claims however that with the onset of electoral politics, and the almost constant campaigning that it brought along, racialized language and modes of thought spread widely throughout the archipelago. Additionally, accusations about the others inherent criminality and plans for violence further enforced these processes of mutual dehumanization. (Glassman 2011: 58-61, 91, 148-150, 160, 212)

Party membership in the *Zama za Siasa* was racialized: ASP was perceived as the 'mainlander/African' party, while ZNP was seen as an 'Arab' party. Both first and foremost competed for the votes of indigenous islanders ('Shirazi') who were ambiguous about their identity and did not assume a sense of 'automatic' belonging with either broad category due to geographic conditions and different experiences with Omani-Arab rule, settlement and land ownership: While many 'Shirazi' in Unguja felt that they had been marginalized from the fertile land by 'Arab' landlords and thus tended to sympathize with ASP, 'Shirazi' in Pemba had less antagonistic relationships with the Omani elite and often felt drawn to ZNP. (Bakari 2001: 47-57; Brown 2010: 619; Glassman 2011: 23-63; Newbury 1983: 254-262, 269) The amount of internal fragmentation and power struggle within the parties, and the oversimplification inherent to the 'African' vs. 'Arab'-dichotomy became obvious later, when further parties developed from party splits, and allied themselves with the respective counter side: the Zanzibar and Pemba People's Party (ZPPP) split off from the ASP in 1959 and formed a coalition with ZNP; the Marxist *Umma* Party split off from the ZNP in 1963 and joined the ASP in government after 1964. (Bakari 2001: 57-58; Glassman 2011: 154, 174; Wimmelbücker 2003: 473)

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simply as Zanzibari. Within this thesis I put such identity-terms into single quotation marks, to indicate their non-essentialist nature.

It was within these turbulent times that women were first granted voting rights[8]. After two-fact finding missions in 1956 and 1959, women first cast their ballots in 1961, at the height of political tensions, and not in one, but two highly contested elections within that same initial year. (Decker 2014: 136-141) Corrie Decker asserts that the campaign for women's suffrage was largely hijacked by male members of the nationalist parties for their own purposes, i.e. to gain members and electoral margins (ibid. 129-131; 141, 155). For her female respondents, who were schoolgirls or young teachers at the time, enfranchisement was not a watershed moment: they did not remember campaigning for or celebrating it (ibid. 148-149; 223, fn. 111). I would nonetheless doubt the implied conclusion that party politics and voting were not important to *any* women at the time. Mohammed Bakari (2001: 177) cites several colonial reports from the period before enfranchisement that speak to a marked interest of women in political affairs, and of their involvement in politically motivated social boycotts:

> Traders, cultivators, labourers, fishermen, *even housewives were affected*. Villagers argued among themselves. Funerals and religious ceremonies were boycotted by rival political parties! *Women even pawned their clothing in order to raise the bus fare to political meetings*. (citing a 1958 report by the Senior Commissioner; emphasis mine)

> [In the period between 1959 and 1960,] [t]he political struggle occupied the minds of the people of Zanzibar to the exclusion of everything else. *Both men and women took full part in these activities*." (citing the British Colonial Report 1959-1960; emphasis mine)

Decker does in fact admit that there were 'some' other women who were politically active during the *Zama za Siasa*, "[…] attending rallies, establishing party-oriented organizations, and giving speeches to women about party membership" (2014: 131) but, nevertheless, her respondents – part of a slowly growing educated female elite who would have been the 'logical' participants in nationalist and suffragette activities (cf. Geiger 1997: 42; Glassman 2011: 80) – for the most part stayed away from politics. Decker argues that the struggle of female teachers and students at the time was not necessarily for political rights but for economic self-reliance and concomitant new definitions of female *heshima* (honour)*,* which they had to defend against conservatives' concerns about female education and professionalization. Additionally, young female teachers were often posted to unfamiliar rural areas where they did not have social networks and thus had little interest in spoiling relations with the local parents and students due to party politics. Further, as most women in Zanzibar and along the Swahili coast, they defied simplistic notions of racial or ethnic identity[9] which might have made them less responsive to

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[8] According to Maoulidi (2011: 43) this did not immediately coincide with the ability to also stand for office.

[9] Fair (1998) characterizes women's flexibility in regard to ethnicity or race in terms of their 'procreative powers': since ethnic belonging of children was usually determined patrilineally, women were able to transform their children's ethnicity through (often multiple) interethnic marriage(s) and reproduction (87-89). If it was to their advantage, women also adjusted their own ethnic identity (Fair 2001: 98). Women were thus much more intimately acquainted with the fluidity of ethnic and racial identities than most men (Decker 2014: 158).

the exclusionary rhetoric and identity politics of the nationalist parties. (2014: 12, 14, 20, 101, 131-132, 145, 154-155, 158)

I would argue that expecting the young, educated and professional elite to be at the forefront of (female) nationalist and political efforts, and disregarding the activities of other societal groups, can be quite short-sighted. Susan Geiger already demonstrated this in her study of female activists in the struggle for independence in Tanganyika: in Dar es Salaam, for instance, it was mostly middle-aged, Muslim 'Swahili' women with low levels of education who joined the Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU) in the 1950s – at a certain point even exceeding male members, who, if employed, feared losing their jobs due to party membership (1997: 1, 53). Usually divorced and in at least their second marriage, engaged in informal (often collaborative) economic activities and in *ngoma* groups[10], Geiger's informants enjoyed higher mobility than younger women, more flexibility than (male) employees, and had ready-made social networks at hand through which they could mobilise for the political cause (ibid. 43-44, 68, 82). Given that Decker's respondents were mostly young women in their first marriage, preoccupied with teaching and other community development activities (Decker 2014: 14), as well as intent on maintaining their *heshima* under the scrutiny of society (ibid. 102, 118, 123), it is hardly surprising that they did not (openly) participate in party politics in large numbers.

Who then, were these 'other women', who joined the nationalist cause(s), even sacrificing clothing[11] to be able to support their party of choice? It is without a doubt inaccurate to suggest that Zanzibari women as a group collectively shied away from nationalist politics in the *Zama za Siasa*. Amani Thani, Aisha Amour Zahor and Abdul Sheriff – all interviewed as witnesses of the era in Barwani et al. (2003) – concordantly acknowledge the involvement of women in electoral politics, particularly during rallies and other political meetings (254, 284, 290-92, 314), but also in leadership positions, albeit in smaller numbers (256, 314). In the same volume, Ludger Wimmelbücker reports that after their defeat in the 1957 elections, the ZNP began to purposefully mobilise women, so that in 1962 half of its members were claimed to be female (2003: 475, fn. 16; see also Decker 2014: 220, fn. 76). There were prominent and active women within the ranks of ASP as well: Bi Zainab Himid, a prominent teacher and former ZNP sympathizer, recalls joining ASP's "*Umoja wa [A]Kina Mama*" (Union of

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[10] '*Ngoma*' can simultaneously delineate a drum, a certain type of music, a kind of dance in which drums play a prominent role, or an event at which this type of music is performed. Participation in *ngoma*-troupes was (and to a degree still is) an extremely popular recreational activity for women along the Swahili Coast. (Askew 2002: 355; Geiger 1997: x; Lazaro 2017)

[11] Laura Fair has a lot to say about the importance of fashion and cloth(es) to Zanzibari women (1998: 6, 77). For instance, the price of cloth was one of the main grievances of lower-class women participating in the 1948 general strike (Fair 1994: 374; see also Glassman 2011: 121). This makes the readiness to pawn items of clothing in order to participate in political meetings even more remarkable.

Women(folk)/Mothers) shortly after 1964. She recounts that at this time, ten to twelve 'grown' women[12] constituted the core of the group, amongst them Fatuma Karume (the first wife of ASP chairman and then-president, Abeid Karume) and Bi Mwanaidi Dai, both of whom are often mentioned as early female ASP activists (see Annex 2; Barwani & Gerhardt 2012: 148-151; Issa 2009: 312; YouTube 2017). Women also supported the party of their choice through other means, like art or fashion: Moza Ali (Suleiman) composed political poetry throughout the *Zama za Siasa*, which was for instance published in an newspaper affiliated with the ZNP, broadcasted on the radio or adapted as songs by *taarab*[13] groups (Askew 2002: 96; Sheikh & Adwiraah 1983: 77, 82-88). Other women proudly displayed and communicated their political affiliation in public through their attire, particularly through *kanga*s[14] imprinted with political symbols and inscriptions, like those exhibited in the Museum of the Revolution in Zanzibar City:

Fig. 3: Kanga 'Furaha ya Mabibi ya Uchaguzi 1961' (Women's Joy for the 1961 Elections); Museum of the Revolution, Zanzibar City (Photograph by the author, 19-02-2019).
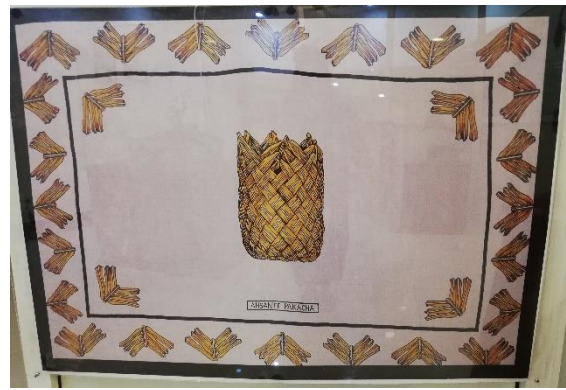
Fig. 4: Kanga 'Ahsante Pakacha' (Thank you Pakacha). The woven basket (pakacha) was a popular symbol for the ASP (see Bakari 2001: 178); Museum of the Revolution, Zanzibar City (Photograph by the author, 19-02-2019).

All in all, the evidence clearly confirms the active and enthusiastic participation of women in the early politics of the *Zama za Siasa*, often even before they were able to vote[15]. However,

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[12] Bi Zainab used the term '*watu wazima*' here, which can be translated as 'fully-grown people' (Knappert & van Kessel 2010), simply as 'adults' (Lazaro 2017; Mohamed 2011, TUKI 2001), or as 'completed' persons (i.e. people who have undergone the important life-events: marriage, parenthood, possibly grandparenthood). In this context, Bi Zainab – who was of course an adult herself at the time – in my opinion, tries to express both the other women's more advanced age, as well as their status as elders within the organization (see also Arnold Koenings 2018: 156).

[13] *taarab:* An extremely popular style of music in Zanzibar; developed from the late 19th century onwards, mixing musical influences from India, the Arab world and East Africa (Askew 2002 109-110; Fair 2002: 61; Fair 2013: 18; Topp Fargion 2014: 3, 55).

[14] *kanga*: A colourfully patterned, two-piece fabric, usually imprinted with a Kiswahili proverb (*jina*); widespread all-over East Africa and popular – also as a means of subtle communication – since at least the 1880s (Beck 2001: 157-158).

[15] This would also not be the first time that women in Zanzibar acted politically: Fair (1994) details the active part women, mostly from Ng'ambo (the 'African' quarter of Zanzibar Town), played in the rent strikes of the 1920s, and in the general strike of 1948 (119, 127-128, 369, 373-375). Additionally, powerful female leaders are by no means unheard of in the history of the Zanzibar archipelago in particular, and along the Swahili coast in general (Alpers 1984: 681-682; Topan 2004: 213); with titled female rulers possibly in place in Zanzibar as late as 1886 (Askew 1999: 81-85).

some women were already practicing self-censorship to avoid inter-family or marital conflicts about party politics. Decker cites a woman from Pemba who gave the following insight when interviewed by an enfranchisement committee in the 1950s:

> I will reply 'yes Sir' to my husband when he orders me to vote for a certain candidate: this will please him and keep harmony: but I will vote for my own choice, and as the vote is secret my husband will never know! (2014: 142)

Additionally, the fierce competition and polarization tangible in Zanzibari electoral politics from the onset, and the thus existent potential for violence and conflict made women's participation inappropriate in the eyes of some (Decker 2014: 153; see also Geiger 1997: 121) and might have deterred certain parts of the female population – like the young teachers in rural areas – from engaging with party politics openly.

Additional to their active participation in politics, women occupied a central role in the raging 'war of words' between ASP and ZNP nationalists – as symbols of the racialized hierarchies and social stratifications inherent to Zanzibari society, and as symbols of 'the nation' in general. Rumours of 'the other's' sexual deviance and allegedly committed atrocities against women were part and parcel of party propaganda on both sides. Controversies, particularly about the issue of intermarriage, occupied a central position in the disputes between nationalist ideologists. (Glassman 2011: 138-143, 159-160, 170-171, 212) As a result, Decker argues that

> *[g]ender was fundamental to the construction of racial ideologies in Zanzibar.* Popular narratives about the intermarriage between Arab men and African women became the basis on which Arab nationalists claimed multi-ethnic representation and African nationalists argued against Arab domination ([referring to the fact] that Arab men always married African women and never the other way around). (2014: 131, my emphasis)

In the end, it might be reasonable to conclude that to the male politicians of the *Zama za Siasa*, "[w]omen's actions mattered less than *what they represented* […], whether as daughters, wives, […], voters, or the nation itself." (Decker 2014: 131, my emphasis). It is however equally true that some women did create their own spaces of political agency: by discussing politics in their *taarab*-associations and other social clubs, by openly supporting political parties, by campaigning and mobilizing new voters, or by silently defying their husbands (or employers), by casting their votes for the candidates of their choice.

(2.2) Politics turn violent: Election Riots and Revolution (1961-1964)

After the second election that women participated in, and as a result of the almost perpetual toxic political campaigns full of race-baiting and stereotyping, as well as the vicious circle of constant retaliation (social shunning, boycotts and retributive boycotts, evictions, racialized

violence), the political tensions of the *Zama za Siasa* reached a violent climax: riots broke out during and after the June 1961 LegCo elections[16]. 68 men, women and children, mostly of Arab decent, died in pogrom-like violence in Unguja, while hundreds of others were injured. There was also widespread sexualized violence against Arab women and girls, as well as acts of brutality specifically targeted at pregnant women. (Glassman 2011: 141-163; 240-247) These events, after one of the first elections that they participated in, and the fact that some of the violence was directed explicitly at women (again, as *symbols,* this time of 'the other's' honour and ability to reproduce – in short: his manhood; ibid.: 256-257), as well as their children, will have further enforced the cautious attitude of some (Decker 2014: 146).

In December 1963, after a total of four highly contested elections, Zanzibar attained its independence under a ZNP-ZPPP coalition. Only one month later, on the night of January 11, 1964, the government was violently overthrown and replaced by a coalition of ASP and *Umma* Party, thereafter forming the Revolutionary Council. (Bakari 2001: 1; Glassman 2011: 3) Until today, there is no uncontested account of the Zanzibari Revolution, its reasons, course, timeline, or participants[17] (Cunningham Bissell & Fouéré 2018: 19). It is however likely that frustrations like the dismissal of police officers of mainland origin, the eviction of squatters who allegedly supported the ASP by 'Arab' landowners, and the banning of the *Umma* Party played a motivating role (Brown 2010: 621-622; Glassman 2011: 64, 173-175, 277-278; Kilian 2008: 108-110; Loimeier 2018: 40-41). Ann Lee Grimstad, who interviewed more than 70 informants and considered a wide range of archival sources on the Revolution, claims that there had been several groups discussing, and fewer seriously planning an overthrow of the government since at least the 1963 elections. There was some collaboration between at least two groups, mainly consisting of ASP Youth League members, sacked policemen and day labourers – both Zanzibaris and mainland-born men. They jointly launched attacks on Zanzibar Town's main police barracks on the night of January 11. It seems that some *Umma* Party youth aligned themselves with the revolutionaries in the early morning hours of the next day on their own account. (Grimstad 2018: 70, 75, 81-87; see also Glassman 2011: 277-278) Bi Aisha Zahor's sister, (K)ubwa Amour Zahor, is claimed to have been the only female revolutionary. As a member of the *Umma* Party (Grimstadt 2018: 100), in her sister's words, *"she took up the gun"* and participated actively in the revolution (Barwani et al. 2003: 282)[18].

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[16] Partly because ASP-supporters alleged that 'their' women had been sexually assaulted while queuing up to vote (Glassman 2011: 371, fn. 44).

[17] For an excellent and concise summary, see Loimeier 2018: 39-53.

[18] Grimstadt however claims that Bi (K)ubwa was in Dar es Salaam together with *Umma* leader Abdulrahman Babu on the weekend of the overthrow (2018: 100). Nevertheless, she is for instance pictured in a newspaper

The coup itself was over after a few hours, but in the following days and weeks there were pogroms, especially against non-elite 'Arabs' and prominent supporters of the old regime in Unguja (Glassman 2011: 278, 282). Pemba was 'reached' by the Revolution belatedly, but with a great deal of more systematic, state-sponsored violence that lasted until 1968 (Arnold Koenigs 2018: 161-165). The total death toll of the Revolution is contested but newer estimates assume a number of around 5,000 fatalities (Brown 2010: 622; Kilian 2008: 110; Myers 2000: 434); countless Zanzibaris of Arab and Indian origin fled the islands, others were arrested and detained in rural camps, and many of them were eventually deported and dispossessed. At the end of 1964, Zanzibar's 'Arab' population was decimated by at least 25%. (Bakari 2001: 102-103; Glassman 2011: 283)

(2.3) Revolutionary Zanzibar and One-Party Rule (1964-1992)

After an "ideological somersault" from pre-revolutionary rhetoric praising colonial rule for ending the oppression of enslaved Africans and "red-baiting" (former) rivals like *Umma* Party leader Babu, the now ruling Revolutionary Council presented itself as socialist (Glassman 2011: 289). Under the leadership of ASP chairman Abeid Amani Karume there were certain progressive welfare measures like land reforms and social housing. At the same time, surveillance, repression and regular disappearances and executions of alleged political opponents were widespread. (Bakari 2001: 106-107) The controversial union with mainland Tanganyika was forged in April 1964, based primarily on pragmatic security considerations on both sides, and without any popular input (ibid.: 107-119; Glassman 2011: 289-290; Kilian 2008: 111 & 121). For the next 16 and 28 years respectively, elections were abandoned, and opposition parties were banned (Bakari 2001: 113; Loimeier 2018: 45; Maoulidi 2011: 44).

The original Revolutionary Council that took power on January 24, 1964 had no female members at all (c.f. Loimeier 2018: 45), but it nonetheless clad itself in a language of women's empowerment: schools were made coeducational and women encouraged to take up employment outside the household; on the whole, the gendered segregation of the public space was to be abandoned (Decker 2014: 5, 147-148; Fair 2002: 72; McGruder 1999: 152). Several of my respondents who grew up or came of age in the post-revolutionary era, like Bi Rehema and her sister Bi Rukia, as well as Bi Raissa, endorsed this language of women's advancement with their life stories; all three profited from educational and employment opportunities

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clipping showing 'The Revolutionaries of Zanzibar' (see Zanzibar Yetu 2014) which demonstrates her closeness to the inner political circles.

accorded to them by the regime[19]. Two elderly respondents who, respectively, were around fifteen and fourteen years old in 1964, Bi Khadija and Bi Salama, had – as was quite common in Zanzibar then – finished 8th grade and gotten married soon thereafter. After the revolution both received training[20] and attained government employment in the police force and the JKU[21]. As an active and loyal member of the UWT (*Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania;* Tanzanian Women's Union) and the ruling party since joining the ASP Youth League, Bi Khadija travelled to Germany, Bulgaria and China for 'short courses.' Later, she was offered a women's special seat in the first multiparty House of Representatives. These individual trajectories match Salma Maoulidi's claim that progress in this period centred mainly on the areas of female education and employment (2011: 46).

In contrast to this, several of the Revolutionary Government's policies made the pronouncement of their alleged 'fight for women's rights' appear like hypocritical lip service. Laura Fair (2002) indeed calls party policy in the first years of the revolutionary regime "misogynist to the extreme" (71). Emblematic for this are the forced marriages of 1970, when young women of Arab and Indian origin were coerced to marry older 'African' members of the Revolutionary Council "[…] to 'end' racial discrimination and produce new Zanzibaris" (Askew 2006: 27; see also Burgess 2018: 134; Decker 2014: 150; Muhajir & Myers 2018: 209; Wilson 2013: 55). My respondent Najima, who traces her family's roots to both Oman and Iraq, mentioned that two of her mother's sisters were affected by the forced marriage decree; one managed to avoid her fate by feigning illness and fleeing the islands from the hospital, the other had to go through with the marriage. This was one of the reasons why Najima found it especially painful to attend the yearly anniversary celebrations of the Revolution while she was still in school. (Informal conversation, December 2018) Her statements also speak to the policy's long-lasting traumatic effect on Zanzibari society (cf. Larsen 2018: 258).

Fair's urban respondents described a general climate of misogyny, and widespread sexualized assaults and rapes during the 1960s and 70s, that made many women afraid to leave the house (2002: 72; see also Boswell 2008: 306), while Burgess (2018) outlines the predatory

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[19] It has to be highlighted however, that all three women came from relatively privileged families and grew up in the urban areas of Unguja and Pemba. Other women in their 50s and 40s today, especially those from rural areas, like Bi Sauda and the women I interviewed in rural Pemba, seem to not have profited from educational and professional opportunities as much.

[20] As a matter of fact, after 1964, the husbands of girls who were still in school had to guarantee the local ASP branch in writing that they would not obstruct their wives' education after marriage (Maoulidi 2011: 46-47).

[21] *Jeshi ya Kujenga Uchumi* (The Army of the Construction of the Economy) – established in 1977, was modelled after the mainland JKT (*Jeshi ya Kujenga Taifa* - Army of Nationbuilding), and based on the structures of the youth labour camps that existed all over the islands at the time. It basically was an institution of national service, and at some point, participation was required for all secondary students for a duration of two years. The JKU exists until today and is part of Zanzibar's sovereign security forces. (Burgess 1999: 42; SMZ n.d.; REDET & TEMCO 2006: 80)

practices of Karume himself during this time (134).[22] According to Glassman, the forced marriages and the further instances of state-condoned sexualized violence can be understood as the 'logical' continuation of the discourses on intermarriage by ASP and ZNP nationalists that I sketched above (2011: 142, 289). The horrors of the past were simply turned around on 'the other'; women, in this context, were conceived of as pawns and symbols in the larger schemes of powerful men, while "[…] [their] bodies became objects of revolutionary retribution." (Fair 2002: 71; see also Maoulidi 2011: 44) In addition, the imposition of policies of gender-integration in public spaces and institutions without the input of women themselves often seems to have had an adverse effect: men were put into leadership positions while women withdrew from spaces in which they felt they no longer had authority or voice. Fair's portrayal of the post-1964 transformation of the formerly almost exclusively female cultural institution of *taarab*-associations into a male-led and government-controlled domain, is an excellent case in point (2002: 63-64; 71-72).

Two years after the forced marriages scandal, Karume was assassinated, and the governments of Aboud Jumbe (1972-1984), Ali Hassan Mwinyi (1984-1985), Idris Abdul Wakil (1985-1990), and Salmin Amour (1990-1995) followed. In 1977, the ASP merged with the mainland Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) to form CCM, cementing one-party rule on both sides of the Union – a key moment in the erosion of Zanzibari political autonomy. (Bakari 2001: 110-118; Cranenburgh 1996: 536; Nassor & Jose 2014: 251-252; Pallotti 2017: 551) The party merger also led to the fusion of the ASP Women's Section with the UWT[23], which had superseded the TANU Women's Section in 1962 (Geiger 1982: 49-50). Geiger suggests that the UWT was much less political than its predecessor(s), as the organization's focus shifted from women's political mobilization and consciousness-raising to 'female development', henceforth concentrating on "cooperatives, household management and economic activities […]" (Geiger 1982: 54; see also Geiger 1997: 191, 194). Bi Khadija, who was a member at the time of the merger, nevertheless credits successes like legislation concerning maternity leave, the establishment of women's and children's ministries in both the mainland and the Isles, as well as the higher number of women in legislative bodies to the lobbying of the UWT. Membership in the organization was – and continues to be – a pre-

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[22] "[…] the president, in his 60s at the time, employed a man known as 'Foum' to drive around the capital every day in search of women and girls, almost always of Arab or South Asian ancestry. Foum would present these unfortunates to Karume at Kibweni palace […]. The total number of those forced to submit to such sexual exploitation is impossible to determine. Most submitted out of fear that he might harm them, or people close to them […]." (Burgess 2018: 134)

[23] Until then the *Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanganyika* (Tanganyikan Women's Union); afterwards retaining the abbreviation UWT, but more commonly known as *Jumuiya ya Wanawake wa Tanzania* (Tanzanian Women's Organization/Association) (see Tenga & Peter 1996: 159).

condition for CCM members wishing to enter the Union Parliament and Zanzibari House of Representatives through women's special seats (IRI 2016: 6; TEMCO 1997: 72; Yoon 2008: 64).

Due to poor economic performance, the growing curtailment of Zanzibari autonomy, problems of political leadership and restrictions or outright violations of civil rights, the ASP/CCM-regime entered more than one crisis of legitimacy during the era of one-party rule (Bakari 2001: 107-118; 151). The contentious issue of the Union with the mainland was the pivotal point in several government crises (Glassman 2011: 292; Kilian 2008: 111-112; Nassor & Jose 2014: 248). In 1984, however, a slight (economic) liberalization commenced during the short term of office of Ali Hassan Mwinyi; the strong Zanzibari opposition has its roots in this time (Bakari 2001: 115, 133, 155-156, 170).

(2.4) The Shift to Multipartyism (1992)

Within the so-called 'third wave of democracy' of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Tanzania, like other African countries, gave way to political reforms that eventually led to the re-introduction of the multiparty system in 1992. The deep and persistent economic crisis since the late 1970s and all throughout the 1980s, the consequent "bitter […] pill" (Bratton & van de Walle 1992: 420) of Structural Adjustment from 1985 onwards, as well as the regime changes taking place in communist Eastern Europe and in several African countries constituted the structural and contextual factors that influenced this shift. (Aminzade 2003: 43; Bakari 2001: 155; Bratton & van de Walle 1992: 422-425, 430; Nyirabu 2002: 102; TEMCO 1997: 12-15) Tanzania, however, represents a somewhat 'odd' case, as political reforms took place without widespread popular pressure, but with explicit and dominant impulses from the political establishment with the *Baba wa Taifa* (Father of the Nation) and long-time Union president (1964-1985) Julius K. Nyerere leading the way. In 1991, then-Union president Ali Hassan Mwinyi initiated the so-called *Nyalali Commission*, to consult public opinion on multiparty democracy all over the country. Although there was some ambiguity[24], the foundation of new political parties was legalised one year later. (Bakari 2011: 235; Bratton & van de Walle 1992: 432; Cranenburgh 1996: 537; Hofmeier 1992: 286) My respondent Bi Rehema recounted these developments as follows:

The Union government made a law in '92 that everyone has the right to join a party. Which means we were told that 'multipartyism is coming, let's go to the march.' Ehh, there was a march to welcome multipartyism, so we welcomed the parties. We were told

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[24] Given that many respondents seemed to prefer a thorough reform of CCM to a direct introduction of multipartyism (Askew 2006: 31-32; Hofmeier 1992: 286).

we must go to the march, who does not go to the march will get his or her salary cut. All right! So then when we arrived there [...] Ali Hassan Mwinyi, [who] was the [Union] president at that time, addressed us, he said that everyone has the right to join the party he or she wants. Well! (claps) *We went, we did [so] and really, multipartyism came.*[25]

Bi Rehema's use of passives *('we were told')*, as well as her hint at coercive measures *('who does not go [...] will get [their] salary cut')* are meaningful, as they testify quite clearly to the top-down mode of Tanzania's transition. It has been argued that the compliant attitude of CCM in this historic moment was a deliberate strategy to take control of and closely guide the inconvenient but inevitable reform process in order to stay in power in the long run. By controlling the pace and direction of the transition the incumbent party was able to avoid losing power to a more mature and better organized opposition at a later point – a calculation that seems to add up until today. (Bakari 2001: 154, 162; Bakari & Whitehead 2012: 104; Bratton & van de Walle 1992: 421; Brown 2001: 68; Nyirabu 2002: 103; Pallotti 2017: 546; 552-553)

In Zanzibar, the changes were implemented more reluctantly since CCM-Zanzibar already faced a tangible challenge to its power: the political situation in the archipelago had been tense throughout the 1980s, and vocal and influential opposition and dissident groups, mostly rallying around a reform of the Union structure, had been forming (Bakari 2001: 170; Hofmeier 1991: 324). The legacy of the revolution as the founding myth of their polity made it hard for CCM-Zanzibar to even allow the thought of conceding power 'through a piece of paper' (Brown 2010: 628, 630; Nassor & Jose 2014: 252). Nevertheless, in June 1992, Zanzibar's main opposition party[26] the Civic United Front (CUF) was formed (Cameron 2002: 314, Hofmeier 1993).

Female membership in political parties before the first nation-wide elections in Tanzania as a whole was low: only 21,63% of the founder members of eight opposition parties at the time were women. There were extremely few women in national leadership, as well as amongst the national parliamentary candidates (ca. 4% overall). (Mmuya & Chaligha 1994: 50; 200-204; Shayo 2005b: 8; TEMCO 1997: 22, 70) In general, the impression that political parties were 'men's clubs' seemed to be widespread (Shayo 2005a: 26; 2005b: 1).

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[25] *"[..] [S]erikali [...] ya muungano, imetunga sheria [...] mwaka '92, kwamba [...] mtu yoyote ana haki ya kujiunga katika chama. Maanake tumeambiwa vyama vingi vinakuja, twende kwenye maandamano [...]. Ehh, kulikuwa na maandamano ya kupokea vyama vyingi, kwa hiyo [....] [t]ulikuwa tumepokea vyama vyingi. Tukaambiwa lazima kwenda kwenye maandamano, asiokwenda kwenye maandamano akatwa mshahara. Haya! Halafu tena tulipofika kule, Mzee Ali Hassan Mwinyi, wakati ule ndo raisi, akatuhutubia akasema kwamba kila mtu ana haki ya kujiunga chama anachotaka [...]. Well! (claps) Tukaenda, [...] tukafanya na kweli [...] vikaja vyama vyingi [...]."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[26] That is, until recently: in mid-March 2019, the leader of the main opposition party CUF, Seif Sharif Hamad and most of its Zanzibari members defected from the party and joined ACT (Alliance for Change and Transparency, founded in 2014), due to prolonged leadership struggles within CUF since the 2015 campaign and election (ICG 2019: 8-9; Namkwahe & Kiango 2017).

Nonetheless, women like Bi Rehema and Bi Halima joined politics at this time, both becoming members of CUF. They respectively claimed to have been motivated by a general desire for *mabadiliko* (change): Bi Halima detailed the aims of CUF that prompted her decision to join, as follows: *"The aims, especially here in Zanzibar, are to bring change. Change that is a good change for the citizens because truly we are very neglected in terms of our lives."*[27] Bi Rehema told me: "*So, I did not have this aim of becoming a politician specifically, to tell you the truth. But this wish of wanting to see [that] we have change; we have these troubles of the Union; we have troubles with different things.*[28] Another respondent, Bi Sauda, who declared that she voted for CUF in the first two multiparty elections also cited a longing for *mabadiliko* as a reason for casting her ballot for the opposition. Pressed on what *kind* of change was wanted or promised, she answered *"A party change, [that] the party of CCM would leave and CUF would enter.*"[29], and explained further that "*We were told that our life will be good [by][t]he leaders who ran for office. Like the one from CUF, he said that life would change, yes."*[30]

Despite referring to some concrete issues like 'the troubles of the Union', economic conditions, or the human rights situation (as Bi Halima did later in our interview), overall, the specific problems that motivated women to vote for the opposition remain largely obscure; just as any explicit policies or ideologies that party leaders might have referred to as solutions to them. This is hardly surprising, since there were (and are) few ideological or policy-related differences between the opposition and ruling party in Zanzibar – beyond a general dissatisfaction with the status quo and the desire for change and a 'good life' (*maisha mazuri*) (cf. Askew 2006: 31-32; Bakari 2001: 184-185; Cranenburgh 1996: 540, 543; Glassman 2011: 285, 288; Richey & Ponte 1996: 82). It would however be wrong to dismiss the larger meaning of the 'simple' wish for a party-change: after twenty-eight years of one-party rule at the onset of multipartyism, the pragmatic (and cautious) hope for *some* sort of change would have already constituted a major, if not revolutionary change of policy, in my opinion.

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[27] *"[Malengo] hususan hapa kwetu Zanzibar ni kuleta mabadiliko [...]. [M]abadiliko ambayo [ni] mabadiliko mazuri kwa wanachi kwa sababu kweli tuko ovyo sana kimaisha."* (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)

[28] *"Kwa hiyo, si[ja]kuwa na ile aim hasa ya kuwa mwanasiasa kwa kusema ukweli. Lakini ile hamu ya kutaka kuona tuna mabadiliko; tuna kero hizi za muungano; tuna kero za mambo mbalimbali [...]."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[29] *"[Mabadiliko ya] kichama [...] kitoke chama cha CCM, kiinigie cha CUF."* (Interview 1 with Bi Sauda, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[30] *"Tuliambiwa maisha yatakuwa mazuri [...] [na] [v]iongozi waliokuwa kugombea. Kama huyu wa CUF, alisema maisha yatabadilika, ndiyo."* (ibid.)

Saida, my research assistant, who disclosed to have voted for CCM in 1995, claimed that, on the one hand, it was family and neighbourhood dynamics that made her cast her vote for the incumbent: *"We were raised by out mother who was a big CCM [supporter] so we follow[ed]*

Fig. 5: Michenzani social housing blocks in Zanzibar City (Photograph by the author, 19-02-2019)

her [politically]. In other words, I just went with the agitation, because I know my mother [supports] CCM and around here [people support] CCM."[31] At the time, Saida and her family lived close to *Maskani ya Kisonge*[32]*,* which could rightfully be called one of the epi-centres of CCM party culture in Zanzibar: up the street from the CCM headquarters, and in front of the iconic *Michenzani* social housing blocks[33] it is a popular meeting point for members and supporters of the ruling party. On the other hand, Saida also cited worries about the prospects of multipartyism and the 'unknown' that a regime change would bring. *"[W]e were thinking that multipartyism [i.e. the new parties] would bring trouble,"*[34] she claimed, mirroring a common charge of the time (cf. Cameron 2002: 317-318; Richey & Ponte 1996: 82).

Bi Pili, who is a long-term CCM supporter and a government employee, additionally explained to me that *"[…] the love for the parties is inside the blood. Inside the soul."*[35] I found her comment quite insightful as it hinted at a similarly ideology- or policy-detached stance amongst supporters of the ruling party. By using the metaphor of blood, and thus eliciting associations with family and heredity, it also reiterated Saida's point about family dynamics influencing political choices. Sigrun Marie Moss and Kjetil Tronvoll argue that this tendency is quite prevalent in Zanzibar, claiming that "[…] political categories are largely assigned through family ties rather than chosen, and when established, the political belonging is perceived as static […]" (2015: 84). Incidentally, this holds true for both sides of the political

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[31] *"[…] sisi tunalelewa na mama ambaye alikuwa ni CCM sana, kwa hiyo, na sisi […] tunamfuata [kisiasa]. […] "[…] yaani nimeenda kwa ushawishi tu sababu najua mama CCM na huku CCM […]"* (Interview 1 with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

[32] Originally, *maskani* merely denoted places of male socialization at street corners; since the re-introduction of the multiparty system existing *maskani* in Zanzibar have increasingly become organized along party lines (Bakari 2001: 179-181; Glassman 2011: 295-296). Sometimes, violence has emanated from *maskani* toward political rivals, as e.g. during the 2001 protests, when members of CCM *maskani* were involved in brutalities against opposition supporters (HRW 2002: 21, 36, 38). The *maskani* at (Mwembe) Kisonge is one of the most famous CCM *maskani* (Bakari 2001: 180, fn. 51); see Figure 1 for a picture.

[33] Seen as *the* symbol of the revolution's achievements (Cunningham Bissell & Fouéré 2018: 2, 14-15), and constituting a traditional CCM-stronghold during elections (Cameron 2002: 317).

[34] *"[…] tuko tunachukulia kama vyama vyingi kama vinakuja kuleta vurugu […]."* (Interview 1 with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

[35] *"[…] vyama upenzi viko ndani ya damu. Ndani ya roho."* (Interview 2 with Bi Pili, Unguja, 14-11-2019)

divide, although it should not be taken as an absolute: there are certainly those who take different political sides than parents, siblings, or partners – this is precisely what leads to the personalized nature of party conflict after all (cf. e.g. BBC 2015a; The Guardian 2015). Najima for instance told me that she supports a different party than her parents and highlighted: *"I am the first one in my family to be choosing a different party than them. I had my own reasons. (chuckles)"*[36] In my opinion, her emphasis here indicates that this choice is nonetheless something out of the norm in the Zanzibari context.

With the re-introduction of multiparty politics, women in Zanzibar and Tanzania in general became very prominently and visibly involved in the electoral processes as political campaigners, party supporters, voters and, to a lesser extent, as candidates (Oloka-Onyago & Nassali 2003: 65). Several respondents told me that women quite often outnumber male participants during election rallies in Zanzibar (cf. e.g. Interview 1 with Bi Farida, Unguja, 31-10-2018) which is confirmed by election observers (Mosha & Johnson 2004: 100; REDET & TEMCO 2006: 45, 64; TEMCO 2011: 130) and video recordings of recent campaigns of both CCM and CUF (see e.g. YouTube 2015b, c). The role of women during rallies, albeit dominant and visible, is sometimes dismissed as a relegation of women to mere supportive roles (Mosha & Johnson 2004: 11; Oloka-Onyago & Nassali 2003: 65), while others bemoan that women's obvious enthusiasm for the political process does not translate into greater representation and participation *in-between* elections (IRI 2016: 17). Another aspect of the criticism of women's overwhelming presence at campaign rallies is a questioning of the authenticity of their motives for attending. Saida claimed that there are women who *"[…] come, having been persuaded by kitenge[37] and kanga"*[38]. She further explained:

> So, if someone has never been to shamba[39] to visit, on a day like this she[40] will already get the chance to visit by having the fare payed for her, maybe she has been given a thousand shilling for provisions, and free transportation, so she goes! She has been given kitenge, t-shirts, and whatnot – [so,] she goes. First, she has already gotten the kitenge, secondly, she can go for a trip.[41]

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[36] *"I am the first one in my family kuwa kuchagua chama tofauti na wao. I had my own reasons."* (Interview 1 with Najima, Unguja, 11-01-2019)

[37] *Kitenge*: colourfully imprinted piece of cloth, used for tailoring; of better quality and more expensive than *kanga*.

[38] *"[…] [w]akaja [wa]kashawishiwa kwa kitenge na kanga."* (Interview 1 with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

[39] Usually '*shamba*' translates to the rural areas or someone's farm (Höftmann & Herms 2010). In Zanzibar, and in this context, it may however denote Unguja's (touristic) beaches, e.g. at Nungwi, Paje, or Jambiani.

[40] Even though I use the generic feminine form here for legibility, I by no means mean to suggest that men might not also be 'pulled' by such factors.

[41] *"Kwa hiyo kama mtu hajawahi kwenda shamba kutembea, siku kama ile anakuwa tayari yeye amepata kwenda kutembea kwa kulipiwa nauli, pengine anapewa mpaka shiligi elfu moja ya matumizi, na usafiri wa bure, kwa hiyo mtu anakwenda! Amepewa kitenge, amepewa fulana, amepewa nini - anakwenda. Kwanza anakuwa ameshapta kitenge, la pili ameweza kutembea."* (Interview 1 with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

This is a common charge (see e.g. Brown 2001: 96, fn. 16), but due to her general disillusionment with party politics[42], Saida's comments should certainly be treated with caution. Andrea Brown for example writes that "[m]any women in my survey told me they were collecting khangas [sic] but had no intention of voting for the parties passing them out." (2001: 96). Overall, political campaigns in Zanzibar and Tanzania have a big entertainment value (cf. e.g. TEMCO 2011: 108-10) that without a doubt draws in some women (and men) who might not necessarily come for the political message, but for the 'show' of it. Other perks include free T-shirts, hats and fabrics in party colours, as well as provisions and fares for campaign teams and party members (Brown 2001: 72; Kelsall 2007: 526; REDET & TEMCO 2006: 64; TEMCO 2011: 109, 119). Nonetheless, the argument that women *only* come for perks and are swayed to vote for one party and not the other, strikes me as quite weak. In my opinion, factors like fear, coercion, threats to lose one's job or social contacts might push people to make an 'unauthentic' political decision (cf. e.g. Roop et al. 2018: 256); 'freebies', free trips and spectacle are certainly effective, but mostly in bolstering the number of attendees at rallies as a show of force. This can be confirmed by the fact that the bussing in of campaigners happens especially in areas where support for the respective party has not been high in the past (TEMCO 1997: 92; REDET & TEMCO 2006: 55).

Women's canvassing activities, however, seem to be more universally valued and taken seriously: Subira, for instance, claimed that each campaigning team *must* have women on its roll (Notes from Interview 1 with Subira, 25-12-2020). Bi Rehema explained why:

> [I]f there is someone who wants to come campaign in this house. Mister Someone. He just sits there. He has said his words, and then he leaves. But if I come in [I will be told]: 'Welcome! I am in the kitchen.' I [will] go into the kitchen. A man cannot go inside the kitchen. Women are trusted. Then with the language, we women have a way of speaking that perhaps is better for speaking with a stranger. Maybe [you are] in a house that you have not come to before, there is no one of your relatives, but you knock, you speak of something and you are understood.[43]

Bi Halima, who was an organizer of such campaigning teams, told me that they were especially useful for reaching those potential female voters who did not come to the campaign meetings out of fear, or those who were still undecisive. Door-to-door mobilizing activities were already part of female political activists' repertoire in the 1920s during the organization of the ground

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[42] Saida shared with me that after entering university and getting married, she started to feel that *"[...] there is no truth in political matters." ("[...] hakuna ukweli [...] kwenye mambo ya siasa [...]"*, Interview 1 with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

[43] *"[K]ama anakuja mtu kucampaign in this house. Mister Someone. He just sit[s] there. Akasema maneno yake, kisha, anaondoka. Lakini mimi nikiingia: 'Karibu! Niko jikoni.' Naenda mpaka jikoni. Mwanaume hawezi kwenda jikoni. [...] Women are trusted. [...] Halafu na lugha, wanawake [...] tuna lugha pengine afadhali zaidi ya kuongea na mtu mgeni. Pengine nyumba hujawahikuja, hamna jamaa yako, lakini unapiga hodi, unaongea kitu, unafahamika."* (Interview 2 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 19-11-2018)

rent strike in Zanzibar (Fair 1994: 117), as well as of Geiger's TANU women in Dar es Salaam of the 1950s (1997: 59-60; 71). Contemporary critics are however concerned that, again, female activists mainly campaign for others (mostly men), and not for themselves (IRI 2016: 24). Bi Rehema also raised the point that female campaigning skills were often exploited by male politicians[44].

(2.5) Electoral Politics since 1995: Constant Crisis

The first multiparty elections, both for the Union president and parliament, as well as for the Zanzibari president and the House of Representatives took place in October 1995 (Bakari 2001: 224). Just like later elections in 2000 and 2005, the whole process from the registration of voters, campaigns, voting and vote counting, up to the announcement of results was marked by irregularities, serious flaws and in-transparency. Over- and under-registration of voters, constraints on the campaigns of the opposition by state organs, and violence between supporters of rival parties, as well as between the opposition and security forces are just a few of the symptoms of the permanent political crisis that began in 1995. (Kilian 2008: 100; Moss & Tronvoll 2015: 95-96; Nassor & Jose 2014: 248, 254; ICG 2019: 4; Rawlence 2005: 520) Election results in 1995 and 2005 were extremely narrow, while the ruling party allegedly secured a margin of 34% in 2000 after a controversial partial re-run (Cameron 2001: 284-285; Kilian 2008: 114).

With the amendments allowing for the re-introduction of multiple parties, a quota system for female representation was also incorporated in both the Zanzibari Constitution and the Union Constitution, initially providing for 15% special seats for women (Askew 2002: 241)[45]. Bi Rehema and Bi Khadija both entered the House of Representatives through these seats for CUF and CCM respectively, and neither recounted having actively requested their nomination for them: Bi Khadija simply said she was selected by the president, while Bi Rehema was approached by party elders who were in need of capable women to fill the positions.

Special seats continue to be the most common way through which Tanzanian and Zanzibari women enter formal politics; the 2016 International Republican Institute (IRI) report estimates that from 1985 to 2000, 95% of women entered Tanzania's two legislatures through some kind of special seat arrangement (2016: 4). The reasons for women's marked underrepresentation

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[44] cf. Interview 2 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 19-11-2018: *"So their [men's] chances are low in campaigns. That's why they take advantage of us. Yes. They know [that] women's agitation [skills are] big. If he manages to go to two houses, I can go to two hundred houses." ("Kwa hiyo chances zao ni fupi kwa campaign. That's why they take advantage of us. Yes. Wanajua wanawake harakati yao kubwa. Yeye kama anamudu kwenda nyumba mbili, miye naweza kwenda nyumba mia mbili.")*
[45] A similar quota system had already existed under one-party rule (Kairuki 2013: 17).

both as candidates and holders of direct constituency seats can be aptly summarized as the '*three Cs*': cash, capacity and conflict (ibid.: 25). First, female aspirants are said to be more likely to have inadequate financial resources, which are needed at different steps of the process from nomination- and candidacy fees, over campaigning costs, up to possible bribes (Brown 2001: 72; IRI 2016: 25; Mosha & Johnson 2004: 10, 29, 91; REDET & TEMCO 2006: 45; Shayo 2005b: 9; TEMCO 1997: 71). Lacking capacity, in terms of political experience, leadership skills, willingness or time on the part of women, is often cited, especially by political parties themselves, as a reason for their shortage of female candidates (IRI 2016: 7, 24; Oloka-Onyago & Nassali 2003: 65; Shayo 2005b: 9; TECMO 1997: 71). A lot of my respondents would however strongly refute this claim, like Bi Farida, who placed the fault squarely with the male-dominated party leadership:

> [T]he women themselves, they already have the willingness to enter decision-making bodies and to participate in politics. Except what we observed during the intervention[s] that we did last time in the 2015 elections, is that the political parties themselves, they are not ready to support women.[46] (see also: Mosha & Johnson 2004: 12)

Women's political enthusiasm might in fact be exceptionally strong in Zanzibar, as Raphael Ami from the project *'Women Leaders – Power of Change'*[47] observed:

> Generally, what is interesting is that when I went to Zanzibar for the first time […] I was so surprised because these women were fierce! They were so informed, they were so actively engaged, as if they are from a different country. […] it's like politics is everything for them.[48] (see also Oloka-Onyago & Nassali 2003: 65)

The last 'c', conflict, signifies the "fierce competition intimidation, hate speech, slander and sometimes violence that women candidates encounter" (IRI 2016: 25), which most often amounts to verbal abuse by rivals, party colleagues and the media; physical violence and sexual harassment have however also been reported (ibid: 11; Mosha & Johnson 2004: 77; Shayo 2005b: 9; TECMO 1997: 71). Another facet that I would allocate here is the risk that some candidates take in terms of their long-term job security, especially if they are employed by the government, which has a habit of laying off employees with 'undesirable', i.e. oppositional 'tendencies' (Mosha & Johnson 2004: 37; Oloka-Onyago & Nassali 2003: 72).

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[46] *"[…] wanawake wenyewe tayari wanao utayari wa kuingia katika vyombo vya maamuzi na kushiriki katika siasa. Isipokuwa tu tulichokiobserve katika intervention ambazo tulifanya last time katika uchaguzi wa 2015, ni kwamba hizi political parties zenyewe, they are not ready to support women."* (Interview 1 with Bi Farida, Unguja, 31-10-2018)

[47] The project, funded by the EU delegation to Tanzania and implemented by Hanns-Seidel Foundation aimed at enhancing women's participation in leadership positions at different levels of decision making in Tanzania; see: https://tanzania.hss.de/eu-project/.

[48] His surprise, as he admits himself, partly stemmed from stereotypes, that he, as a mainland (and probably Christian) academic harboured: *"I never thought they could be that strong. […] [B]ecause of the religion […] my expectation was, maybe they are less engaged, but that was absolutely contrary to my expectation."* (Interview 1 with Raphael Ami, Skype, 06-05-2019)

Additional to the '*three Cs*', many studies refer to structural issues, on the one hand inherent to the special seat system, which may lead to the perception on the part of party strategists that "since the women have special seats they should not take the spot of a man who can run, and presumably be more competitive, for an open competition elected seat" (IRI 2016: 5; see also Mosha & Johnson 2004: 94). On the other hand, the winner-takes-all electoral system makes it harder for the minority of women who do manage to run to secure themselves a seat (ibid.: 12). All in all, most analysts and many of my respondents remain ambiguous about the long-term effects of special seat or quota policies. The system has certainly been successful in creating a critical mass of female representatives, which undoubtedly led to more gender-sensitive legislation. On the other hand, in Zanzibar (as elsewhere) there still remains a lot to be done in terms of truly equitable political representation. (Kairuki 2013: 18; Mosha & Johnson 2004: 107)

Likewise, structural issues, like the winner-takes-all system, possible gerrymandering and the dubious role of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) caused one political crisis after another in Zanzibar. Overall, none of the first three elections under the multiparty system produced a result that all parties and voters were able to accept. Three peace accords all either failed before their implementation, or were only implemented in a flawed and faltering manner. (Bakari & Makulilo 2012: 197; Bakari 2011: 232-233; Cameron 2002: 314-325; Kelsall 2007: 527-528; Killian 2008: 113-114; Moss & Tronvoll 2015: 95-96; Rawlence 2005: 517-520) Bakari (2001) argues that the Zanzibari polity was in fact *less* democratic after 1995 than in the last years of one-party rule (251-252). There were widespread politically motivated sackings and other repressive measures, especially targeted at Pembans, who were seen as troublemakers and opposition supporters across-the-board; as well as a number of sporadic violent incidents all over the archipelago, probably perpetrated by militants from both sides of the party divide. (Amnesty International 2002: 4; Bakari 2001: 134, 137-140, 258-262; Bakari 2011: 253; HRW 2002: 7; Oloka-Onyago & Nassali 2003: 72)

In this hostile climate, Bi Rehema lost her job in a government affiliated institution shortly after entering the House of Representatives. Her sister back in Pemba, Bi Rukia, was fired in 1998, because, as she claimed, she expressed a deviationist opinion on the Union structure during the public meetings of the Kisanga Commission[49]. Both women indicated to me that these experiences further politicized and motivated them in their activism: "*I was expelled from work, I was now at home, so I felt that now I should participate fully in politics, competing for*

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[49] In 1998, the appeal court judge Robert Kisanga was appointed to head a commission to review the Union constitution and make recommendations to its enhancement. The issue of the Union's structure came up prominently in the commission's research and report. (Branson 2015: 3; Oloka-Onyago & Nassali 2003: 14-15)

different leadership positions in politics on the side of the opposition,"[50] Bi Rukia said. Bi Khadija, a member of the ruling party, also (reluctantly) recounted her experiences with social discord in this period:

> *In the past, when multipartyism started, people didn't know about these many parties [and how to behave]. Like the things [that] the opposition [did]: they put faeces inside the well. The members of the opposition destroy[ed] the water pipes so we wouldn't get water. They did these things. In the past. But now they don't do that. But the ruling party did not dare to do this. Because we are the people of the government.*[51]

Bi Khadija conveniently blocks out the state-led repressive measures enforced against the opposition and its followers from her narrative. It is however without a doubt true, that this period was frightening for supporters of the incumbent as well; especially in Pemba physical attacks against property and people connected to CCM were quite common (Bakari 2001: 258, 262).

Eventually, the tensions and animosity between the political camps found their sad climax in 2001: on January 26 and 27, between 30 and 70 men and women were killed in several Pemban towns and in Zanzibar City by security forces during CUF-organised protest marches against the official election results; hundreds more were injured and arrested. Women were sexually assaulted and raped – especially during house raids and while in police custody. As a result of the violence, around 2,000 people sought refuge in Kenya and Somalia. (Amnesty International 2002; Oloka-Onyago & Nassali 2003: 66; HRW 2002) Bi Halima, who participated in a protest in Zanzibar City and was subsequently arrested told me: *"We were brought to the jail. And don't believe that you just go there, [that] you are brought like a bride! You are beaten up!"*[52] By contrasting treatment accorded to brides – *the* 'icon of femininity' in coastal culture (Fuglesang 1994: 141) – with the actual practices of the police, Bi Halima's statement highlights that violence against women *as women*, in her opinion, should be assessed as an especially grave breach of moral standards by the security forces.

Sometime during this period of turmoil, another one of my respondents, Subira, entered party politics. Looking for work as a recent university-graduate, she described being constantly confronted with questions like *'Which side [are] you on?'* or *'Whose child are you?'* [53]. Her

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[50] *"Nikatolewa kazini, nikawa sasa niko nyumbani kwa hiyo nikaona nishirikisha sasa kikamilifu katika siasa kwa kugombea nafasi mbalimbali za uongozi katika sisasa kwa upande wa upinzani."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018)

[51] *"Zamani vilivyoanza vyama vyingi watu walikuwa. [...] hawajui vyama vyingi. Kama vitu vya upinzani: wanatia vinyesi kwenye [...] kisima. [...] Wapinzani wanabomoa bomba wa majij, tusipate. Walikuwa wanafanya hivyo. Hapo zamani. Lakini sasa hawafanyi. [...] Lakini chama kinachotawala hakijathubutu kufanya hivi. Kwa sababu sisi ni watu wa serikali."* (Interview 2 with Bi Khadija, Unguja, 13-11-2018)

[52] *"Tukachukuliwa jela. [...] Na usifikiri kuwa unakwenda tu, unapelekwa kama Bi Arusi! Unapigwa juu."* (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)

[53] *'Wewe upande gani?', '[Wewe ni] mtoto wa nani?'* (Notes from Interview 1 with Subira, Unguja, 25-12-2018)

experiences are indicative of the pervasive influence of party politics in the realm of employment in Zanzibar then and now[54], as well as the degree to which political alignment is common knowledge – a simple question about one's family background could reveal one's political 'side'. Subira, growing increasingly frustrated, searched for a forum in which she could express and address her grievances. She eventually joined the CHADEMA party[55], where she holds a local leadership position today.

With the presidency of Amani Karume (2000-2010), the archipelago saw was a slight mitigation of the political tensions, especially because CUF for the first time recognized a CCM presidency. However, when the opposition withdrew from renewed peace negotiations in March 2008, the relations between the parties worsened again, and with the onset of voter registration in July 2009 societal frictions rose to an unprecedented level. Social and economic boycotts, arson attacks and bomb blasts became an almost daily fare. (Bakari 2011: 262; Brown 2010: 625-628; Cameron 2002: 313; Moss 2016: 320; Moss & Tronvoll 2015: 95-97, 106 fn. 58; Minde et al. 2018: 165) Due to this cycle of escalating violence, CUF leader Seif Sharif Hamad, and CCM president Amani Karume met for talks in November 2009: their momentous 'hand-shake-agreement' was followed by the so-called *maridhiano* (reconciliation)-process. As a result, the Zanzibar Constitution was amended to allow for the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) after the forthcoming elections. In July 2010, a referendum confirmed these amendments with a 66.4% majority[56]. The elections three months later were calm and peaceful, and although electoral margins were again extremely close (1%), opposition leader Hamad accepted the result, and thereafter became First Vice President. (Minde et al. 2018: 166; Hirschler & Hofmeier 2011)

In the first two years of the following legislative period the spirit of harmony between the parties that had begun to develop in early 2010 continued, and an atmosphere of collaboration and critical democracy prevailed in the HoR (Roop et al. 2018: 260). Scholars, politicians and the general population welcomed these developments with enthusiasm and social relationships in the archipelago improved significantly (Bakari & Makulilo 2012: 212-213; Hirschler &

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[54] With the government continuing to be the largest formal employer, this is of course highly relevant for most graduates (cf. SMZ 2019: 7).

[55] CHADEMA (*Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo* – Party for Democracy and Progress) has not yet been able to secure a meaningful proportion of votes in Zanzibar. On the mainland, however, where Subira studied, CHADEMA began making strides in 2007 as a vocal opposition party, especially in connection to a series of corruption scandals in the Kikwete administration. In the 2010 General Election, it surpassed CUF as the biggest opposition party in the Union parliament. (Hirschler & Hofmeier 2008, 2011 & 2012) Subira told me that she joined CHADEMA and not CUF or CCM because she saw bigger chances of fast advancement as a woman there (Notes from Interview 1 with Subira, Unguja, 25-12-2018).

[56] The same constitutional amendment also raised the percentage of special women's seats awarded in the Zanzibari HoR to 40% (Roop et al. 2018: 261).

Hofmeier 2012; Nassor & Jose 2014; Minde et al. 2018: 166, 169) – although the arrangement was, according to Roop et al., far from perfect or even fair (2018: 255, 258). Additionally, within CCM leadership and its party base in Unguja, substantial scepticism about the GNU remained (ibid: 255, 259-260; Minde et al. 2018: 169, 174).

From late 2011 onwards, when the issue of the Union and its structure – and thereby the question of greater autonomy for Zanzibar – came to be part of a national debate in the context of the constitutional review launched by Union president Kikwete, the atmosphere changed, and the spirit of *Maridhiano* and the GNU began to ail. CUF and some reformist CCM carders advocated for a re-structuring of the Union towards a three-government-system, while CCM hardliners accused them of the ultimately aiming to break up the arrangement altogether. The divisive 2015 electoral campaigns and the dramatic events following the October elections can be understood both as the deathblow to the *Maridhiano*-spirit and the Government of National Unity, as well as a re-assertion of control by CCM hardliners in Zanzibar. (Minde et al. 2018: 164-175; ICG 2019: 5) Tangibly disenchanted, Bi Rehema summed up the 'history' of the GNU like this: *"I feel a lot of resignation at seeing that the GNU was a story like smoke. It was just a story like smoke, it passed by, [and] it was [already] over."* [57]

The subsequent elections in 2015, although calm and appraised as the most transparent and free since 1995 by observers, were annulled in a dramatic move by the chairman of the ZEC; ostensibly as it became clear that the opposition had made significant gains in Unguja (until then a CCM stronghold) and Seif Shariff Hamad had declared himself and his party the winners of the elections. After failed closed-door talks, an election re-run was held in March 2016, which was boycotted by the opposition. These developments effectively put Zanzibar back under one-party rule, as all but four seats in the Zanzibari House of Representatives were filled by CCM-members. CUF refused to recognize the president and his government, and as a result, at least half of the Zanzibari electorate is effectively excluded from political participation and representation today. (Hirschler & Hofmeier 2017; Minde et al. 2018: 176-177, 181; Roop et al. 2018: 264; Pallotti 2017: 557) Bi Rukia captured how this affected the previously improved social relations in the archipelago:

In the time from 2010 until 2015 there was no discrimination like, 'who is this one', 'which party does he/she support'. We did our work together. We walked together, neighbours, relatives, all were good together. No problem. But just after the Government of National Unity ran into troubles in 2015, you started again like it was before: 'So-and-

[57] *"Lakini mimi [...] nasikia unyonge sana kuona kwamba [GNU] imekuwa ni hadithi kama moshi. Imekuwa ni hadithi kama moshi tu, imepita, imeisha."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

so is not my fellow.' 'I do not want to work with so-and-so.' 'I do not visit so-and-so'. So, these are the politics that we have right now. Of hate.[58]

In addition, democratic and civil space in Zanzibar and Tanzania has shrunk progressively since 2015 (Defend Defenders 2018: 10; ICG 2019: 6; Hirschler & Hofmeier 2018: 388). As we have seen above, democratic processes have never been flawless, but since John Magufuli became Union president, things have taken a pronounced turn for the worse: opposition party members and government critics are harassed, imprisoned, and have become victims of assault and even murder. Independent newspapers have been closed or suspended, and journalists are persecuted and have disappeared. Civil society organizations and independent researchers are intimidated. (Article 19 2018; Defend Defenders 2018: 14, 21-24, 26; Hirschler & Hofmeier 2018: 388, 391; ICG 2019: 6-7; Ulimwengu 2017) Often, violent incidents have taken place in an unexplained and mysterious manner which further adds to the general atmosphere of fear and insecurity in the population[59] (Defend Defenders 2018: 23; Hirschler & Hofmeier 2018: 392; ICG 2019: 6-7). At the same time, Tanzania's economy is faltering, with the president's unpredictable policy shifts scaring off both local and international investors in the private sector (Hirschler & Hofmeier 2018 & 2019; ICG 2019: 7-8). In June 2016, all opposition rallies and protests were suspended until at least 2020. Further measures by the police suggested that internal party meetings could also fall under this ordinance, which has left the opposition in an extremely precarious state – pushed out of the public sphere and at risk for government intervention even during internal gatherings (Hirschler & Hofmeier 2017; ICG 2019: 6, 8). Bi Halima told me that scheduled meetings of CUF party leaders with the Zanzibar Youth Wing had been prevented by the authorities the day we met for our interview. In general, the undemocratic developments on the mainland were observed with great worry, and their impact was acutely felt in the islands by my oppositional respondents: *"We are being crushed. That man [Magufuli] just [upon] entering [into office], he blocked everything."*[60] (Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019).

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[58] *"[Wakati wa 2010 mpaka 2015] [...] ilikuwa hakuna ubaguzi wa kuwa huyu ni nani, huyu ni chama gani [...]. Tuko tunafanya kazi kwa pamoja. Tunatembea pamoja, majirani, ndugu, wote tuko vizuri kwa pamoja. Hakuna tatizo. Lakini mara tu baada ya ile serikali ya umoja wa kitaifa kuingia dosari 2015 pale ukaanza tena [...] [kama ilivyokuwa] kabla: 'Huyu fulani siyo mwenzangu', 'Huyu fulani sitaki kufanya naye kazi.' 'Huyu fulani simtembelei.'[...] Kwa hivyo hizi ndo siasa zizopo sasa hivi. Za chuki.* (Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018)

[59] A good example would be the mysterious kidnapping of billionaire Mo Dewji in October 2018 (BBC 2018). I spent the weekend after his disappearance in Dar es Salaam and the city was abuzz with rumours and conspiracy theories, from allegations that Dewji had orchestrated his kidnapping himself, to claims that president Magufuli had personally ordered it (Informal conversations, Dar es Salaam, 12- to 14-10-2018). Bi Rehema referred to the incident in one of our interviews when talking about the risks of political involvement in present-day Tanzania. (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[60] *"Tumebanwa sana. [...] Huyu bwana [Magufuli] kuingia tu, akablock kila kitu."* (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)

The Zanzibari House of Representatives further added its own set of restrictive laws, for instance reversing the reform of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) that, as part of past reconciliation agreements, was intended to make the electoral process more transparent and fair. Due to the 2015 crisis and the subsequent developments there seems to be only very limited space for inter-party dialogue. (ICG 2019: 10) The leadership crisis in CUF and the mass-defection of most of its Zanzibar faction to ACT-*Wazalendo* in March 2019 further contributed to instability and uncertainty, especially because there is the possibility that the incumbents will try to use new party registration laws to obstruct the opposition's activities as the next elections in 2020 draw closer (ibid. 8-9). There is a growing sense of precariousness and concern relating to the coming elections (see e.g. Mwananchi 2019: 15; Salim 2019b: 17), which Bi Rehema expressed as well:

> *But now, the style that the mkuu[61] is going with is not good and may God grant that we might just be patient. That we should not become like other places, they would already have war by now. But the truth is that he is moving [us] towards that there either is no election in 2020, or if there is, I am asking myself of what kind it will be. Really, I am asking myself how it will be in 2020.[62]*

(2.6) Conclusion: "It is like a bomb that is ready to blast."

Since the re-introduction of multiparty democracy in 1992, the political climate in Zanzibar seems to be marked by similarly intensive and chronic conflicts as during the first *Zama za Siasa*, generating deep divisions which, in such a small geographical space, almost inevitably have an adverse effect on social relationships (cf. Glassman 2011: 285). Bakari (2011: 242) and Minde et al. (2018: 163) agree that, despite some periods of relative calm, the political crisis in Zanzibar has been a constant since at least 1995.

On the level of the political parties, division and conflict are caused by a deep mistrust and hostility between the two camps (Bakari 2011: 223-224). The incumbent CCM lacks the willingness to surrender its power and grip on state resources (Minde et al. 2018: 165), while the opposition does not believe that the current electoral system will be able to ever deliver a fair result (Bakari 2011: 232-233; Roop et al. 2018: 248). A huge bone of contention is the question of the nature and future of the Union with the mainland (Minde et al. 2018: 167)[63].

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[61] '*Mkuu*' can, amongst others, mean leader, or elder (Knappert & van Kessel 2010). Here, Bi Rehema is referring to President Magufuli. Just like Bi Halima, and many other people that I met during my stay in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, she avoided mentioning his name directly.

[62] *"Lakini sasa hivi style ambayo anakwenda nayo mkuu siyo nzuri na Mungu ajaliwe tuwe wastahamilivu hivi. Tusiwe kama sehemu nyingine, tayari wangekuwa wana vita saa hizi. Lakini ukweli ni kwamba anapelekea kwaba aidha hakuna uchaguzi 2020 au kama upo […] najiuliza itakuwa wa aina gani. […] [Kweli] nakuwa najiuliza inakuwaje 2020."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, 24-10-2018)

[63] It is notable that even in CCM-Zanzibar, a critical mass favours more Zanzibari sovereignty (Hirschler & Hofmeier 2006; Glassman 2011: 294; ICG 2019: 3). Nevertheless, CCM party leaders know that ultimately, their

Additionally, political rivals are not understood as such, but are frequently portrayed and treated as 'the enemy'[64] (Hirschler & Hofmeier 2010).

For ordinary Zanzibaris, the party conflict translates into everyday life as a disparate access to 'life chances', i.e. the relative ease or difficulty to seize employment, business licenses, loans, scholarships, passports, and other government services. The incumbent party, in its entanglement with the state, acts as a major gatekeeper here, distributing rewards and sanctions at discretion. (Bakari 2001: 149-150; Bakari 2011: 251; Nassor & Jose 2014: 253) The extremely close electoral margins and the fact that regional dynamics play a role in the political conflict as well, indicate that there is significant polarization in Zanzibari society (Roop et al. 2018: 248). All of the few respondents that were prepared to answer my questions to this end, could tell me about a friend or neighbour that they no longer interacted with, or a relative that caused a rift in their family due to his or her political attitude.

Within the political discourse, memories of violence and experiences of discrimination and exclusion from the distant and more recent past that I have narrated in this chapter, are actively commemorated and frequently referred to (Cameron 2004: 109; Kilian 2008: 114; Moss & Tronvoll 2015: 97). Bi Kauthir, who personally has been a victim of politicized intimidation, characterized the situation as follows: in general, she said, Zanzibaris are tolerant and patient (*wavumilivu*) but *'they have pain in their hearts – it is like a bomb that is ready to blast. For now, they are enduring, but if something happens it can [all blow up]'*[65]. She vividly pointed to the fact that political resentment and grievances in Zanzibar sit deep, just under the

Fig. 6: Political cartoon commenting on the 2020 elections (ICG & Gado 2019; cropped by the author)

surface of the peaceful and calm 'island paradise' and have never been sustainably reconciled. The 2010 *maridhiano*-process constituted a hope in this regard, but it seems to have failed in the long run (cf. Arnold Koenings 2018: 178; Minde et al. 2018; Rajab 2018: 348, 350; Roop et al. 2018).

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continued rule depends on their mainland counterparts and the security forces they command (Bakari 2001: 262; Cameron 2009: 155; Roop et al. 2018: 248). The fact that there are significant doubts whether the political and constitutional structure of the Union could even accommodate an opposition government in Zanzibar complicates matters further (Brown 2010: 628-629; Rawlence 2005: 522).

[64] This was also expressed by Subira who said, '*If you are an opposition member, you are the enemy, you don't have rights'* ('*Ukiwa mpinzani, wewe ndo ni adui, […] huna haki'*; Notes from Interview 2 with Subira, Unguja, 29-01-2019)

[65] '*Wana maumivu ndani ya moyo – ni kama bomb ambaye ni tayari kublast. […] kwa sasa wamevumilia lakini ikitokea kitu inaweza kublast.'* (Notes from Interview 1 with Bi Kauthir, Unguja, 02-02-2019)

The political context in Zanzibar is thus overall characterized by a great deal of fragility and uncertainty. Union-President Magufuli's encroachment on political and civil rights in the mainland has emboldened Zanzibari hardliners to act in increasingly authoritative ways. A growing number of disenchanted and often unemployed youth might be ready to voice their frustrations in violent ways (ICG 2019: 11). Others, having experienced several phases of seeming reconciliation and hope being superseded by phases of escalation and tension, are quite frankly tired of the political 'games' (Cunningham Bissell & Fouéré 2018: 3; Keshodkar 2013: 68). It is further unclear what the recent split of Zanzibar's opposition will mean for the political conflicts in the islands, as well as for the nationwide elections in 2020 (ICG 2019:8-9; Karashani 2019; Ulimwengu 2019).

Zanzibar and Zanzibaris continue to be polarized, and today, like in the past, the close, intimate and, personal interactions between followers of the incumbent and the opposition parties often lead to especially severe feelings of resentment (Glassman 2011: 108; 284-285). In such a context, elections and other political processes cannot but function as a catalyst, that brings political ills, grievances and frustrations to the surface over and over again (Bakari 2001: 1; Moss & Tronvoll 2015: 91). These processes obviously affect both men and women, but, as I will argue, women develop specific outlooks, attitudes and strategies within this context of uncertainty.

(3) 'Birthing' a Theoretical Framework

My research question calls for several concepts and theories to be more closely examined in order to set the data of this thesis into a comprehensive framework for analysis and interpretation. First, as I considered the field and data from a feminist standpoint, I discuss the dynamic relationship between feminist thought and motherhood, and establish motherhood as institution and resource, and mothering as practice. I especially focus on Sara Ruddick's (1989) notion of maternal thinking here. Uncertainty, as the overarching context of maternal practice and maternal thinking in Zanzibar is established, while Vigh's (2009, 2010, 2015) concept of social navigation – so far most notably deployed in studies of (male) youth (cf. Christiansen et al. 2006: 13, 22; Cooper & Pratten 2015: 9; Di Nunzio 2015; Thorsen 2006; Vigh 2006 & 2010; Waage 2006) – is introduced and extended by integrating it with the relationality of maternal thinking. I argue that 'maternal navigation' as a concept can take into account the practices of people who not only strategize to *'get by'* and *'get on'* as individuals, but who navigate uncertainty *on behalf of* and *through others* as mothers.

(3.1) Feminism and Motherhood: A Turbulent Relationship

"[…] the contemporary capitalist industrialized societies in which white feminists are located are structured to disregard motherhood, […] [as a result] many feminist have bought into the idea that to progress (whatever that means), women must discount, minimize, nay eschew motherhood in their lives. (Oyèwùmí 2016: 214)

When I began noticing patterns in Zanzibari women's narratives, referring to their role as mothers and the influence this had on their (political) behaviour, I was initially faced with doubts whether a focus on women as mothers would be appropriate within a feminist-oriented research project: Would I not run the risk of reducing women back on their biology, which has long been one of the central premises of gender-based discrimination that feminism strives to overcome? Was 'women-as-mothers' not an outdated and reactionary category? Would such a focus even be applicable to the totality of my data, given that at least two of my respondents weren't biological mothers?

My initial apprehension was undoubtedly fed by a subliminal awareness of the categorical rejection of biological motherhood by some radical white Western feminists as summarized and criticized by the Nigerian feminist scholar Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí above. Such extreme views however only represent a fraction of feminist thought on maternity, mothers, and mothering, which is much more diverse and multifaceted than the quote above makes it seem: additional to being the subject of an expanding field of feminist inquiry, much of the mainstream feminist political agenda in the past and present actually centres on 'maternal issues,' for instance

through campaigns for safe abortion, maternity leave, or through promoting the compatibility of family and career (Arendell 2000: 1192; Kinser 2010a: 395-396; Ruddick 1989: 236).

Still, the relationship between (Western) feminism and motherhood has been a dynamic one; as intimate, as it has been conflicted (Coulter 2010a: 572; Kinser 2010a: 396). It emerged from the maternal feminism of first wave feminists, suffragettes and peace activists (Coulter 2010b: 707; Marotta 2010: 992), to, indeed, a repudiation of motherhood by early second wave feminists, who saw biological reproduction as the root of women's oppression (Tong 1989: 74-76; Roth-Johnson 2010: 352). Yet, theorizing did not stop dead here, and scholars like Adrienne Rich, Nancy Chodorow and Sara Ruddick initiated a feminist reclaiming and rethinking of maternity in the late 1970s and 1980s. Today, motherhood studies constitute a separate field of inquiry, with their own research association[66], journals[67], and conferences. (Green 2010b: 831-832; Glenn 1994: 22-23; Jeremiah 2006: 22-23)

African feminist thinkers have had (and are having) similarly intensive debates on the issue of motherhood, especially about its relationship with an 'authentically' African feminist outlook. Most of these thinkers agree that, in general, the concepts developed for feminist analysis in the West by white, middle-class theorists and activists are – to say the least – inadequate to describe and examine African realities. Based on this criticism, a number of writers have drafted up indigenous feminist models, intended to speak from and to an African perspective and location. (Nkealah 2016: 62) One of these models is what Catherine Obianuju Achonolu (1995) termed 'motherism'; an alternative to Western feminism, focussing on the centrality of motherhood in the experiences of African women and highlighting the nurturing, life-giving and -sustaining role of rural women (Bakare-Yusuf 2003: 7; Ebunoluwa 2009: 231; Nkealah 2016: 62). Others, like Oyèwùmí, emphasize the powerful position and centrality accorded to mothers as the givers of life in the philosophies of different African societies, which was offset negatively with the onset of colonialism and the spread of Abrahamic religions (2016: 2, 7; see also Tyler 2013: 221). Most of the authors of the 'motherist strand' subscribe to what Bibi Bakare-Yusuf has termed the 'dual-sex role system theory' (2003: 5) – questioning the inherency of the hierarchization of gender relations in African societies, and arguing that before colonialism African societies were organized by complementary and parallel structures of power for women and men (ibid. 3). In these approaches, motherhood represents the central

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[66] The Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (MIRCI), see: https://motherhoodinitiative.org/.

[67] e.g. the *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement* (until 2009: *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*; see: https://jarm.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/jarm/index), or *the Journal of Mother Studies* (https://jourms.wordpress.com/).

column of women's identity and "the symbolic core of a powerful female subject position" (ibid. 4).

Proponents of a more radical African feminism have strongly criticized this often romanticising, uncritical celebration of maternity (see ibid. 5; Nekeleah 2016: 64; McFadden & Twasiima 2018: 3, 12, 14). Desiree Lewis writes that

> [c]elebrating purely symbolic roles for women, or affirming gendered roles of service and nurturing, Achonolu [with her idea of 'motherism] ultimately reinforced gender stereotypes. […] The assumption that identities and life strategies that are historically determined, profoundly oppressive and coercively policed [like motherhood] can provide the only basis for an alternative to western feminism is *disturbing*. (2001: 6, my emphasis)

Others, like Fatou Sow in her recent keynote lecture at the 2019 European Conference of African Studies in Edinburgh, denounce the celebration of African women's power as mothers as tokenistic, and warn that motherhood often develops into a trap (YouTube 2019b; see also McFadden 1997).

(3.1.1) Motherhood and Mothering

In my opinion, both of the general approaches to maternity by African feminists remain somewhat incomplete, as they focus mainly on its ideologies and symbolisms; their subject matter is thus the institution of motherhood, and not mothering as a lived experience. This differentiation is one of the central conceptual distinctions of motherhood studies; established in the Western tradition by Adrienne Rich in her ground-breaking work *Of Woman Born* (1976). With the concept of motherhood as an institution, Rich meant to denote the socially constructed ideals of motherhood and the culturally specific image of 'the good mother'. These often work to the detriment of women and may contribute to their oppression under patriarchy in a significant way, as mothers struggle to meet an impossible standard. (Coulter 2010a: 571-572; O'Reilly 2010: vii-viii; Green 2010a: 347 & 2010c: 839; Kinser 2010a: 396) Motherhood as an institution for instance finds expression in the dominant image of the "superstrong Black mother" (Collins 1991: 116), preeminent in African American communities, as well as in many parts of Africa: the suffering and self-sacrifice of mothers is revered but also normalized in a way that leaves little space to address the structural issues that make both necessary, as well as judging harshly those mothers who 'fail' at accomplishing the ideal. (Akujobi 2014: 374, 379; Collins 1991: 116-117; hooks 1990: 45)

On the other hand, the immense symbolic and metaphoric value attached to motherhood as an institution might certainly be tapped into as a resource in the quest for various forms of public power and legitimacy. Different authors claim that motherhood can be employed as a political strategy to frame demands, imbuing them with legitimacy and wider resonance (Alidou

2013: 39, 101; Kron 2016: 580, 589, Marotta 2010: 991; Peteet 2002: 140-141,145). Motherhood as institution can also be effectively mobilized to gain support without appearing threatening (Chuchryk 1989: 131-132; Tibbetts 1994: 38; Weinbaum 1999: 96).

Historically, motherhood has been a potent force in political activism on the African continent: Iris Berger describes how different women's movements from all over Africa made recourse to their maternal roles to lay claim to political power, as well as using it as a source of solidarity in the struggle against colonial rule (2016: 66-88). In fact, the female TANU nationalists mentioned in the previous chapter made prominent references to natality (and thereby to motherhood) to strengthen and legitimize their claims to public leadership and activism during pre-independence mobilization: *"'We have given birth to these men [the party leaders]. Women are the power in this world. We are the ones who give birth to the world. I am telling you that we have to join the party first,'"* their leader Bibi Titi Mohammed for instance argued, when addressing potential female party members in the 1950s (Geiger 1997: 58).

This other side of the institution of motherhood – what I would term 'motherhood as (political) resource' – is certainly what African motherists refer to when they argue that the institution of motherhood can be a site of power and leadership (Oyèwùmí 2016: 216). Other writers however caution about the wider implications of the usage of motherhood in this way: Peteet for instance argues that political claims to motherhood may be empowering and effective in the short run, but not transformative in the long term, as activism remains within the rigid framework of conservative gender norms (Peteet 2002: 135, 139). Others warn in a similar vein that making demands on the basis of motherhood often serves to reinforce stereotypical and essentialist images of women, relegating them even further to the margins of formal politics (Moravec 2010: 21-24; Glenn 1994: 23-24). In this context, it is important to note that many of the African 'motherist' activists of the anti-colonial struggles were faced with a reactionary backlash after independence – as for instance was the case for the mentioned TANU activists in post-independence Tanzania who were called on to "[…] abandon leadership roles and rebuild the community by retreating into subordinate roles relative to men" (Mikell 1997: 24; see also: Geiger 1997: 191-194).

In contrast to motherhood as institution, the term 'mothering', denotes the concrete practices and lived experiences of individuals doing mothering work (O'Reilly 2010: viii; Arendell 2000: 1196-1197). Although individual mothers may at times succeed in resisting the oppressive tendencies of institutional motherhood, most scholars acknowledge that mothering experiences are usually heavily affected by its norms and expectations (Green 2010c: 839; O'Reilly 2010: viii). Many academics thus highlight the deep ambivalence and dialectical tension inherent to

individual and collective experiences of mothering, especially regarding power (Arendell 2000: 1196-1197; Ruddick 1989: 34-36, 68, 109; Saliba 2002: 8).

I think that a recognition of this ambivalence, both in relation to the institution of motherhood and the experience of mothering, could harmonize the two strands of African feminist thinking on maternity that I introduced above – both hold some truth: motherhood can be empowering *and* oppressive at the same time, with women possessing the agency to "resist, rework or acquiesce" (Bakare-Yusuf 2003: 8) its normativity, or draw on it as a resource in their quests for power and control. Individual experiences of mothering are similarly ambiguous: experienced as a trap by some, and as "[…] enabling, enobling, and inclusive" (Oyèwùmí 2016: 220) by others – or by the same individual mother at different points of her 'career', or at different times in her day of work (cf. Arendell 2000: 1196). The social, ideological, and political context of mothering, as Bakare-Yusuf reminds us, always needs to be considered in order to be able to take account of this ambivalence adequately (2003: 5). The same author also argues that the embodied potential to bear children is something that all women[68] share. Even if this potential is never realised or is impaired, it still retains an enormous influence on most women's experiences and relationships. (ibid. 8) This reassures me that a careful, context-sensitive and critical consideration of *women as mothers* is by no means out-dated or reactionary but actually signifies taking seriously women's (embodied) experiences in their complex entirety. My focus on mothering as experience and the concepts I choose to analyse it with, additionally deconstruct images of motherhood resting upon some sort of 'biological essence', as, for instance, a 'natural' motherly instinct allegedly activated by gestation and birth.

As to my last 'doubtful question' – is it permissible to focus on mothering and motherhood as an analytical lens if not all of my respondents are, in fact, mothers? In many societies, notions of motherhood and womanhood are intimately interwoven, and 'appropriate femininity' is often firmly tied to the institution of motherhood (Kinser 2010a: 396; see also: Arendell 2000: 1192; Glenn 1994: 3; Peteet 2002: 136; Ruddick 1989: 41). Certainly this is the case in Zanzibar, where women are understood to only reach full status as adults when they become (preferably married) mothers (Beckmann 2015a: 199-120 & 2015b: 61; Fuglesang 1994: 256; Keefe 2016: 123-125; Kielmann 1998: 141). Women and girls practice mothering in a diverse range of relationship constellations from a young age onwards (see e.g. Poblete 2007: 156-158) and are

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[68] Bakare-Yusuf's argument of course applies only to cis-women and is exclusionary of transwomen who do not possess this 'natural' potential but wish to be included in the category of 'women'. One could however argue that even a transwoman's experience would be shaped significantly by this potential or, more specifically, the lack of it, which might make her 'less of a woman' in the eyes of some.

– as I experienced first-hand – perceived and addressed as (at least prospective) mothers by society[69]. It could thus be expected that most Zanzibari women have internalized cultural and religious images of motherhood and proper mothering, and make sense of their experiences as women in the islands by referring to these notions – even those women who are not mothers (yet). It should however not be swept aside that this firm ideological connection between motherhood, femininity and full adult status of course carries strong exclusionary tendencies; for sure for women who might choose to stay childless, and even for those for whom childlessness is not a choice (see Akujobi 2014: 375). Additionally, we always need to remain aware of the fact, that women who are mothers, and who consider their mothering activities as an important part of their daily work and identity, still retain other identities and pursue other activities that are similarly relevant to an understanding of the complexity of their experiences (cf. Glenn 1994: 16).

(3.1.2) Maternal Thinking

One of the most important works of motherhood studies that addresses mothering primarily as practice and lived experience is Sara Ruddick's 1989 monograph *Maternal Thinking. Towards a Politics of Peace*, in which she establishes a framework for describing and analysing a style of thought that develops as mothers engage in the work of mothering (cf. Adams 2010: 726; Keller 2010: 834, O'Reilly 2009: 295-296, Green 2010b: 831). Ruddick's main argument builds upon practicalist assumptions about truth: Practicalists presume that distinctive ways of knowing evolve out of practices or work – defined as (organised) activities distinguished by specific aims and consequent demands. Practitioners who want to achieve these aims develop strategies, attitudes, capacities, and virtues in their pursuit and make sense of their actions within a framework of socially developed concepts and values. These strategies, attitudes, capacities, virtues, concepts and values then constitute a consciousness or truth, connected to the specific practice in question. Ruddick applies this model to mothering as work and argues that the demands and goals of maternal practice likewise lead to a unique kind of consciousness: maternal thinking. (Ruddick 1989: 9-16) By highlighting that mothering is a consciously and voluntarily practiced intellectual activity, Ruddick counters essentialist ideas of a 'natural' maternal instinct (cf. Kinser 2010b: 405, Adams 2010: 727; Glenn 1994: 4-5, O'Reilly 2009: 296).

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[69] The polite address for any woman of an approximate childbearing-age in Zanzibar is '*mama*', which I was approached as often as well. With the mean age of women both at first marriage and at first birth around 23 years (SMZ 2019: 9), aged 25 years at the time of fieldwork I should have had at least one child by local standards.

Ruddick claims that the practice of mothering is shaped and constituted by three demands: (1) preserving life, (2) fostering growth, and (3) ensuring social acceptability (Ruddick 1989: 17). Maternal thinking evolves as mothers think about, develop and make sense of strategies to fulfil these maternal demands or aims – strategies of protection, nurturance and training in general terms – and try to balance them out amongst each other (ibid. 24). Ruddick believes that these three demands, as well as the three types of strategies are universal, while concrete practices and thinking vary greatly in different localities, cultures, classes, and religions (ibid. 52). The most generalizable of the three demands is preservation, since, as Ruddick argues "[i]n all societies, children need protective care, though the causes and types of [perceived] fragility and the means of protection vary widely" (ibid. 18). Specific strategies of preservation may include 'scrutinizing' – looking out for dangers before they appear (ibid. 71-72) – or 'holding', "[…] a way of seeing with an eye toward maintaining the minimal harmony, material resources, and skills necessary for sustaining a child in safety" (ibid. 79). A basic attitude of distrust or wariness of the actions and strategies of others (especially those in positions of power) as related to children's needs, is also part of mothers' efforts to ensure preservation. (ibid. 118, 177) Fostering growth, in Ruddick's opinion is more culturally specific, and of course, other people than mothers typically aim to fulfil this demand, like e.g. teachers. To mothers, however, falls the primary task of upholding the conditions in which growth is possible, for example by creating a safe home environment. (ibid. 19-20, 87) Lastly, a mother's social group demands that she trains her children in ways that are acceptable to them, ultimately making her offspring successful adults that will contribute to the continuance of the group in question (ibid. 17, 104, 170). A mother is eventually defined by Ruddick as "[…] someone who responds to the three main demands of [maternal practice]" (ibid. 51) and invests a large part of his or her working life and time into this response (ibid. 40). Separating birthing work from mothering work, she is able to perceive the category of 'mother' as principally gender-neutral, although she highlights that historically and to a large degree until today, most mothers have been women (ibid. 40-41).

Of course, maternal demands and goals are merely *ideals* that are striven for, and Ruddick herself emphasizes over and over again, that actual maternal practice in this striving is usually far from perfect or easy (ibid. 162-163), especially if there are material or environmental constraints that obstruct mothers in their work (Frazer & Hutchings 2013: 117; Schalge 2010: 258). Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1994: 18), in the same line, reminds her readers that, in order to fulfil the goals of preservation, fostering growth and ensuring acceptability, mothers are in need

of resources that may be more or less difficult to obtain, depending on the context of mothering and the social positions of mothers themselves (see also Arendell 2000: 1199).

Another important and, initially, implicit aspect of Ruddick's work on mothering is the principle or relationality, i.e. the fact of its characterization and constitution by ever-evolving networks of relationships. Motherhood and mothering are thus shaped by an understanding of the deep and fundamental dependency of the mother-child(ren) unit on the support of others: being unsupported, i.e. unconnected, exposes mothers to a much higher degree of vulnerability, and causes difficulty in accessing the resources needed for fulfilling maternal demands. (Ruddick 1989: 131, 211 & 2009: 306; see also Arendell 2000: 1192; Butler 2016: 19; Jeremiah 2006: 24, 26)

Most criticism of Ruddick's work has been concerning her broad claims pertaining to the universal validity of the outlined maternal goals, especially coming from feminists of colour, who bemoan the exclusion of their voices and experiences in mainstream (read: white, middle-class) feminism in general, and within the theories of mothering in particular, which tend to minimize or ignore the influences of race and class on experiences and practices as mothers and women (Andrade 1990: 92; Collins 1991: 5, 7, 116 & 1994: 48; Glenn 1994: 3; Jenkins 1998: 202-203, 205, 208). This assessment is highly relevant to me, since African writers – as touched upon above – have played a significant part in the critique of the feminist project in this regard. It is notable that even those authors who set out to endorse Ruddick's theses by 'rethinking' (Keller 2010) or 'revisiting' (Frazer & Hutchings 2013) her work, acknowledge the ethnocentric and classists bias in her writing. As Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings note, Ruddick, by no means, carried out the empirical work that could have strengthened her universalist claims (2013: 117); although it needs to be remembered that hers was a "[…] philosophical and political project, rather than an anthropological or sociological one." (Cohn 2013: 48). Nonetheless, Ruddick is certainly guilty of making a general rule of what is mostly her own experience of mothering (Keller 2010: 836).

Jean Keller argues that much of the contention about Ruddick's work stems from the general tension between universalization and particularism in the social sciences. She proposes a 'modified universalism' as a way out of this dilemma; recognizing on the one hand, that some broad and general categorizations are needed in order to make sense of specific, context-bound realities of mothering, and to be able to compare them in a meaningful way. (2010: 843-844) On the other hand, these categories need to be understood "[…] as provisional and subject to change, as new voices contribute to our understanding of mothering" (ibid. 844). Terry Arendell, in a similar line, argues that even though we must consider the heterogeneity and

diversity of mothering practices, experiences and contexts, an extreme focus on what makes mothers different without examining broader commonalities bears the danger of constructing "[…] 'an Other who is an exotic alien, a breed apart.'" (2000: 120; citing Bordo 1990: 140; see also Moore 2009: 209). Overall, Keller emphasises that only a thorough engagement with the specific local variations of abstracted maternal aims can truly enrich a feminist understanding of maternal practices and thought (2010: 846). This demand is mirrored by most of the more current feminist texts on mothering, urging scholars to abandon 'pure' universalism in favour of considering diversity and multiplicity, as well as foregrounding the social location of mothers and the implications of social, political, and economic contexts in their mothering experiences (Abbey & O'Reilly 1998: 14-16, 24-25; Collins 1994: 45, 62; Glenn 1994: 3-4, 26; Jenkins 1998: 210).

As the purpose of this thesis is to examine the *particular* mothering practices of women in a *particular* local context, quite far removed from what Ruddick had in mind when she wrote *Maternal Thinking*, the ethnocentrism critique remains relevant to me. I however tend to agree with Keller, that a complete dismissal of Ruddick in favour of extreme particularism is not conducive of meaningful scholarship either (Keller 2010: 843). The basic tenets of her theory of maternal practice and thinking are extremely helpful in conceptualizing Zanzibari mothers as skilled agents who actively negotiate and balance the needs, aspirations, and pressures of their environment, as well as of others and themselves, developing strategies, capacities and virtues in the process. By adopting Ruddick's theses as an analytical lens, I can avoid the pitfall of reducing women back on 'biology' or interpreting their actions as based on some sort of innate 'maternal instinct'. Overall, I see my work as an attempt to move on from Ruddick's general classification of maternal goals, towards a modified, 'Kellerian' conceptualization of these categories as provisional and necessarily subject to critical examination through the empirical data I co-created with respondents.

Just as the literature on motherhood, Ruddick and other authors focusing on mothering as experience give impulses in the direction of its political potential, especially as a resource for peace politics in Ruddick's case. She argues that the fact that all aspects of maternal practice are seriously hampered in times and places of conflict and war, creates a potential for antimilitarist and nonviolent maternal politics of peace (Ruddick 1989: 148, 220; see also Afshar 2004a: 4; Foster 2010: 242-243). The term *potential* is important here, as Ruddick highlights that often, mothers have supported military endeavours (1989: 12, 136; see also: Afshar 2004b: 43; Pankhurst 2004: 13-14). The issue that needs to be overcome in order to actualize this potential, in Ruddick's opinion, is the equally strong potential for chauvinism

based e.g. on ethnicity, religion or class, and racism that dwells within maternal thinking, often aimed at fulfilling maternal demands for particular children only, sometimes to the deliberate or unintentional detriment of other – or 'other*ed*' – children (1989: 57, 174-175, 177; see also Mukta 2000: 166-168; 174-175; Weinbaum 1999: 87, 90-91). Consequently, for the potential of maternal thinking in terms of peace building and nonviolence to be 'activated', a conscious decision to extend care and attentive love to children and people outside of one's own group is needed (Ruddick 1989: 136-137). Ruddick suggests feminism with its ideology of female solidarity as a stimulating force (ibid. 239-241), while Patricia Hill Collins argues that practices like 'other-mothering'[70] could help extend the ethics of care and provide a foundation for political activism in the wider community (1991: 127, 122).

Additional to Ruddick's considerations, other authors have claimed that the experience of mothering may engender specific political subjectivities, possibly giving rise to 'maternal' political demands: Alexandra Tibbetts for instance writes that mothering experiences may guide the choice and prioritization of political issues by female activists, as well as shape how they address these, especially if circumstances or policies impinge on their abilities to care for their families properly (1994: 38, 45). For certain 'motherist' movements of the past century, especially in South America, it was the experiences of governments' attacks on the domestic sphere, e.g. through 'disappearances' of family members, that pushed women to engage in public political work (Chuchryk 1989: 140). Stefanie Kron claims that, in fact, under such circumstances "[…] motherhood may become a radical and political subjectivity" (2016: 580), even though it is commonly seen as an apolitical subject position (ibid: 581). Tibbetts however cautions, that mothering as experience should not be seen as the exclusive source of female activists' political consciousness and argumentation schemes: "[…] the motivating force of women's political action," in her opinion, "is not limited to the 'care ethic'" (ibid. 45).

(3.2) The Context of Mothering in Zanzibar: Uncertainty, (Mis)Trust and Vulnerability

As I do choose to take seriously the demand for a sensitivity to context made by so many motherhood scholars and feminists, the question arises, what context, or what parts of the overall context in Zanzibar should I turn my attention to? Which aspects of this context had and

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[70] Othermothering is a term principally developed by black feminist scholars, meant to describe the practices of people mothering children who are not their own biological offspring, sometimes in organized women-centred networks. Experiences as othermothers have, according to Collins, been the basis for social and political activism, especially on behalf of the African American community in the US. (Collins 1991: 119, 127; Wilson Cooper 2020: 956)

have the largest bearing on the mothering practices of the women in my sample? How can this context be adequately defined and conceptualized? I argue that in Zanzibar this can be appropriately captured by the term uncertainty, which many of my respondents experienced and explained to me through a deep sense of their (gendered) vulnerabilities.

(3.2.1) "A World of Uncertainty"

Uncertainty has been one of the preeminent images used to describe the experience of ordinary people in contemporary Africa against the background of 'the crisis', characterized by years of economic decline, political instability, and overall dramatic changes since the beginning of the 1990s (Cooper & Pratten 2015: 1; Mbembe & Roitman 1995: 324; Haram & Yamba 2009: 11-12). Henrik Vigh describes a "world of uncertainty" (2009: 422) as an environment that is in constant motion, shaped by multiple forces at once, in which change is perceived as "an *uncontrollable* sequence of events" (ibid.: 421; my emphasis) and planning for positive futures is extremely challenging (ibid.: 419-423).

This image of uncertainty seems quite fitting as a backdrop to everyday life in Zanzibar – like other places in Africa, the islands have gone through major transformations in the recent two decades: the liberalization and privatization of the socialist economy under the provisions of the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1990s, which lead to the monetarization of formerly state-funded social services like health, education or water supply, and an increase of corruption, inflation and consumer prices; the re-introduction of the multiparty democratic system, causing upheavals and violence in the islands; as well as a surge of tourism and immigration from mainland East Africa. (Askew 2006: 29-31; Beckmann 2015b: 76-77; Keshodkar 2013: 56-58; Larsen 2009: 18-20) Most of these changes went ahead without popular input, and a sense of a personal inability to influence societal shifts and ruptures seems to be widespread:

> From the late fifties until now, the lives of most Zanzibari women and men have been influenced by dramatic socio-political changes *in which most of them had no say at all*. In this context *the unpredictability of life has truly been experienced by Zanzibari men and women*. (Larsen 1995: 57; my emphasis)

Larsen refers to some of the historic developments examined in the previous chapter, for instance the violent regime change in 1964, the Union with the Tanganyika the same year, as well as the liberalization policies of the early 1990s, but this awareness of limited personal control over the environment in which they live, is still shared by many Zanzibaris today (see Beckmann 2015b: 76; Demovic 2007: 100; Larsen 2013: 73,76, 84). Although there are certainly differences in how individuals experienced and experience these economic and

societal shifts – depending for example on their class, ethnic background, or gender (Keshodkar 2013: 58; see also: Haram & Yamba 2009: 13) – a sense of demise seems to be widely shared, which "[has led] led to a profound sense of uncertainty both about individuals' and families' prospects, and about the continuity of Zanzibari society as a whole […]" (Beckmann 2015b: 76-77). This generalized sense of decline was also mirrored during some of my interviews and informal conversations, as my respondents bemoaned the current '*hali duni*' (poor (living) conditions) and spoke nostalgically about the past, especially in terms of the services the state used to provide:

> *In the past, when we were little, education was free, we did not pay, [and] you [could] study until university. We didn't pay for water. Do you see? Therefore, life went well. But now you have to pay for everything; the state of life is difficult; the salaries of the workers are low, those who didn't work, let's say they are doing business, that's difficult. You can sit in your store maybe for three days, [and] you don't sell anything.* [71] (Bi Rukia, Pemba)

As Nadine Beckmann argues, the sense of uncertainty that develops in face of this decline decidedly influences the futures that people imagine for themselves, their families, and their society (see above). Susan R. Whyte and Godfrey E. Siu confirm this in their definition of uncertainty as "[…] the inability to predict the conditions on which you are dependent." (2015: 29). In Zanzibar, this incapability manifests itself further in the estimations given by respondents when they were asked about the anticipated development of the economic situation in the country in the coming twelve months in the most recent *Afrobarometer Survey*: 33,6% of interviewees presumed that the situation would either become 'worse' or 'much worse', while a staggering 27,5% reported that they didn't know what the future held in this respect (Afrobarometer 2016/2018). Additionally, a majority of Zanzibaris assessed their government's strategies in managing different indicators of economic stability and future development as overall poor[72].

In summary, a great part of the population in Zanzibar feels that recent years have brought significant decline in several areas of their lives, that positive futures for themselves and their dependants are not necessarily a given, and that unfavourable economic fluctuations are almost inevitable. At the same time, people do not feel that they can do much to control or influence the abstract forces that impinge upon their lives and livelihoods. It is hence reasonable to argue

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[71] "*Zamani sisi tulipokuwa wadogo, elimu ilikuwa ni bure, hatulipi, unasoma mpaka university. Maji tulikuwa hatulipi. Umeshaona? Kwa hivyo, maisha yalikuwa yanakwenda vizuri […] lakini sasa hivi, kila kitu ulipe; halafu hali ya kimaisha ni ngumu; mishahara ya wafanyakazi ni dogo; waliokuwa hawafanyi kazi, tuseme anafanya biashara, ni ngumu. Unaweza ukakaa na duka lako pengine siku tatu, huuzi kitu.*" (Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, 26-11-2018, Pemba)

[72] For instance, those who chose the options 'very badly' or 'fairly badly' to the question "How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters […]?" amounted to 69,88% for 'addressing the needs of youth', 77,8% for 'creating jobs' and 87,4% for 'keeping prices stable'. (Afrobarometer 2016/2018)

that the majority of Zanzibaris live in and with a situation of prolonged uncertainty[73]. Further relevant for this thesis is the fact that the economic decline and retrenchment of public services seems to have hit women and children especially hard: Schalge (2002) for instance claims that, while "[…] Tanzania's economic crises of the 1970s and 80s forced women to take greater responsibilities for the maintenance of their families" (211), men were perceived to be quick to abandon their obligations in this respect (ibid. 2, 273; see also Schalge 2004: 152-153). Other authors confirm this pattern, which is sometimes referred to as the 'feminization of poverty' (e.g. Arendell 2000: 1200; Mikell 1997: 1, 27; Obbo 1995: 177).

(3.2.2) Uncertainty as Lived Experience: Contingency and (Mis)Trust

What does living in such circumstances signify for people in their everyday lives? This is a question that the contributors to the volume *Ethnographies of Uncertainty in Africa* (2015) address: the editors, Elizabeth Cooper and David Pratten, define uncertainty as "[…] the lived experience of a pervasive sense of vulnerability, anxiety, hope and possibility […]" (2015: 1) and suggest shifting the scholarly focus away from the macro level of 'the crisis' per se – i.e. explaining its causes or predicting its future trajectories – towards the microlevel: to exploring how uncertainty as an experience affects people in their everyday lives. The authors highlight the fact that uncertainty shapes "ways of knowing and being" (ibid.) and, firstly, is entwined with social relations and secondly, guides people's navigation of short-and long term temporal horizons, their "[…] *get[ting] by'* in the here and now, [and their] […] *'get[ting] on'* in the future" (ibid. 12, my emphasis; see also 2).

While discussing the former aspect or relationality, Cooper and Pratten refer to the work of Caroline Bledsoe on fertility and reproduction in rural Gambia (Cooper & Pratten 2015: 4): Bledose uses the term contingency to describe a notion of physical and social proximity, implying that social agents are always susceptive to the impact of actions of others – in a negative *and* positive sense (Bledsoe 2002: 20, 25). Cooper and Pratten incorporate contingency into their conception of the relational element of uncertainty, which is also fundamentally double-edged: "[…] while certainty and security are sought by investment in social relations, so those proximate, intimate social relations provide no guarantee and may produce further uncertainties" (2015: 4). The possibility that an investment into social relationships could 'go either way', is certainly nothing novel for Zanzibari women. A good example would be the

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[73] I use the term 'uncertainty' for the situation here, and choose to not distinguish between uncertainty as a state of mind and insecurity as the social context in which it develops, as for instance suggested by Susan Reynolds Whyte (2009: 213-214; see also Whyte & Siu 2015: 19). In my opinion, the term 'insecurity' can elicit unhelpful associations with situations of armed conflict or criminality, that do not fit my context.

pessimistic attitudes many Zanzibari women hold about the longevity of marriages: Erin Stiles claims that a majority of her respondents "[…] regarded divorce as unavoidable and said that they expected to be divorced at some point and perhaps without their knowledge."[74] (2005: 586; see also Keefe 2016: 119, 125; McGruder 1999: 26). Bi Pili, who was married for the fourth time when I met her, explained:

> *My first husband left me with a six-month old child, but I did not get any assistance from his family*[75]. *I stayed with the child, me and my parents. So, I took care of everything at our place, I help[ed] myself [with some] business [here and there]. I raised my children myself, alone. And this is our norm here in Zanzibar. [There are] few men who care for their marriages, [who] care for their children. But on my side, I had a lot of bad luck in marriage.*[76] (Bi Pili, Unguja)

Left with a small infant to care for, Bi Pili made the experience that the connections created through marriage did not guarantee her much in terms of concrete support, and that the attempt at forging relationships to secure herself in the future, left her more vulnerable than before, with additional dependants to tend to.

Whyte and Siu (2015) describe different strategies and behaviours that people in situations of uncertainty and heightened contingency adapt; for instance, an attitude of 'civility' or tentativeness, in which open confrontations are avoided in order to maintain relationships on which individuals and groups are dependent, or might become dependent in the future (28-29). This is an attitude that should be fairly familiar to maternal practitioners who 'hold' onto relationships in order to preserve favourable conditions for preservation and nurturing growth of their children (see above).

Cooper and Pratten point out that the development of trust in the face of such myriad (inter)dependencies and contingencies, as well as in the context of uncertainty is elusive (2015: 4-5): trust, following Niklas Luhmann, can be defined as a means by which social actors reduce complexity and uncertainty concerning future events. By making positive assumptions about others' behaviour and accepting the risk of vulnerability to their actions, people are able to reduce the number of possible futures they need to take into account when making decisions. (Kenworthy et al. 2016: 1044; Lahno 2011: 675; Lewis & Weigert 1985: 968, 971; Morgner

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[74] This is possible due to the fact that, according to Islamic tenets, men are able to divorce their wives through repudiation without their consent, presence, or even knowledge (Stiles 2005: 582).

[75] During the same interview Bi Pili shared with me that she was around 19 at the time, alone in Dar es Salaam. She said her first husband just *"[…] disappeared, [and] until today it is not known where he is" ("[…] akatoweka, mpaka leo hajulikani alipo*.")) (Interview 1 with Bi Pili, 22-10-2018, Unguja)

[76] *"[…] [M]ume wangu wa kwanza […] ndo aliniacha na mtoto wa miezi sita lakini sikuwa na huduma zozote kutoka katika familia yake. Na mtoto […] nabaki na yeye, miye na wazee wangu. Kwa hiyo kila kitu kilikuwa nashugulikia kwetu na mimi mwenyewe najisaidia biashara biashara. […][W]atoto [wangu] nalea mwenyewe, peke yangu. […] Na hii ni ndo kawaida yetu Zanzibar. […] Wanaume wachache ambao wanajali ndoa zao, wanajali […] watoto wao. Lakini kwa upande wangu mimi, nilipata bahati mbaya sana. […] kwenye ndoa."* (ibid.)

2018: 234-235) In contexts in which uncertainty surpasses these 'normal' levels, trust-building becomes more difficult, which is confirmed by Beckmann for present-day Zanzibar:

> […] [T]rust is hard to establish and in some respects has become a drawback: where success in life has become connected to savvy and ruthlessness, trusting others has acquired a whiff of gullibility and backwardness. This is especially the case when dealing with the institutions and agents of power, be they connected to the state or the powers of the market. (2015b: 77)

The lack of trust into those in positions of power, and, further, those connected to 'politics' can be conceptualized as a shortage of 'system trust', i.e. of trust based on the perception of the stability and reliability of the bureaucracy and other social, political and legal institutions (Lewis & Weigert 1985: 973; Morgner 2018: 235). System trust is especially low in Zanzibar where "[p]eople have learned from experience that […] socially distant forces are unreliable and have little faith in their workings," (Beckmann 2015b: 77), or even take the point of view that "[…] ordinary people […] [are] not respected and thus, […] [have] no legal rights" (Larsen 2013: 81). (Inter)personal trust in socially close actors is given preference (Beckmann 2015b: 77), although, as pointed out above, there are also clear risks involved in this.

Mistrust and a wariness of the unpredictability of life (and people) exist on different levels and in different contexts in Zanzibar: in relation to the political system political parties and political elites and within personal relationships and the family. I argue that it is politics (*siasa*) that frequently exacerbate these tendencies on a more personal level. Greg Cameron, describing the consequences of the re-introduction of the multiparty system in rural Pemba, put this very aptly, claiming that "[s]uddenly, *politics*, not the vagaries of nature itself or a bumbling one-party state *could undermine survival strategies for households*" (2004: 112; my emphasis). Unsurprisingly, most of the Zanzibaris whom I talked to understood *siasa* as something inherently negative (see also Cunningham Bissell & Fouéré 2015: 18; Fair 1994: 5 & 2001: 55), and often as one of two things: as *mambo ya vyama* (party matters), i.e. the adversarial relationship between the ruling party and the opposition which – as I described in the previous chapter – has, amongst others, led to violence, politically motivated sackings and employment discrimination. My respondents claimed that politics victimizes people[77], leads to social

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[77] e.g.: '*Here in Zanzibar, many people are victims of politics. They get into difficulties/they get stuck.*' ('*Hapa Zanzibar watu wengi ni victims ya siasa. Wamekwama',* Notes from Interview 1 with Bi Kauthir, Unguja, 08-02-2019)

discord[78] and associated it with 'hate'[79] and 'trouble'[80]. A second group of informants considered politics as '*kazi bure*' (empty/fruitless work), something that happens in the distance but has little to no benefits, but possible drawbacks for ordinary people: '*Politics are just talk, the benefits don't arrive.*'[81]. They described it as 'meaningless'[82] or as a 'waste of time'[83]. In Zanzibar, party politics frequently figure in everyday life as a negative force – for instance, even in people's perceptions of the health care system:

> […] [P]oor quality of care, lack of drugs, harsh treatment by health-care providers are closely associated with the hospital as an extension of the ruling party. The mistrust of government health facilities goes as far as accusing health staff of deliberately mistreating patients and killing infants during birth […]. (Beckmann 2015b: 71)

On the level of personal relationships, the state of political affairs not only frequently dictates which social relationships people cultivate by attending weddings, funerals or through visiting (see Bakari 2011: 262; Moss 2017: 177-179), but marriages – anyways perceived as highly unstable – have ended because of politics[84]. The volatility of the political situation, the recent decline of democratic values, and the structural violence exercised by an unpredictable bureaucratic state towards those perceived as 'anti-government', e.g. by obstructing access to 'life chances' further exacerbate uncertainty, tentativeness, and mistrust in Zanzibari society today.

(3.2.3) Gendered Vulnerability

These experiences of uncertainty, and the lack of system – and, to a degree, - interpersonal trust, leaves many women (and men) feeling vulnerable. In fact, a "sense of vulnerability", as Cooper and Pratten write, is a significant factor in the lived experience of uncertainty (2015: 1). Semantically, vulnerability is closely connected to 'exposure' (Butler 2016: 14) which

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[78] Bi Hasnaa said, '*Politics are a problem, they hold people back from going far.*' ('*Siasa ni tatizo, inawanyima watu kwenda mbali.*) According to her, there is no true development in her village, since people do not work together due to politics. (Fieldnotes 27-11-2018)

[79] e.g.: "*You know here, especially in Zanzibar, there are politics of hate.*" ("*Unajua, huku kwetu, hasa Zanzibar kuna siasa za chuki.*", Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018)

[80] e.g.: "*[This organization is a] safe place. We don't want to talk about politics. [We don't want] to put anybody in trouble. We are just there to talk about our own issues.*" (Interview 1 with Najima, Unguja, 19-01-2019)

[81] Bi Zahra: '*Siasa ni […] kuzungumza tu, faida hazifiki.*' (Fieldnotes 27-11-2018)

[82] e.g.: "*I saw that there is no meaning in politics because there is no change at all that results from it.*" ("*Nikaona [siasa] haina maana, kwa sababu […] hakuna mabadiliko yoyote yanayotokea.*", Interview 1 with Bi Sauda, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[83] e.g. "*2015 came, I was there, but I saw the political process in the same way. I felt like I am just wasting my time.*" ("*Imekuja hii 2015, nipo, lakini […] ni vile vile jinsi nilivyokuwa nikiona zile harakati za siasa […] [N]ilikuwa nahisi[…] kwamba napoteza muda [tu] [...]*", Interview 1 with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

[84] In the wake of the 'election drama' of 2015, it was reported that several Zanzibari women were divorced or abandoned by their husbands due to the way they had voted (BBC 2015a; IRI 2016: 15; The Guardian 2015; see Hanak 1996: 33-34 for a similar case in 1995).

resonates well with how some of my respondents conceptualized their own or others' vulnerability in connection to multiparty politics:

> *So, still, in African multiparty politics there are very big challenges. And, at time you can even say, [they are] worse than those of the one-party system. Because in the one-party system you were not known, just there in the shadows, you [were] hiding. You just go [on with your life]. But now, when you entered the multiparty [era] you became exposed. 'Ah, really, this one is not our fellow.'*[85] (Bi Rehema, Unguja)

'Exposure' could result from being a party member, and publicly engaging in party work, but also simply from being seen going to a campaign meeting or heard uttering criticism of the incumbent government; in Zanzibar, these dynamics most commonly affect members and supporters of the opposition.

Julie Drolet defines vulnerability as "[…] the compounded effect of the exposure and susceptibility of people […] to the impact of the hazard, as well as their capacity to anticipate, cope, and recover […]" which depends significantly on people's access to power and resources, and, correspondingly, on aspects like ethnicity, class or gender (2015: 478; see also Neumayer & Plümper 2017: 551-552). This definition originates in the framework of studies of environmental and human-induced 'disasters', but I would contend that it fits for the Zanzibari political context as well – female party supporters calculate the impact of their personal exposure to the hazards of government and social sanctions, while taking into account their need of resources in order to fulfil present or future (maternal) demands, their relative access to power, and how this access could be negatively influenced by government authorities.

In general, mothers as social actors are, *a priori*, intimately familiar with experiences of uncertainty and vulnerability, even in contexts that are relatively stable and secure (cf. Arendell 2000: 1197; Oyěwùmí 2016: 216; Ruddick 1989: 209). For those women who are biological mothers, mothering starts with the uncertainty of pregnancy and childbirth, which is intimately connected to gendered and social conceptions of vulnerability (Beckmann 2015b). In many African contexts, a large portion of this vulnerability is understood as emerging socially: pregnant and birthing women, as well as the prospective child, are perceived as being highly vulnerable to those close to them who, for instance, bear grudges, and to social discord in general (Bledsoe 2002: 22; for Tanzania and Zanzibar specifically, see Allen 2002: 11; Haws 2009: 37, 44, 50-52, 64; Kielmann 1998: 142). After birth, the perception of the vulnerability of an 'other' – the child – is one of the major elements that sets in motion the processes of

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[85] *"Kwa hiyo, bado siasa za mulitparty kwa Afrika [kuna] changamoto kubwa sana. Na wakati mwingine unaweza ukakusema mbaya kuliko ile ya one party system. Kwa sababu [....] [kwenye] one party system unakuwa hujulikani, humo tu kwenye mamvuli, unajificha. Unakwenda tu. Lakini sasa ukiingia kwenye multiparty unakuwa umekuwa exposed. 'Ah, kumbe huyu si mwenzetu.'"* (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

maternal thinking: Ruddick asserts that mothers perceive the fundamental vulnerability of a child and then *choose*[86] to respond with care to work towards its preservation (Ruddick 1989: 18-19, see also Cohn 2013: 51-52).

Counting 'women and children' as part of 'especially vulnerable groups' is commonplace in security and NGO rhetoric and has been critically examined by different feminists: vulnerability, they argue, is an intensely gendered concept, and has often been associated with femininity, passivity, weakness, lack of control and victimhood within Western discourse. It is also frequently assigned to a distant 'other'. (Butler et al. 2016: 1; Cohn 2013: 53) Thinking about my respondents and my data, I recognize that Butler et al. were right to hold that there is "[…] something both risky and true in claiming that women and other social groups are especially vulnerable." (2016: 2). My respondents expressed the truism of women's vulnerability to me countless times:

> *You know in any country, if there is disorder or chaos, women are very much afraid […] because they will be the victims […], they and their children.*[87] (Joyce, Unguja)

> *Women know that they will be 'victim number one', together with their children.*[88] (Bi Kauthir, Unguja)

Despite these claims, I contend that it would be wrong and over-simplified to imagine Zanzibari women solely as passive victims; they develop active strategies to counteract their own exposure and vulnerability as I will show in Chapters 5 and 6 by using the concept of maternal navigation.

(3.3) Social Navigation - Maternal Navigation

In exploring how people deal with uncertainty, as well as out of positions of vulnerability or powerlessness, different authors have strongly emphasized the need to depart from notions that portray those in such situation as without agency (e.g. Butler et al. 2016: 2; Copper & Pratten 2015: 2-3; Haram & Yamba 2009: 14-15). Mbembe and Nuttall (2004), referring to those living with 'the crisis' in Africa, demand not only that we need to find concepts that can take account of the complexity of the situation itself, but also a language "[…] to describe people's relentless determination to negotiate conditions of turbulence and to introduce order and predictability into their lives." (349). This is also reflected in the writings of those hoping to advance

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[86] The element of choice is important here, as Ruddick highlights that this choice, by no means, is natural, or, in other words 'a motherly instinct' (1989: 18). In this sense, all mothers are adoptive (ibid. 218).
[87] *"[...] unajua nchi yoyote ilinapokuwa na machafuko wanawake wanakuwa wanaogopa sana [...] kwa sababu wao ndo watakuwa wahanga [...], wao na watoto"* (Interview 1 with Joyce, Unguja, 21-02-2019)
[88] *'Wanawake wanajua kwamba watakuwa victim namba moja pamoja na watoto wao.'* (Notes from Interview 1 with Bi Kauthir, Unguja, 08-02-2019)

motherhood studies as a field of inquiry, calling for a stronger focus on maternal *agency* (Glenn 1994: 26).

The concept of 'navigation' is currently '*en vogue*' to try to take account of the practices of people in situations of prolonged uncertainty. Henrik Vigh, whose work is central in this respect, has however criticised that 'navigation' in many studies remains undefined and inexplicit. He suggests using the term 'social navigation' as a perspective on practices at the intersection of individual agency, social forces and change, i.e. practices that take place within the unfolding and constantly changing environment of uncertainty. (2009: 419-420) In his words, "[t]he concept […] highlights motion within motion; it is the act of moving in an environment that is wavering and unsettled." (ibid. 420). Immediately upon reading how Vigh traces back the word 'navigation' to directing a boat at sea (ibid. 420, 429-430), I remembered something that Bi Rehema had said to me about the current political situation in Zanzibar:

> *Once I talked to my leaders [in the party], we were talking about the state of affairs, [and] I told them 'We are at a point in time which is like we are in the Nungwi Channel. We are coming from these waters, going into those, [and] there are maelstroms. It is like this. Only when that channel might calm down, we will receive [i.e. we will know] which direction to go.*[89]

The Nungwi Channel (sometimes also: Pemba Channel) constitutes a strong metaphor in the Zanzibari context. It is the body of water that separates the two main islands of the archipelago, Pemba and Unguja, from each other, and, according to Nadine Arnold Koenings, it represents a 'deep divide', both in a symbolic and geographical sense. The channel is marked by rough seas and strong currents, and several ferries travelling between the islands have capsized and sank, costing the lives of many. (2018: 151) When I left Unguja to go to Pemba in November 2018, I witnessed the roughness of the seas myself as the huge ferry continuously swayed from right to left as we were crossing the waters of the channel (Fieldnotes 21-11-2018). Bi Rehema thus drew an extremely vivid picture of different social and political forces and dangers acting upon Zanzibar as a polity, with the very real possibility of fatal consequences and significant loss of innocent lives. Only if the situation calms down, she argued, a clear view to the horizon of the future would be possible, while the current situation continued to warrant tentative navigation to prevent (another) catastrophe.

Vigh develops two components of social navigation that relate to "[…] both the socially *immediate* and the socially *imagined*" which are however not to be considered as separated

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[89] *"Mimi niliwahi kuzungumza na viongozi wangu wakati fulani, […] tunazungumzia hali, […] nikawaambia kama 'Tuko katika kipindi ambacho [ni] kama […] tuko mkondo wa Nungwi vile. Tunatoka maji haya, kwenda haya hapa, pana msokotano. Ndiyo huu. […] Mpaka huu mkondo utulie, ndo tutapata direction hasa ya kwenda."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, 24-10-2018, Unguja)

endeavours but need to be thought together (2009: 425-426; his emphasis). In the first instance people focus on *'getting by'* in the here and now, all the while experiencing and anticipating the movement of their environment. Secondly, social navigation also includes figuring out and adjusting strategies and tactics for *'getting on'*, i.e. gaining life chances, social worth and recognition in the future they imagine for themselves. For both components of navigation, the establishment of contacts and networks is vital. (ibid: 420-422)

What is termed '*dubriagem*' in the Portuguese-creole of Vigh's respondents in Bissau (2009: 423-424), or '*se débrouiller*' in Cameroon (Waage 2006: 61-62), i.e. the "[…] tactical practice of navigating social forces and events" (Vigh 2009: 424), in my opinion, finds a close match in the Kiswahili verb '*kuhangaika*': many of my respondents used this term when describing activities necessary to *'getting by'* and '*getting on'* in current times. The verb has, as many Kiswahili terms, a myriad of meanings and thus offers a wide range of interpretations. I argue that what comes closest to a translation in this context would be 'to roam about and struggle'. In the context of mothering, the word applies both to *'getting by'* as a family, in terms of fulfilling basic household needs, as well as to activities aimed at creating future possibilities. For the women I interviewed, the focus here was often on securing a positive future for their children, for instance by facilitating their education. I will further discuss the meaning and relevance of maternal *kuhangaika*-activities in Chapters 5 and 6. For now, let it suffice to say, that social navigation has a local equivalent in the Zanzibari context, and that the women and mothers I interviewed frequently used the term to describe their own activities.

Another important point that Vigh (2009) makes is that the practice of social navigation is always linked to an actor's social location, and the perception of one's own power to influence social forces. In other words, "[…] we all navigate, but the necessity of having to move in relation to the movement of social forces depends on the speed and volatility of change as well as the level of exposure or shelter that our given social positions and 'capital' grants us […]" (430). This speaks very well to both the relative (in)ability to influence social forces as experienced by Zanzibaris, as well as to the different levels of vulnerability or exposure experienced by different people in different positions on the continuum of power (ibid. 430-431).

When exploring Vigh's ideas about the practice of social navigation with Sara Ruddick's philosophy still fresh in mind, I was surprised how well some of their ideas spoke to each other: Vigh's hyper-attentiveness – the "[…] uncompromising awareness of socio-political movements in order to anticipate oncoming problems and assess possibilities of action" (2009: 422) that people in Bissau displayed, sounded a lot like Ruddick's maternal tactic of

scrutinizing. Michael Jackson's concept of 'manoeuvring' (1998: 18-19) that Vigh partly builds his conceptualization of social navigation on (see Vigh 2009: 424) – the constant striving for balance and control in human practice (Jackson 1998: 18-19) – reminded me of 'holding'. If we develop these similarities further and look at Vigh's work from a practicalist point of view, social navigation could arguably be understood as a practice, giving rise to 'navigational' reasoning; it is, as he claims "[…] simultaneously an act of analysing possibilities within a social environment, drawing trajectories through it [i.e. thinking] and actualising these in practice." (Vigh 2010: 150). Despite these overlaps, Vigh's view of social navigation, as precisely *not* a "mechanical practice toward a goal, but a practice that is tied up in a range of power configurations" (432-433), on first glance, seems to clash with Ruddick's practicalism. At a second glance, this perspective might actually be the remedy for the weaknesses in Ruddick's argument in relation to her ethnocentrism and context-blindness. Considering maternal practice while carefully minding the power relations it is tied up in, would enable us to uncover the differences in mothering practices of women situated in different spaces constituted by the intersecting dimensions of class and race, that her critics so rightly point towards.

As I have suggested at the end of the last sub-chapter, it is not surprising that the practices of mothers and people living with prolonged uncertainty in general, tend to be similar: Arendell has argued that the fundamentally ambivalent character of mothering is intensified by the fact that the long-term outcomes of mothers' work are always uncertain (2000: 1197); Oyěwùmí claims that mothers "must constantly project into the future for the benefit of their children" (2016: 216), while Ruddick writes that "[…] to give birth is to commit oneself to the protecting the unprotectable and *nurturing the unpredictable*." (1989: 209; my emphasis). Mothers, we could thus say, are always navigating, even in political and economic environments that are not 'uncertain' in the sense of Vigh, Cooper, Pratten, Mbembe and others: in their daily work, mothers everywhere mediate the specific social, cultural and economic conditions they are contingent on, so as to gain the most favourable results in achieving their maternal goals (cf. Maher 2010: 835). They strive to introduce certainty into the uncertainty of preserving, nurturing and training a being with its own subjectivity and free will (Ruddick 1989: 73). Large parts of a mother's work are future-oriented and involve a similar simultaneous focus on *'the immediate'* and *'the imagined'*, (Cohn 2013: 55) as Vigh describes for youth in Bissau (2010: 150 & 2015: 122). Consequently, I think that it would be extremely beneficial to integrate the notions of maternal thinking and social navigation with each other, establishing a new concept of 'maternal navigation' that not only enables me to analyse and interpret women's practices as

mothers in the context of prolonged uncertainty in the thesis at hand, but would also open up possible pathways for social navigation to be applied to more diverse contexts by others: So far, Vigh and other authors, have most commonly used the concept to study the endeavours of (male) youth and their struggles – often to transcend their current status of 'waithood' and enter adulthood in times of economic crisis and generalized uncertainty (Cooper & Pratten 2015: 9-11; Vigh 2010: 147-148). Although these analyses are insightful, the narratives that are woven here can at times read like highly individualized 'every *man* for himself'-stories. Relationality and contingency are only considered as part of the strategies of individual young men trying to *'get on'* and *'get by'* for their own benefit. This is where notions of maternal practice and thinking could enrich the idea of social navigation: Mothers not only navigate uncertainty for themselves, but also for their dependents, ensuring *their* survival and positive futures. Other than the protagonists in Vigh's studies, they are not trying to reach adulthood, but attempting to fulfil the demands of maternal work – an activity that emphatically marks their status as adults. Maternal navigation, as I would define it, includes navigation practices *through* and *for* other people, whom mothers are connected to by way of relations of care. These practices take place in an environment that is not only in motion through the natural growth and development of their children, and changing policies affecting mothers and their families, but also due to a general climate of uncertainty. Maternal navigation is thus the lens under which I will consider the strategies, investments, connections, mothers in Zanzibar take and make, in order to reach maternal aims in a context of political and economic uncertainty.

(4) *"Being a stranger, you cannot know what is going on"* - Challenges of Epistemology and Methodology

> *In my second interview with one of my key informants*, Bi Rehema, I ask her cautiously about conflicts in Zanzibari society and sketch the difficulties I had had so far in getting clear answers about them in conversations. *"You know Hannah,"* Bi Rehema answers, *"you only have come here a very short time [ago]. Being a stranger, you cannot know what is going on, because you just came, and you see people how they are."*[90]

In my opinion, this exchange is an excellent starting point for contemplating basic questions of epistemology, ontology and positionality, about my own outsider-position and its limitations, and about the silences looming large in Zanzibari society, which have lead some authors to claim that "[…] in Zanzibar […] things are never only what they appear, or what they are said to be." (Larsen 2015: 234). From Bi Rehema's statements, the transition to questions about the epistemological foundations of knowledge, i.e.,

- its nature (*What can I, as an outsider-researcher know? What do Zanzibaris classify as 'truth'/knowledge?*),
- its sources (*How can I best obtain knowledge in the context at hand? How can I access knowledge or the 'truth' about 'what is [really] going on'?*)
- and its validity (*What are the limits of knowledge? How does my position and background limit what I can know? How do time and other constraints influence data? How do outside influences, like the political context of uncertainty, limit my access to knowledge?*),

is not too far-reaching (cf. Schnegg 2015: 21). It is these questions that I will discuss and attempt to answer in the course of this chapter. By bringing transparency to, and reflecting on the processes of knowledge production, its context and agents, as well as the complex relationships between these elements, I hope to add a reflective element and further validity and reliability to the selections and interpretations made within the thesis at hand (cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 9; Cho & Trent 2006: 327; Schnegg 2015: 46).

In terms of the epistemological orientation of my work, I do not claim to be able to present 'Truth', but much rather attempt to give a glimpse into what my respondents conceived as their truth(s), and to present and analyse the ways in which they tried to make sense of their realities for me. In agreement with this line of thinking, I did not assume that I would go to the field to

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[90] *"Unajua Hannah wewe bado umekuja muda mfupi sana. [...] Kuwa mtu mgeni kweli huwezi kujua what is going on, kwa sababu wewe umekuja tu umeona watu kama walivyo."* (Interview 2 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 19-11-2018)

'collect' data (i.e. 'truth'), but instead sought to co-create meaning with my respondents; meaning which additionally passed through several layers of selection and interpretation (dominantly of course, my own). Thus, what is (re)presented here can only be partial and fragmentary. (cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 269, 294) Nonetheless I would hope that by representing some empirical examples of women's practices of maternal navigation in Zanzibar in this thesis, I created opportunities for understanding and further investigation (cf. ibid. 9).

(4.1) The Process of Knowledge Production

(4.1.1) Fieldwork

Fieldwork for this thesis was conducted in the Zanzibar archipelago from September 2018 until March 2019 with approval of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (SMZ). For the most part of my stay I was based in the historic downtown of Zanzibar City (Stone Town), on Unguja, which is why a majority of my respondents hail from the urban area of this island (56%). In November 2018, I travelled to Pemba for nine days and stayed with a local host family[91]. This provided me with valuable data from informal conversations and participant observation at their house, and the opportunity to carry out interviews in two urban districts and one rural area there. One interview was additionally conducted with my Zanzibari research assistant in Dar es Salaam, and another upon my return to the Netherlands via Skype.

Generally speaking, I approached 'the field' with an open-ended and flexible attitude. I had determined my interest and a preliminary research question in my research proposal, but remained open to adjustments according to the inputs and impulses by respondents, thereby following a 'Geertzian' research design ("[…] the fieldworker must go to the field with a number of questions, adapt them, and leave the field with different questions."; Schnegg 2015: 34). I would call my approach pragmatic and explorative; in some respects resembling the guiding principles of grounded theory (cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 55-56) and inductive ethnography (ibid. 86). This proved to be the right approach, as my research question changed significantly in the field and after my return to the Netherlands.

As a student of multidisciplinary programmes in both Bachelor and Master, I have access to several academic and disciplinary 'identities' from which I can select in different contexts. It is thus no wonder that my research and this thesis are a product of a pragmatic and somehow opportunistic application of theories and methods from a wider repertoire (see also Quinn 2005: 6-7). As mentioned in the introduction, I was however strongly committed to conducting research from a feminist standpoint, wanting to understand political uncertainty and tension

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[91] In order to maintain the family's anonymity, I refrain from naming the exact area of my stay.

based on my respondents' (gendered) experiences (cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 238-239). With this focus on experience and the rejection of heavily imposing my own categories and notions of what I deemed 'important' prior to the field stay, I adopted qualitative research methods aimed at gaining free narratives (ibid.: 7).

Methods and Sample: My main research methods were semi-structured interviews, often with a life-history orientation, of which I conducted twenty-eight[92], (participant) observation and informal conversations. My aim for the interviews was to obtain narratives of personal experiences, conceding respondents extensive narrative privileges, i.e. as much control as possible over the conversation, its course and focus (Quinn 2005: 8-9). By trial-and-error I figured out that the best practice would be to ask an open question about the respondent's life at the beginning of the interview and then make recourse to some of the issues raised during the narrative at a later point. In this context, the period of collaboration with my research assistant Saida was very helpful. I observed that she asked questions in a verbose manner, giving lengthy examples and explanations; the answers she then obtained were much more detailed than the ones I received. As a consequence, I scraped some of the rather compartmentalizing life-history questions I had devised (e.g. asking separately about childhood, youth, and adult life), and instead began most interviews with an almost overfraught, but open question that resonated better with respondents[93]. If I already had some knowledge about an interlocutor (e.g. that she was involved with a particular political party) I usually prepared a few more pre-formulated, but open questions.

Overall, the co-operation with Saida as my research assistant at the beginning of fieldwork proved extremely advantageous: having conducted research in the archipelago herself, she was able to advise me on different issues, such as gaining research permission from local authorities, or approaching contentious issues in a delicate manner. Due to budget restraints on my, and limited time on her side, we only worked together for the very first weeks of fieldwork. Saida did not act as a translator, as my level of Kiswahili was sufficient to ask questions and understand the gist of what was being said during interviews on my own, but – knowing my research interest – she probed some respondents herself on certain topics and reformulated questions that they did not understand. After our collaboration ended I conducted an interview

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[92] My 29th interview, which was conducted upon my return to the Netherlands via Skype, is excluded here, and my interlocutor is not included in Table 1 which details my sample. This is for the simple reason, that with him being the project manager for an EU-project for female empowerment in leadership positions, this interview was the only 'true' expert interview, and his perspective as a male non-Zanzibari, was interesting as background information, but not as relevant to my main argument.

[93] *Nieleze kuhusu maisha yako/'hadithi' ya maisha yako (kama utoto, elimu, ndoa, kazi, n.k.). Vipi umefikia ambapo upo sasa hivi maishani*? (Please explain me about your life/the 'story' of life (like your childhood, education, marriage, work etc.). How did you 'arrive at' where you are right now in life?)

with her – as proposed by Temple and Edwards (2002: 6) for translators in cross-language research: I figured that the examination of her values, personal opinions and insights on the issues I was interested in would be extremely fruitful. Since Saida thus became an informant, I gave her a pseudonym and included her in my sample below.

Originally, I approached some of my interviews as separate 'expert interviews.' Ultimately, I however decided to discard the artificial boundary between interviews with 'members of the local population' and 'experts' because on the one hand, the female 'expert' shared a lot of her personal experience as a woman in Zanzibar, while, on the other, a number of interviewees from the 'local population' group were 'experts' in their own right, for example due to their considerable experience as professional politicians. I thus integrated all of my female respondents into one sample. Additionally, I use the contents of a number of informal conversations I had with two women, whom I never formally interviewed, in this thesis. Their details are added to the table below in brackets.

Table 1: Sample Details

Current residence	Party affiliation[94]	Occupations included	Motherhood status
Pemba rural: 6 Pemba urban: 3 [+ 1] Unguja rural: 1 Unguja urban: 13 [+1]	CCM: 4 CUF: 3 [+1] CHADEMA: 1 apolitical (self-reported): 8 unknown/unsure: 7 [+1]	teacher, librarian, journalist, private tutor, tailoress, farmer, *sheha*, civil servant, police officer, *mama wa watoto/wa nyumbani*[95], small-scale entrepreneur, politician, NGO employee, etc.	mothers: 19 [+2] childless: 2 unknown: 2

Total: 23 [+2] women; 28 formal interviews and numerous informal conversations

I recruited respondents for formal interviews by way of networking with different people: I, for instance, met my five first participants through Saida, more through the personal networks of the women thus sampled, and others through friends and acquaintances in the archipelago. I

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[94] This strictly applies to the time of my research. As already mentioned, a large part of the Zanzibari CUF membership defected to ACT-Wazalendo in March 2019. I reckon that at least three of my CUF-respondents did follow their party leaders to ACT. The affiliation of one CCM supporter was inferred due to her position in local government, which would have been almost impossible to access if she was not a party-member; the others clearly communicated their support for the incumbent. Those in the 'apolitical'-category told me directly that they did not have any party or were not interested in politics. It could be however the case that some of them did support a certain political grouping but did not feel comfortable sharing this with me. The 'unknown' category includes informants whose statements were too elusive to infer a party following, those who said they supported one but didn't want to share which one, and one respondent who said that she '*hate[d] politics*' but obtained a CCM-membership card to avoid negative sanctions in her work (Fieldnotes, 31-01-2019).
[95] This is the term respondents employed, so I choose to use it as well. It translates roughly to 'mother of children' or 'mother of the house'. A hasty equation of this term with the Western 'housewife and mother' or 'stay-at home mum' is inadequate in my opinion. In the local context, being a *mama wa watoto* includes a wide range of activities, like care- and housework but often also the running of (sometimes several) small businesses from home, and, especially in rural areas, horticultural and agricultural activities (see e.g. Demovic 2007: 114-115, 128). In general, it is to be noted that most of my respondents pursued numerous economic activities, even though they might self-identify 'only' as a *mama wa nyumbani*.

noticed quickly that a facilitated contact to new respondents, i.e. snowball sampling through a friend or relative that I had already interviewed, often provided an important foundation of basic trust. I also felt that respondents recruited in such a way were slightly more inclined to meet with me, as a direct refusal, in their view, would not have only offended me, but would have probably caused the facilitator in question to lose face. This element of social pressure of course raised ethical concerns about the voluntariness of participation and made me feel uneasy at times, especially when I presumed that a person might be taking a risk by talking to me (e.g. employees of the government). In these instances, I tried to be particularly cautious when approaching sensitive or politicized topics and made sure that respondents understood that they could ask me to omit certain information in my transcripts and thesis. In other cases, when I sensed a reluctance to speak with me (e.g. numerous postponed appointments), I did not push for a meeting, since I felt that Zanzibaris themselves were much better able to assess the potential risks of participating in my project than myself, and probably had good reasons for evading me[96].

Most of my interviews were recorded on a tape recorder, after obtaining permission by the respondent in question. Although taping can be an obstacle to candour, I agree with Quinn (2005), who claims that there are also clear advantages when researchers are able to use recorders: the ability to hold a conversation in a more natural way (looking at one's interlocutor and not at a note pad), and the possibility to listen more attentively and react more immediately. Additionally, for a close analysis of discourse and narrative, a detailed record at one's disposal is vital (Quinn 2005: 18-20), especially, I would add, if the interview is not conducted in one's first language. Nine of my interviews were however only recorded in notes, according to the preference of the participants in question[97]. Three interviews in rural Pemba merged into an impromptu group discussion: the four of us sat together outside one of the respondents' house and after hearing the individual life histories, the women started relating to each other's statements in a more general discussion.

I had originally aimed at creating a diverse sample of respondents – in terms of their place of residence, political activity, class background, educational level, etc.– which I did not fully achieve. I, for instance, failed to recruit a meaningful number of respondents from rural Unguja (see table 1). This was partly due to the fact that in rural areas sampling would have had to be facilitated through local authorities like *shehas*. My experience in Pemba, which I will describe

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[96] I rarely heard a clear 'no' though, which highlights to me that there were clear cultural inhibitions towards direct refusal. Sensibility to subtle ways of communication was thus paramount.

[97] Quotes from these interviews (and informal discussions) are obviously not fully verbatim but paraphrased as closely as possible. Throughout the thesis, I mark them with single quotation marks ('…').

in further detail below, showed that this would mean – as Saida put it: '*You will only get people from one [i.e. the ruling party's] side.*'[98] – as well as a high probability for socially and politically desirable answers. There also is a bias for higher educated and professional women in my sample, which had to do with differing levels of willingness and confidence to embark on certain topics.

Observations and the contents of informal interactions in my everyday life, which included semi-regular 'drop-ins' with two key informants in urban Zanzibar, participation in celebrations (like weddings), but also mundane everyday activities like going to the market, participating in an all-female fitness group, or travelling around the islands, were recorded in a field diary. It however proved difficult to spontaneously strike up informal conversations about politics and political conflict with women in the everyday context (in contrast to male acquaintances), so the bulk of my empirical data was co-constructed in formal interviews.

Validity and Ethics: In the field, I tried to ensure validity on the one hand through occasional member checks, e.g. raising some unclear issues from previous interviews with the respondents that I had the chance to talk to more than once, and reflecting on some of my preliminary interpretations together with them (cf. Cho & Trent 2006: 322). I also confronted respondents with compelling points that other informants had made (while safeguarding anonymity of course), to retain their interpretations and reactions. Data triangulation was carried out by consulting a wide range of secondary literature, statistics, observations, and through discussions with acquaintances and friends in the field that were not directly involved in the research project. Such techniques were the context in which I was able to carve out the centrality of motherhood and mothering for female identity in Zanzibar, as well as for women's attitudes towards political uncertainty. After noticing this pattern during transcription, I, on the one hand, confronted respondents directly with my interpretations, and, on the other hand, also waited to see if motherhood would come up if I asked similar questions in ensuing new interviews (e.g. *Do you think that women are more peaceful than men? Why?*). I additionally went back to the transcripts of previous interviews to explore how motherhood and mothering figured in them.

As it quite quickly became clear to me that there were real worries from the side of many respondents that a disclosure of their participation in the research or the content of our interviews could become known to the government, employers, neighbours and others, and lead to negative consequences for themselves and their families, questions of anonymity and informed consent came to be of primary ethical importance. Guided by the central 'do no harm'-principle of research, and following Wood's guidelines for research in (post-)conflict areas, I

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[98] '*Utapata watu wa upande moja tu.*' (Informal conversation with Saida, October 2018)

focused on three key points in this regard: full informed consent, protection of sensitive data in the field, and the avoidance of harm caused by publication (2006: 179). Before interviews, I made sure to obtain full informed consent through a combination of written and oral informing practices[99]. I also offered to share the transcript or notes of the interview with participants for editing, which only one respondent requested. I decided against seeking signatures on consent forms as I felt strongly that for most respondents this would have been off-putting in the current political context and would have further eroded openness and willingness for participation (see Crow et al. 2006: 90). I also preferred to avoid producing a written link to my project through filled out forms with personal information (cf. Wood 2006: 380).

The question if consent was 'fully' informed was one that troubled me at times: my original research question focused strongly on political conflict and polarization. I however believed that this wording would deter people, especially non-politicians and those connected to the ruling party from participating. I thus found myself in the dilemma of not wanting to disclose 'too much' and scare possible participants off, and revealing 'too little', and unethically misleading my interlocutors about my motives. As a middle course, I took great care to approach questions about sensitive topics in a step-by step manner, remaining attentive to signs of discomfort on the part of respondents. If they let me know, verbally or non-verbally, that they did not want to talk about certain issues, I usually abandoned the topic at hand and did not probe further. Additionally, by using the keywords *'siasa'* (politics) and *'mahusiano ya kijamii'* (community relations) prominently, both in my information document and in oral procedures before the interview, I hoped to communicate a 'code' that people would be able to read, and thus could make an informed choice about their participation. The fact that my research permit with exactly these key words in the title (*Women, Politics and Community Relations in Zanzibar*) was initially revoked by the authorities, speaks to the fact that these are charged terms in Zanzibar.

Respondent's data were protected in the field by keeping personal information separate from transcripts, interview recordings or notes which I stored on a password-protected hard drive that remained locked away in my room at all times, and was put in my hand luggage whenever I travelled. Sound files from interviews were transferred to this hard drive as soon as I reached home after a meeting. The biggest portion of my field diary was composed in German which would make it unintelligible to most people in Tanzania. Additionally, at first, I inconsistently shortened the first names of people to initials in the notes; later I blacked all of them out

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[99] See Annex 3 for the English version of the document I handed out to respondents before our first meeting or which's main messages I covered verbally with them before the interview started and the tape recorder was turned on (if applicable). I am indebted to Sigrun Marie Moss for sharing her own document with me as a template.

consistently. I chose to use pseudonyms for all respondents throughout the thesis and I took care to also leave out or anonymize personal information that would – especially due to the 'singularity' of certain women[100] – make them identifiable in any way. The promise of anonymization helped to raise the willingness to respond to certain questions, and to participate in general.

In written and oral information procedures I made clear, that I was not be able to monetarily compensate any of my respondents. Like many field workers in the post-reflexive-turn-age, I did recognize it as one of my responsibilities to achieve a degree of reciprocity for taking up participants' time, unearthing distressing memories or bringing about fear of government reprisals for their participation (Eckl 2008: 383; Johansson 2015: 56). Concerns about becoming the caricature of "[…] the ambitious social scientist making off with tribal lore and giving nothing in return […]" (Clifford 1986: 9) were constantly at the back of my mind; on many of the interview recordings I can be heard apologizing for 'stealing people's time'. I was able to overcome some of my qualms by bringing small gifts (snacks, self-made sweets, etc.) to some interviews, and by inviting participants from Unguja to a dinner party before I left. Some of my informants (especially those with an opposition leaning) displayed a degree of 'narrative urgency''– the need and desire for others to know one's story, or the pleasure to finally be able to define and defend one's identity (Quinn 2005: 12; Wood 2006: 377) – and were happy to know that the narratives about their struggles would be disseminated outside of the archipelago; they were however not in the majority by a long stretch.

I am planning to share this thesis privately with a number of respondents but – due to the current political climate in Tanzania in general and Zanzibar in particular, which will probably deteriorate further with the 2020 elections – an immediate sharing with the community as a whole does not seem prudent for now. Hence, I will have to live with the insight, that my research project, as those of many others (cf. Johansson 2015: 55-56, 58; Wood 2006: 382), will remain a deeply uneven exchange.

Data Analysis: Interviews were transcribed, partly in the field, partly upon return to the Netherlands, and for the most part left in the original Kiswahili. Some sections which I deemed interesting for further analysis and possible quoting were transcribed verbatim, while other sections were summarized in quick notes, recording the gist of what was being said. I also made

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[100] I.e., for instance, being the only female holder of a certain position or job.

note of certain 'surrounding' circumstances of the interview on top of some of the transcripts, mostly as soon as possible after the interview[101].

The transcripts and other data recorded in the field diary were then intensively reviewed, probing for recurring images, keywords or metaphors, and loosely coded according to my research question and the envisioned structure of this thesis. Emergent themes were also considered and incorporated into said structure. Overall, I looked at the narratives both on the level of 'plain content' (as a 'factual' account of respondents' life experiences, views and values), while also trying to tease out patterns that pointed to "[…] the covert underlying presuppositions that organize the worlds in which speakers live" (Hill 2005: 157; see also Luttrell 2005: 249-250).

(4.1.2) De-constructing the 'Story of Success'

If I report it like this, my 'fieldwork story' sounds very straightforward – like a carefully planned and impeccably executed, effortless endeavour. I would argue that any researcher with experience in fieldwork would probably call such a narrative into question. At the same time, it is not at all uncommon to present fieldwork in this way. (cf. Thomson et al. 2013: 5; Lecocq 2002: 274) Why then, do researchers choose to tell such polished 'stories of success'? I think that, on the one hand – and this is the reason why the above compiled description is not invalid – readers need a more or less concise overview about methodology and fieldwork for practical reasons of accessibility and comprehensibility. On the other hand, I believe that telling success-stories produces authority: it shows that we were 'in control' of our respective fields (cf. Lecocq 2002: 274, 281; Berckmoes 2013: 125). Especially as a master student, anyways struggling with the legitimacy of my own 'authoritative voice', to construct such a story (and letting it be the only story) is extremely tempting. Admitting that I was not 'in control' of 'the field' would seem like an undue risk to take in terms of my credibility.

However, I decided to take this risk and admit that the account I presented above is of course 'true', but only partially; it leaves out the massive doubts, reorientations, challenges and difficulties that my time in Zanzibar presented me with – the "pains of fieldwork" as Baz Lecocq (2002: 275) calls them. I think that these 'pains' are not only worthwhile pondering upon as part of a personal 'debriefing' but need to be discussed in order to understand how, and in what context data were co-created. Such transparency demonstrates the enormous impact that respondents and other external agents or forces can have on any research process. Hereby,

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[101] This could e.g. be basic information as the place of the interview, and who else was present, but also occurrences before or during the interview that I deemed relevant or interesting, e.g. Bi Halima's consistent lowering of her voice whenever someone passed in front of her window during our interview.

I do by no means wish to present a collection of anecdotal evidence of 'how hard I had it,' but divulge information that can serve as an answer to some of the epistemological questions posed at the outset of this chapter. (cf. Leegwater 2015: 35)

Looking back, I can see that the most difficult moments of my research were those in which I felt that I was losing control. Even though I was aware of the sensibilities of politics in the archipelago before I left the Netherlands, the intensity with which this impacted my experiences and my research was unexpected. The dynamics of relinquishing control over my research already started after re-writing my proposal and subduing most of its critical language in order to receive my research permit, which I initially succeeded in after a record time of only two weeks. This was certainly too good to be true, as became clear during a visit to the Second Vice President's Office[102], which holds the final say in all matters of research: That day, I wanted to request required reference letters for my visa and to the district authorities throughout the islands. When the approached employee looked at my documents, he lost control over his facial expression for a second – I reckon in utter disbelief at the topic that had been approved. After long hours of waiting in uncertainty, a younger officer finally informed me that my research permit had been retracted, without being able to tell me the exact reasons or point me to the concrete 'problems' in my forms that he mentioned. I barely made it out of the building and broke down crying outside, under the puzzled gazes of passers-by. (Fieldnotes, 08-10-2018) Embarrassing as I found this breakdown later on – I am sure, the men in the office noticed me fighting back tears of anger while I was still inside – it was a formative experience of my stay, as well as a glimpse into some of the non-transparent and arbitrary workings of government power in Zanzibar and the hostile attitude towards independent research in present-day Tanzania in general[103]. After intense negotiations at the office, I was later allowed to go ahead with my project – on the conditions of submitting a catalogue of interview questions, providing a detailed plan of my whereabouts until March, a circumscription of the districts I would be able to visit and committing to regular reports. The hardly veiled threat that employees would come 'check on me' during interviews angered and frightened me at the same time. (Fieldnotes, 09-10-2018)

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[102] The position of second vice president, and the office were created with the 2010 amendments to the Zanzibar constitution providing for the GNU: according to the constitutional amendments, the first vice president has to be of the opposition party, while the second is from the majority party. While the 1st VP does not have a clearly defined mandate, the 2nd VP has extensive powers, and was at the time of my fieldwork CCM-hardliner Seif Ali Iddi. (Minde et al. 2018: 180)

[103] An example for this was the (now retracted) statistics law, whereby it would have been a crime to publicize data contradicting government statistics. In 2018, the passport of the head of TWAWEZA, an NGO that has carried out surveys in Tanzania for years, was confiscated, which was connected by many to the publication of polls suggesting a decrease in support for president Magufuli. (Eyssen 2019; ICG 2019: 7; Nyeko 2019; Said, K. 2018)

Additional to the extensive powers the central government wields over researchers by way of the Second Vice President's Office, further control is exercised through the local government and administrative system which reaches down until the neighbourhood and ward level, with the so-called *shehas* acting as the face of the CCM-regime here. All *shehas* and their superiors, the Regional and District Commissioners, are appointed by the government and most are staunch supporters of the ruling party (Minde et al. 2018: 168; Roop et al. 2018: 254). *Shehas* are especially powerful vis-à-vis ordinary citizens as they are to write letters approving almost any civil procedure, like applying for a passport or an ID. They also control enrolment in the voter register, which has resulted in many a controversy over the years (Roop et al. 2018: 252). A notion of surveillance as also falling into their area of responsibility was expressed to me by Bi Hawa, a *sheha* in Pemba: "*In short, anything that enters the shehia (ward) the sheha has to know [about].*"[104]

The government wants researchers to work with and through commissioners and *shehas* when recruiting respondents, and interactions with local government officials can become another site of struggle between researchers and local authorities: First of all, district commissioners are able to influence significantly *where* in their district research is conducted, as they can pick and choose for which *shehias* (wards) they will provide the needed introduction letters. Secondly, *shehas* are able to exercise tight control over *whom* the researcher is allowed to talk to and *what* is told to him or her, as my experience in a village in northern Pemba shows:

> *I arrive in the village in the morning*, after I called and announced my visit the evening before. I meet the *sheha* who is busy with the '*zoezi ya kitambulisho*'[105]. He is quite curt and immediately asks for my documents. He calls someone on his mobile phone, and I can understand snippets of his conversation: '*The one that I told you about yesterday is here. She really has a letter.*' He goes on to read the beginning of the letter that the district commissioner wrote for me. '*Who signed? ... The district commissioner himself. ... So, should we allow it?*' The *sheha* makes a copy of my letter, tells me to wait for his assistant and returns to his endeavour. After a while, the assistant arrives, and I explain the reasons for my visit. He leads me straight to a specific house, but the occupant is not there.

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[104] *"[K]wa kifupi sheha, lolote ambalo linaingia [katika shehia], lazima alijue."* (Interview 1 with Bi Hawa, Pemba, 28-11-2018)

[105] 'The ID exercise:' Zanzibaris used this term to describe the registration process for the new Zanzibar ID, needed for instance to register as a voter, receive a business license or open a bank account. Talk about this left a mark on my whole stay in Pemba: on the ferry other passengers asked me jokingly if I was also going back 'home' to get my ID, like them; my host mother went to the relevant offices on several days during my stay, initially unsuccessfully. The first step in the process involved obtaining a letter from the local *sheha*, and again there were charges that 'certain people' were prevented from obtaining the correct documents. (Fieldnotes, 22-11, 23-11 & 27-11-2018; see also: Daily News 2018; Salim 2018: 16 & 2019b: 17)

Without further ado, he compels two female neighbours who happen to be in the vicinity to talk to me. The elder woman, Bi Zahra, is palpably reluctant, while the younger one, Hamida, is nervous and taciturn. The man stands facing us as we talk, and interrupts often. Hamida vehemently negates any interest in politics (*'sina chama'* – I don't have a party). At a certain point, while I talk to Bi Zahra, the *sheha's* assistant leaves to get some breakfast and during this time the woman he originally had wanted me to talk to, Bi Hasnaa, arrives. She listens in and then joins our conversation. I begin to ask her some questions, and – encouraged by the man's absence – also dare to inquire about more sensitive topics, like the degree of political conflict in the village. She is open and critical, and then asks me – almost conspiratorially – if I know with whom I came and what that means. I have the impression that all of us feel a bit paranoid, and constantly peep at the corner of the house to see if the *sheha's* assistant comes back. When he does, the conversation dies down and Bi Hasnaa invites him and me to come in for tea. While we are inside, she asks the man to whom else in the village he will take me and suggests some names. He dismisses all of her suggestions insistently: he will not bring me to *'those people'*. Bi Hasnaa and I exchange a furtive glance; she raises her eyebrow, as if to say: *'See, what did I tell you?'*. The *sheha's* assistant takes me to several other houses all over the village, but it is clear that he consciously picks and chooses which ones. He stands next to me while I talk to the women, and some seem extremely intimidated. When asked, they consistently tell me that they have no interest in politics at all, also no knowledge about it and anyways, *'politics do not reach the village' ('siasa haifiki mpaka kijijini')*… Around midday I decide that I have had enough. I have to leave my name in the *sheha*'s visitor book before I take the *daladala* (minibus) back home. (Fieldnotes, 27-11-2018)

To me, this experience further demonstrated the Zanzibari government's desire to control the kinds of knowledge that researchers can access while in the archipelago. It also showed me that the government's local agents are acutely aware of the members of their community 'loyal' and 'disloyal' to the ruling party[106], and as unwanted 'research assistants' their simple presence is enough to enforce silence about certain topics.

Additional to controlling access to respondents, the authorities would clearly like to seize some of the data gathered by researchers for their own purposes: additional to requiring me to write reports for them, I was called repeatedly by an employee of the 2nd VP's office. During one call – upon hearing that I was working on interview transcripts – the officer demanded to

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[106] Also testified to by the role during the 2001 crisis in Pemba, when they helped security forces by pointing out 'opposition houses.' (HRW 2002: 10)

come to my house to view them, which I firmly declined. He later suggested to me, that things could go 'more smoothly', if I were to work together with the authorities 'more closely' (Fieldnotes 16-01-2019).

I do by no means intend to suggest that it is in principle inappropriate or even uncommon for some kind of governmental oversight of scientific studies to exist; for instance, reviewing whether ethical standards are abided by. It is however quite revealing, how *much* control the Zanzibari regime would like to, and can, in fact, exert over research, e.g. through the measures I described above. I often sensed that local authorities and members of the ruling party were somewhat fed up with foreigners coming to pry beyond the surface of the image of the idyllic and peaceful island paradise they would like to present to the outside world (see e.g. Mtumwa 2019; Said, S. 2018)[107].

Overall, my interactions with Zanzibari government authorities and their local agents made it obvious that I would have to be on my guard when presenting my research interests to others, in order to not risk the whole endeavour, and – more importantly – to not endanger participants; I became increasingly wary of any unnecessary contact with the authorities. My experiences greatly influenced my research as they gave rise to – at times – intense feelings of anxiety, mistrust and animosity, especially in relation to the government and the ruling party (cf. Leegwater 2015: 42). Certain parts of my research project planned in my proposal, like visits to the Zanzibari House of Representatives or more intensive sampling in rural areas, could not be carried out due to the adverse attitude of state organs, and my own desire to avoid them and their interference[108]. The constant cautioning of people around me about the sensitivities of my research topic made me hesitant and restrained in asking certain questions or probing deeper with respondents at times. I struggled *with* the control that the authorities tried to enforce on me and my project, and at the same time, struggled *to* control my own fears, anxieties and other negative emotions that my experiences evoked. Reflecting on these events from a spatial and temporary distance brings home the point that total control or 'mastery' (Lecocq 2002: 274) of one's field is at any rate an illusion, if not totally misguided. Additionally, I realize that pushing negative experiences, failings, dead ends, and the attached emotions aside because they are

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[107] I, for example, gathered this impression during my visit to a District Commissioner's office in Pemba: After I carefully (and vaguely) explained my research interest, he let out a deep sigh and condescendingly asked *'Why politics?' ('Mbona siasa?').* He then went on to carefully hand-pick the *shehias* I would be allowed to visit. (Fieldnotes, 22-11-2018).

[108] My avoidance was reinforced by the fact that the young male officer responsible for my 'case' behaved in increasingly inappropriate ways towards me; questioning me about my relationship status, calling me outside of office hours, asking to be invited to my home for dinner, taking me to separate, empty rooms to talk, etc., which made me deeply uncomfortable. See Kloß (2017: esp. 405) & Johansson (2015: esp. 56-59) on the issue of sexualized harassment in fieldwork, especially regarding 'big men' or 'gatekeepers'.

supposedly 'unscientific', leads to missing out on chances for deeper reflection and discovery, as the following sections demonstrate.

(4.2) The Context of Knowledge Production: Morally, Socially and Politically Motivated Silences, Denials and Evasions

The context in which knowledge is produced is one of the elements that needs to be examined more closely in any reflective research framework (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 269). In this section, I focus on the silences, denials and evasions that I was confronted with during my stay in Zanzibar, which substantially shaped the process of data co-creation. At first, such instances of self-censorship greatly frustrated me, which again relates to struggles for control: in the context of uncertainty that prevailed in Zanzibar during the time of my research, I had little control over the extent to which respondents felt they could invest trust in me and be open and honest. It also speaks to informant's own desires to control what could be addressed during interviews (Löfving 2005: 89).

(4.2.1) The Stakes of Truth-Telling in Zanzibar

In general, it can be argued that many Zanzibaris have a rather tentative attitude towards 'knowledge' or 'truth'. Kjersti Larsen writes that in the archipelago "[…] people are continuously preoccupied with the idea that everybody is always hiding something and nobody will ever disclose what she or he actually thinks or feels" (1995: 34). This idea that what people say, do or display is not necessarily 'true' is also expressed in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter: Bi Rehema questioned my ability to know 'reality', as I could only see people 'how they are', i.e. 'how they *present* themselves'; the implication being that there is much more to people than what they will be able and willing to show to an outsider like me.

I was confronted with silences, denials and evasions in almost all of my interviews. As I described in the introduction, I had planned to gather personal narratives about the impact of electoral conflict on ordinary life in Zanzibar, to find out how individual women experienced and possibly mitigated political tensions in inter-election times. This ambition was frustrated over and over again, as respondents typically became evasive or silent altogether whenever I asked for more concrete examples of conflict from their own lives:

> **Hannah:** *I have heard a lot that politics and also the conflict between the parties enter into the everyday life of people. Would you agree and if you agree can you give me an example from your life? Maybe how this conflict has-*
>
> **Saida:** *How it has influenced you? Maybe in the family.*

Bi Rehema: (chuckles uncomfortably) *You know there are other things that I wouldn't like to be recorded, for what reason? These are things that I don't like* (pauses) *to be open [about].*[109]

Others promised to give me a concrete example, but then talked in general and frustratingly familiar terms about social sanctions: *"'So-and-so is not my fellow.' 'I do not want to work with so-and-so.' 'I do not visit so-and-so'"*[110]. Still others denied *any* conflict or tension in Zanzibari society at the time of the research *("The situation is calm and peaceful! At this time, there is absolutely nothing. Everyone has calmed down their soul."*[111]*)*. It was extremely rare for someone to tell me about conflicts in their personal networks of family, friends or neighbours in clear and straightforward terms[112].

The general restraint towards disclosing personal matters, conflict and negative emotions is something that many authors working on the Swahili Coast have noted (cf. Demovic 2007: 63; 260-261; Fuglesang 1994: 25; Hirsch 1998: 8, 39-40; Larsen 1995: 31; McGruder 1999: 50; Stiles 2005: 583; Thompson 2019: 684). Beckmann (2015b) captures this well by stating that "[i]ssues of secrecy and mistrust characterize life in Zanzibar. Secrecy is a central value in Zanzibari society, and private, domestic matters must always be kept secret […]." (78). This mindset is also reflected in a number of popular Swahili proverbs, warning people about being 'chatty', as for instance "*The one who talks much, is usually thanked by few*" ("*Asemaye sana, hushukuriwa na wachache*"; Kalugila 1997: 8; see also: ibid. 5, 20; Farsi (1958) 1973: 28, 43, 47). In Zanzibar, there are thus distinct moral-cultural sanctions against revealing one's own and other's private matters, as well as against gossiping and slandering – especially within the family (McGruder 1999: 50). This moral standard might apply particularly strongly to women who, according to Angela Demovic (2007: 99), are less likely to voice criticism or grievances in public. Transgressing the ideal of secrecy can lead to severe reputational damage, shame and might even have socio-economic consequences (McMahon 2015: 30; Thompson 2019: 692). Susan Hirsch (1998) already pointed out the 'awkward fit' that this ideology can have with researchers' interests in 'inner' affairs and workings of society (1998: 14).

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[109] *Hannah: "Nimesikia sana kwamba […] siasa na pia ugomvi […] baina ya vyama zinaingia sana katika maisha ya kila siku […] ya watu. […] Ungekubali na kama unakubali unaweza kunipa kama mfano ya maisha yako. Labda [u]le ugomvi [u]meku-"* - Saida: *"Imekuathiri vipi? […] Katika familia labda. […]"* – Rehema: *"Unajua kuna vitu vyingine kuwa sipendi lakini virecordiwe, kwa sababu gani? Ni vitu ambavyo sipendi […] [to] be open."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[110] *"'Huyu fulani siyo mwenzangu', 'Huyu fulani sitaki kufanya naye kazi.' 'Huyu fulani simtembelei.' […]."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018)

[111] *"Hali iko shwari! […] sasa hivi hakuna chochote. Kila mtu […] katulia roho yake."* (Interview 2 with Bi Pili, Unguja, 14-11-2018)

[112] Even if I knew people longer this did not change significantly, although I would expect this could have been the case if I would have stayed with a Zanzibari host family, and for a longer period of time.

Silences, denials and evasions, can also be viable (though rather unsustainable) strategies to maintain social stability within polarized societies (Vinckel 2015: 80; Eastmond 2010: 8-9). The silences of my respondents in connection to (past and present) interpersonal conflicts associated with party politics can thus likewise be understood as a coping mechanism, that might be particularly necessary in such a small and close-knit place like Zanzibar. Larsen – when writing about the reluctance of elderly Zanzibaris to speak about their memories of the 1964 revolution – links the individual desire to forget and keep silent to "[…] the notion that 'speaking of memories' would prevent a wished-for reconstruction of social harmony and propitiation of the past." (2018: 254). I think that the same holds true for 'speaking of memories' of violence, social strife and injustice in more recent times, especially if these affected the private domain of family. These attitudes clearly relate to notions like 'civility' or the maternal strategy of 'holding' that I explored in the previous chapter. Pressing for answers to certain questions in a context of polarization, can quickly become an ethical issue as well: by insisting on replies, e.g. to questions of personal identity or political following, researchers could re-highlight differences and divisions that have been supplanted for the moment, acting in contrary to the 'do no harm' imperative of ethical research (cf. Moss 2017: 174).

A third structural constraint in the Zanzibari context causing silences, evasion and denials is the exacerbated context of (political) uncertainty: in a climate where journalists are practicing self-censorship out of fear (cf. Quintal 2018), and even private posts on social media or in WhatsApp groups can land citizens in prison (Hirschler & Hofmeier 2018: 393; Ismail 2016), it is not surprising that few ordinary people were willing to speak bluntly or critically about current politics with me. The stakes of being 'politically exposed' are extremely high, as Saida poignantly emphasized to me:

> *So, if for example that information [that I gave you in the interview] comes up and goes to any other place that 'so-and-so said', it will be that they [the government] will see that you talked about something that is not based on their side. So even if you are educated, you may not be given a [job] posting. There are things like that. So, once you have exposed your [political] interest straightforwardly, they will see 'Ah, really, he/she is not together with us.' So that then you are shocked [that] you suffer difficulty you and your family because people know 'Doesn't so and-so come from a certain family?'[113]*

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[113] *"Kwa hiyo information […] mfano zikikuja, zikienda sehemu nyingine yoyote kwamba 'anasema fulani', ikiwa wanaona umezungumza kitu ambacho hakikubase upande wao. Kwa hiyo hata kama una elimu unaweza ukawa usipewe posting […] Kuna mambo kama hayo. […] Kwa hiyo once umeexpose zile interest zako moja kwa moja [...] [wataona] 'Ah kumbe, hayuko pamoja na sisi.' […] ili basi unaweza ukashtukia unapata ugumu - wewe pamoja na ile familia yako kwa sababu watu wanajua 'Fulani si anatoka kwenye familia fulani?' [...]."* (Interview with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

Saida made clear that the stakes for candour and 'exposure' in Zanzibar are extremely high and may (importantly) extend to one's wider family, in a way of 'guilt by association'. In their silences and self-censorship, people were thus communicating important information about the current political context in Zanzibar, and about the protective functions these strategies fulfilled to me; as Vinckel (2015) asserts: "[…] if we are to understand the meaning of silence, we have to look at 'the structural constraints that are behind the silence and the functions that it performs'[114] […]" (85; see also Fuji 2010). Time and time again, instances of self-censorship reminded me of my responsibility to keep data safe and anonymized. On other occasions I used silences as access points, like when I asked Bi Rehema about them as cited at the beginning of the chapter. Respondents' answers in these instances added greatly to my insights. Lastly, such discussions helped me to reflect on my position in the field, and my own share in causing silences or 'noise'. In this regard, Lee Ann Fuji argues:

> As many scholars have pointed out, not only are researchers studying their informants, their informants, in turn, are studying them back – to figure out who the researcher is and whether the researcher is a source of potential threat […]. How informants identify researchers can determine the amount or level of access the researcher can gain. (2010: 233)

This is what I will reflect on in the next section.

(4.3) *"If a mzungu comes…"* - The Agent(s) of Knowledge Production

The last interview of my research in Tanzania was conducted with my research assistant Saida. As I was about to finish my stay and embark upon the task of writing up this thesis, our last meeting not only constituted the unique opportunity to examine her personal opinions and insights as a Zanzibari academic on the issues that I was interested in, but also gave me the opportunity to reflect on the challenges and emergent questions of my fieldwork with her, in particular those related to the silences, denials and evasions discussed in the previous section. After I inquired why she thought that many of the women I tried to talk to were extremely reluctant to be interviewed or to answer my questions, especially if I mentioned '*siasa*' (politics), she pointed out that,

> *[p]eople have a mental orientation that if a mzungu* (white person) *comes, […] she will maybe want the information about CUF [and] what they have done more. And maybe she will bring the information [over] here/there [and] after bringing the information, it will come back [as] 'Ah so-and-so said, so-and-so said'.[115]*

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[114] Translating and citing Pollack and Heinich (1986: 12).

[115] *"Watu pia wana mental orientation ya kwamba akija mzungu, […] atakuwa anataka habari za labda CUF wamefanya nini zaidi. Na pengine atapeleka information huku, baada ya kupeleka information zikirudi 'ah fulani alisema, fulani alisema' […]."* (Interview with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

Saida's comments aimed precisely at what Fuji argues above – informants are often studying and interpreting researchers 'back': figuring out whether they are trustworthy, what their ulterior motives might be, and, as Saida highlighted, what kind of stories or information they are interested in (see also Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 287). It should however be noted, that even though this notion of 'studying back' can easily convey the impression of a more equalised research encounter taking place on eye-level between researcher and 'researched', we should not misconstrue the fact that my informants' studying- and classifying-me emerged from a very different subject position than my studying-them. Saida made this acutely clear within the second part of the quote above: despite my promises to the contrary, my position as a socially distant foreigner made it hard for others to invest trust in me; they had no way of knowing if I would not share sensitive data *'[over] here/there'* and adjusted their testimony accordingly. Her statement underscored the relative position of risk and vulnerability that any of my (potential) informants occupied and spoke from, and the ethical responsibilities and dilemmas that thus emerged; as a researcher I was always bound to be an 'exposer' to a certain degree (c.f. Hirsch 1998: 40). Therefore, in order to understand knowledge production for this thesis fully, I consider it vital to reflect on how intersecting aspects of my subject position, like race, gender, age and family status, influenced data co-construction, as respondents and others interested in control over my endeavour assed my trustworthiness, ulterior motives and 'true' intentions.

According to Na'mah Razon and Karen Ross, in research settings characterized by tensions and polarity, it is vital for researchers to be perceived as allies by respondents, as this significantly influences the kinds of knowledge they are able to access. The authors connect this ability to be recognized as an ally to a researcher's identity: informants (and others with influence on the research process) consciously and unconsciously interpret aspects of it, and place researchers on a continuum between a 'close' or 'distant' position accordingly. They highlight how 'alliance-building' in interview situations can already start with so-called 'micro choices', like the language the interview is conducted in, or the kind of questions, comments or reactions a researcher communicates or silences. All these choices contribute to a respondent's assumptions about the relative 'closeness' of their counterpart. (Razon & Ross 2012: 495-496, 501) Although the two authors do not make this connection explicitly, 'building alliances' of course also relates to trust and trust-building. Bernd Lahno (2011) for example notes that a 'trustee' usually needs to be perceived as someone who can ultimately be held accountable for acts, as well as someone abiding to similar aims and norms as oneself (675). Satisfying these 'credentials' as a foreign researcher who will eventually leave the place of his or her fieldwork, is of course difficult.

Razon and Ross point out, that informants may play an active role in processes of identity-construction (and alliance- or trust-building), by confronting researchers directly with their assumptions about them, or asking questions aimed at prompting the researcher to position her- or himself (ibid. 497, 499-500). In most of my own researcher encounters, this 'testing' of my alliance went on quite subtly: especially in interviews with women that had a clear political positioning, the frequent use of phrases like '*Umeshaona?*' (*Have you already understood?*) or '*Unajua, ...*' *(You know...)* was striking to me[116]. Sure, partly this is to be attributed to the fact that respondents (sometimes with good reason) may have doubted my command of Kiswahili, or it simply being a part of 'automated' speech patterns. However, the aggregation of such check-backs in certain interview contexts led me to also interpret them as a testing of my alliance; I argue that what respondents were really asking was: '*do you agree?*' (see also Temple & Edwards 2002: 8). The only respondent that tried to prompt me to explicitly position myself politically was Leila: when I visited her at home for the first time, she caught me quite off-guard by asking very straightforwardly which 'side' I was on. Now it was my turn to become evasive, and I wriggled myself out of the situation by suggesting that it would not be my place to have a side, since I wasn't a Zanzibari. (Fieldnotes 06-01-2019) I think that it is reasonable to assume that most of my respondents asked themselves this question before, during and after out interactions; trying to classify me as 'close' or 'distant,' 'trustworthy' or 'suspicious', as 'ally' or 'adversary'. Different intersecting dimensions of my identity influenced this process: My gender guaranteed me an easier access and acceptance in women's spaces, my interest in talking to women was not deemed inappropriate or suspicious, and it was often the helpful basis for assumptions about shared gendered knowledge and solidarity. Issues that were thought of as 'female problems' – marriage, divorce, or concerns about children and motherhood, but also more delicate issues like sexualised harassment – were more readily communicated to me, even though they were quite intimate. As a fellow woman I was expected to understand and sympathize. Additional to my gender, my age and childless status at times de-constructed the hierarchy of research relationships, especially when I started to use motherhood as an access point to other, more obviously 'political' discussions. A great many of my informants could have easily been my mother themselves, which made it easier to be classed as a non-threatening junior eager to learn about the subtleties of life as a prospective wife and mother. Often, this greatly enhanced sharing, as well as 'closeness'.

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[116] E.g. during my short interview with the Bi Hawa, the *sheha* in Pemba, she asked me '…*umeshanifaham?*' *(…have you already understood me?)* seven times in only a little over 11 minutes. Additionally, most of these times, it sounded like she was making an affirmative statement, rather than asking a question. (Interview 1 with Bi Hawa, Pemba, 28-11-2019)

Another important attribute of my identity in the field – which both Saida and Bi Rehema, singled out as relevant to the process of knowledge production – were my race and nationality: both voiced their doubts whether I, as a white European (*mzungu*) and temporary visitor to the islands (*mgeni*), would ever be able to fully access and comprehend the type of knowledge I was interested in – due to my obvious distance to the context at hand, as well as to the fact that respondents would probably attach significant weight to these elements in their interpretation of me. Certainly, this played into many of my encounters in the field that were characterized by silences or evasions. Sometimes however, as I already mentioned, and as Saida also emphasized in the quote above, these aspects actually encouraged sharing, especially for those respondents affiliated with the opposition. To them, my being a white European marked an ideological 'closeness'; an assumed sympathetic stance towards their struggles, as well as a possible access to a receptive outside audience[117]. This assessment was of course mirrored in the judgement of my positionality by respondents close to the ruling party or by the government agents I encountered. I sometimes noticed what I perceived of as a certain defensiveness in their replies; like when CCM-loyalist Bi Khadija stressed that "[..] *at this time there is no conflict. Ah-ah [no]. Every person is supporting his or her party. There are many parties here in Zanzibar, a great deal of them.*"[118], to my inquiry about political tensions in the islands. I interpreted reactions like these, as reflective of the wariness of both the Zanzibari and Tanzanian governments towards what they regard as 'Western interference' into internal political matters (Throup 2016; Hirschler & Hofmeier 2019; see also fn. 107). Without a doubt, I was at times identified as belonging to this group of 'biased Western meddlers' by respondents, and certainly by government authorities. Finally, to those politically 'unexposed' women my identity might have represented a danger to be 'exposed', since talking to me would have invited interpretations about their political leanings. This might have been the reason why many remained evasive, both if interviews took place, or in avoiding to be interviewed in the first place.

Finally, 'closeness' was consciously produced through language use: I conducted the vast majority of my field encounters – including interviews, informal conversations and administrative matters – in Kiswahili. Overall, I dare say, my experience would have been radically different without my language skills. They, for instance, enabled me to approach a

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[117] Although Bi Halima for instance also criticised that such outsiders, like election observers, or representatives of foreign missions, leave and publish their reports, but do not end up taking an active stand for those they saw wronged in elections or conflicts. (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019) See Fuglesang (1994: 25) on scepticism towards foreign researchers in Lamu.

[118] "*[...] katika kipindi hichi [...] hakuna umgomvi. Ah-ah. Kila mtu anatetea chama chake. Kuna vyama vyingi chungu nzima hapa Zanzibar.*" (Interview 2 with Bi Khadija, Unguja, 13-11-2018)

diverse sample of women and I was able to understand parts of conversations that were not directly aimed at me – but most importantly, they allowed my respondents to express themselves in a language that they felt comfortable speaking in, and their statements were not mediated through a translator, whose 'ally-status' would have also needed to be assessed. Still, conducting lengthy interviews in Kiswahili, some replete with linguistic variations unknown to me, and listening, writing and understanding simultaneously proved to be a challenge. I have no doubt that many of the intricacies of my respondents' statements were (and continue to be) lost on me, and that I missed multiple opportunities at gaining deeper insights because I simply did not grasp the full meaning of a certain comment in time. These obvious deficiencies are aggravated by the fact that Kiswahili is a language riddled with word play, polysemy, and hidden meanings – a characteristic that is also consciously employed at times (Askew 2003: 619; Fuglesang 1994: 26; Stiles & Thompson 2015: 24; Topan 2004: 218).

Further, understanding a word, sentence, or the gist of a narrative is a far way off from understanding the underlying intentions of a person in sharing something, their choices to remain silent about other topics, or fully comprehending the experiences of the person uttering it. The fact that I had the same gender as all of my respondents, that I chose to dress in ways similar to them[119], and spoke and understood their first language, should not mislead me into thinking that I could ever fully understand or share their experiences of being-in-the-world as Zanzibari women and mothers. Importantly – as Saida's comment above also highlights – I spoke and acted from a position of relative privilege in relation to my respondents: the vulnerabilities that shaped their testimony did never fully apply to me (cf. Thomson et. al 2013: 3, 8). Yes, the government exerted pressure on me and could have put an end to my research endeavour, but I always knew that I would leave the islands eventually. My long-term career or my family's access to government services were never on the line. Thus, my 'knowledge' of my respondents' experiences remained and will always remain 'partial' (Mullings 1999: 337; see also Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009: 1; Schnegg 2015: 29, 41; Thomson et al. 2013: 1).

On a related note, not being a mother myself, the knowledge and practices I try to analyse and interpret within this thesis are, as of yet, merely theory to me (although, as I argued above, this was helpful at times). Should I ever have children myself, I, in contrast to many women in Zanzibar, do not anticipate that I will have to struggle economically in order to facilitate their survival and education, or assume that I will, at some point, be left to fend for myself and my

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[119] Throughout my stay, I adapted to local ways of female dress by covering my head and hair with a loose scarf or turban and wearing floor-length and shoulder-covering clothes; also to set myself apart from the many other Western foreigners in the archipelago.

dependants by a partner without any monetary support. Similarly, although childbirth is surely a scary and vulnerable experience for women everywhere[120], I do not presume that it will be like 'bingo'[121].

It thus becomes clear that there are certain pitfalls and clear limitations to consider as one engages in 'alliance-' or 'trust'-building' as a field researcher. Another flipside of such practices, namely the desire to preserve 'closeness' or trust established through conscious micro-choices, significantly impacted my process of data co-creation at times: frequently, when I looked at the list of questions that I came to an interview with, I felt like a terrible researcher, noticing all the questions that I had skipped fearing they could alienate my interlocutor. I routinely agreed with my respondents on everything, scared that a critical comment, or insistent probing would not only elicit denials or evasions, but also end the research relationship, or at least call into question my status as an 'ally'. This was emotionally straining at times, as I found myself affirming statements that would have elicited at least a respectful challenging in other circumstances (see also Begley 2013: 77)[122]. I also began to watch very closely what I said or shared about my research in public and became increasingly concerned about the respondents of 'one side' knowing that I spoke to those 'of the other side,' as well as about my visibility ('exposure') when I entered the houses of opposition party members (see e.g. Fieldnotes 11-12-2018). Witnessing my own 'silencing' was deeply distressing to me; it made me doubt whether I really could 'access' the quality data I needed. Nonetheless, as frustrating it was to observe my own self-censorship; and as troubling it was at times, to constantly be on my guard, these experiences – as different authors have very aptly stated – constitute the proverbial 'tip of the iceberg' in comparison to what many of my respondents felt every day (Bouka 2013: 120; Leegwater 2015: 49-50; Thomson et al. 2013: 6)[123]. In the end, they helped me to make a better sense of the context of my research, and encouraged me to accept women's silences: many of them kept quiet, not because they had nothing to say, but because there were too many reasons to say nothing.

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[120] See e.g. recent reports about widespread occurrences of abuse and mistreatment of women during childbirth (e.g. Gimson 2018; Hill 2020, WHO 2019).

[121] "'Giving birth is like bingo', a young woman from my neighbourhood in Zanzibar Town told me. 'You have a fifty-fifty chance of survival.'" (Beckmann 2015b: 59)

[122] This parallels my reactions to the inappropriate behaviour by the employee of the 2nd VP's office; just like Johansson, "[…] I hesitated to respond from within my own ethnocentric conceptions of gender relations and definitions of 'harassment'. I doubted myself. Was I reading the context right? Was my experience of this encounter […] really legitimate? Immobilised by navel-gazing, I responded to […] sexual advances by politely smiling, sweetly declining, joking or mildly chastising, not wanting to cause offence. Such responses, in the murky landscape of cultural translation, might have been misread as uncertainty rather than the clear 'no' that I instinctively wanted to voice." (2015: 58-59; see also Kloß 2017: 402)

[123] According to Afrobarometer, 81,24% of respondents in Zanzibar claimed to be careful about what they said about politics 'often' to 'always' (Afrobarometer 2016/2018).

(4.4) Conclusive Remarks

In the end, my research experience in Zanzibar was a process that was never entirely controlled by me – respondents, government officials, and even my own subconscious and emotions, played a role in shaping and directing it. It was a learning experience, and looking back on my six months in Zanzibar, I can see the methodological shortcomings, and the many "stones left unturned" (cf. Berckmoes 2013: 128). The question whether it was all worth it – possibly having endangered some research participants, or having stirred up disturbing memories with others – for the self-serving purpose of this thesis and my degree, remains as unsettling to me as it does to many others (see e.g. Begley 2013: 81). In the end, I can only hope that my respondents will find themselves adequately represented in the version of 'truth' that I present here. In this chapter I hope to have clarified, that there were many different factors and dimensions that shaped the process of knowledge production for this thesis; influencing, and enhancing each other, or cancelling each other out, both on my side as 'the researcher' and on the side of my respondents as 'the researched'.

(5) *'Every woman must also be a mother.'* – Womanhood, Motherhood and Mothering in Zanzibar

I first meet Subira, a single mother and political activist, in a restaurant in Zanzibar Town in December 2018. Over the past few weeks, I noticed that in informal talks and interviews, women from all different kinds of backgrounds prominently invoked their motherhood when talking about their lives and positions in society, as well as their navigation of the (political) context of uncertainty in the archipelago. Bi Rehema, for example, a mother of three and a former CUF-politician, highlighted her identity as a mother at the very beginning of our interview, even before discussing her many political activities and successes. Bi Rukia did the same. When asked to tell me about their lives, my informants often not only described their own activities, but also recounted where their children stood in life: their current educational levels, their jobs, or marital status. Subira is the first of my informants that I ask directly about the importance of motherhood for the experience of women in Zanzibar. *'Ah yes.'* she tells me enthusiastically, *'Motherhood is everything for the woman. Every woman must also be a mother.'* [124]

Subira's highly affirmative response confirmed my perception of the close interlinkage of motherhood and womanhood in Zanzibar and led me to further develop ideas about the influence of motherhood as institution and resource, as well as of mothering as practice, on women's navigation of (political) uncertainty in Zanzibar. Given that, as I demonstrate below, maternity along the Swahili Coast is often only mentioned in passing in the scientific literature, I first present a relatively detailed account of the interlinkage of motherhood and womanhood, as well as mothering practices in this chapter, before I move on to its connections and linkages to the political sphere.

(5.1) Considering the Literature: Maternity as an Afterthought?

In the growing body of literature on gender, gender relations, sexuality and women along the Swahili Coast and in Zanzibar, topics like marriage and weddings, as well as divorce, female initiation and sexual instruction, sex segregation, and spirit possession have been approached by a range of different scholars, mostly female anthropologist (see Caplan 1976; Fuglesang 1994; Hanak 1996; Hirsch 1998; Keefe 2016; Larsen 1995; Stiles 2005; Stiles & Thompson (eds) 2015; Strobel 1979; Thompson 2011). Motherhood, its intimate connection with attaining

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[124] *'Ah ndiyo, umama ndo kila kitu kwa mwanamke. Kila mwanamke lazima ni mama.'* (Notes from Interview 1 with Subira, Unguja, 25-12-2018)

full status as a woman, the position of mothers in society, as well as specific maternal practices, however, are often merely mentioned in passing:

> Marriage *and childbearing* are a woman's primary accomplishments and status markers in this community [...] (Keefe 2016: 125; my emphasis.)

> [...] to marry *and to have children is the aim of both women and men* and the main concern of their families and relatives. (Larsen 2015: 222; my emphasis.)

Both in the literature and the local context, therefore, marriage and motherhood typically seem to be thought together, albeit, especially in academic works, the primary focus is rather on the former than the latter; making motherhood and mothering afterthoughts of sorts to the elaborate ceremonies of Swahili weddings, sexual initiation and sexual instruction. This omission is surprising to me; on the one hand, since their roles as mothers seemed to be so very important to many of my female informants, and on the other hand, because marriage and sexuality within marriage can in a very basic sense be thought of as principally aiming for the realization of mother- or parenthood within a morally sanctioned space; a claim that most of the inhabitants of the Swahili Coast would probably corroborate[125]. Within this chapter, I will thus make a first attempt at exploring some aspects of Swahili motherhood and mothering to be able to establish the maternal standpoint my respondents spoke and navigated from. The fact that motherhood and mothering were emergent themes of my research is of course a limitation, and I would strongly argue for the need of other researchers to engage with this topic in the future.

(5.2) Sex, Gender, and Womanhood in Zanzibar

As I already indicated in Chapter 3, and as also becomes clear in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, womanhood and motherhood are intimately linked in Zanzibar. Thus, a brief exploration of local ideas about sex, gender[126] and gender relations at large is surely due at this point: In Zanzibar, as well as along the Swahili Coast in general, local ideas about these concepts have long structured and organized society in a crucial manner; in most works on

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[125] Cf. e.g. Hirsch's quotation of a *kadhi*'s ruling on a divorce case in Mombasa: "'The main aims of the marriage are tranquillity, mutual love and mercy *and procreation*.'" (1998: 9; my emphasis); Demovic (2007: 232; my emphasis): "'*To have children together* and to work together nicely.' Those are the two reasons that women in Jambiani [Unguja] unanimously cite for desiring marriage.", or Fuglesang (1994: 17): "The marriage system in Lamu has first and foremost functioned to ensure procreation.". Additionally, in Islam in general, childbirth is regarded as the "natural outcome of marriage" (Schleifer 1996: 51).

[126] The difference between sex and gender made in feminist studies and related fields should be sufficiently clear to most scholars today. 'Sex' on the one hand, identifies the anatomical traits that mark a person as male or female, although there is also the possibility of inconclusive sex markers and discussions about the constructed nature of sex. 'Gender' on the other hand, refers to the social roles that people consciously and unconsciously learn to perform according to their (assigned) biological sex within different societies. (McHugh 2007: 124-125) In Zanzibar, there does not seem to be a heightened awareness of a distinction between sex and gender; with bodily differences commonly understood as reflecting psychological differences between men and women (Larsen 1995: 205-206). The Swahili word *'jinsia'* can be translated as both sex *and* gender (Mohamed 2011).

women in this area, at some point, the reader will come across a mention of sex(ual) segregation or seclusion (sometimes referred to as *Purdah*) as an important part of everyday life (cf. Askew 1999: 74). In Zanzibar today it is, according to different scholars, still possible to speak of disparate, gendered life worlds and practices of women and men in the archipelago due to their spatial and physical separation in various contexts (e.g. Larsen 2009: 22; Stiles & Thompson 2015: 22). Underpinning local concepts of sex, gender, and the need for sex segregation is the notion of a complementarity of the sexes and their fundamental 'natural' difference (Demovic 2007: 15, 164-165; Fuglesang 1994: 88; Larsen 1995: 36). Respondents' statements like *"Ahh, because we mothers/women are naturally like this. The way we were created,"*[127] confirm the ongoing validity of this idea and add a distinctive religious component to it. The consequent notion, reproduced by Kjersti Larsen and Minou Fuglesang, that women are inferior to men, both in terms of physical and psychological power or strength (*nguvu*), having less *akili* (reason) and less self-restraint, thus making their subordination to male authority needed and natural (Fuglesang 1994: 88-89; Larsen 1995: 31; 207-201) is, I would contend, not as universally held in its extreme form as in the 1980s and early 1990s when these two researchers conducted their fieldwork on the Swahili Coast. It was certainly not voiced, and sometimes even emphatically challenged by the educated women and women of the younger generation within my sample. Some men, on the other hand, do seem to hold onto this view: Often, when I spoke to men about the topic of my research, I was met by a derisive smile, raised eyebrows and the suggestion to turn my attention to men's 'more valuable' perspectives instead. These attitudes echo the 'devaluation of female speech' that Hirsch (1998), Stiles and Thompson (2015), and Thompson (2011) outline: 'women's talk' is typically thought to revolve around trivialities like gossip, weddings and consumer goods in contrast to men's 'serious' discussions of matters like religion and, importantly, politics (Hirsch 1998: 65; Thompson 2011: 428).

Moving on from the way that women are naturally thought *to be*, to how they *should behave*, in order to be acknowledged as honourable and respectable (*ya heshima*), I would agree that ideal 'female' character traits like 'shyness, respect and passivity', as mentioned by Beckmann (2015a: 119) and Larsen (2015: 227) in recent works, continue to be regarded as making for a 'good' woman's character in Zanzibar. Countless times I was told by men and women alike that '*women in Zanzibar are shy*'[128], for instance when I narrated the challenges of my research

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[127] *"Ahh, kwa sababu naturally wamama ndo tuko hivyo. […] Tulivyoumbwa."* (Interview 1 with Bi Farida, Unguja, 31-10-2018)

[128] Interestingly, even if this sentiment was voiced in Kiswahili, the English word 'shy' was almost always used. I think however that the Kiswahili term '*haya*' is much more fitting. This encompasses 'shyness' in the English sense of the word (cf. Wamtilia 2016: 'the state of not being able to look a person in the face'), but also signifies 'bashfulness, modesty', 'humility, respect', 'an upright character' or "a person's attitude to refrain from doing

to Zanzibari acquaintances, friends or respondents. Older informants told me about the sheer inconceivability of a woman standing up in front of a group of men *"[…] and then just talk"*[129], or their nervousness while doing so at the beginning of their political careers. This female 'shyness' seems to be the epitome of Swahili restraint and reticence that I discussed in my methodology. The latter examples additionally suggest that there were (and are) clear differences in female behaviour according to the composition of their 'audience' (cf. Stiles & Thompson 2015: 22-23) – in certain all-female settings, women's behaviour can be quite different, often not 'shy' at all[130].

Another crucial and related component of female *heshima* (respectability) in Zanzibar is 'covered-ness', as Nuru explained to me:

> *We Zanzibaris are not used to being naked, [for] example we have gotten used to cover ourselves with the hijab. [If] you come across a Zanzibari, [and] she is wearing her shawl nicely, and is a 'well-covered person' (mstiri), this is a case of Zanzibariness.*[131]

Interestingly, the translations of *'mstiri/msitiri'* and the corresponding verb *'-sitiri'*, seem to both refer to the physical act of covering-up, and to the ability to hide or protect someone else's secrets or disgrace (cf. Knappert & van Kessel 2010; Mohamed 2011; TUKI 2001). I would thus argue that Nuru in her description means to refer to a woman who, on the one hand, covers herself in an aesthetic way with the different types of religious head- and body coverings in fashion, and, at the same time, complies with the Swahili ethics of concealment and reticence. The ideal Zanzibari woman is thus a 'covered person' in appearance *and* behaviour. All my respondents (and the overwhelming majority of women in Zanzibar) covered according to their interpretations of Qur'anic ordinances[132]. This was usually related to the deep commitment to

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something because of too much respect given to another person say of higher authority, status, etc." (TUKI 2001). Additionally, it can also mean 'shame, disgrace, dishonour', which could be caused by the kind of behaviour that goes against the norms stipulated in the first group of translations. (TUKI 2001; Knappert & van Kessel 2010; Wamtilia 2016) *Haya* is thus something that women should possess, should act upon and should not violate - neither the *haya* of others, nor their own.

[129] Interview 1 with Bi Raissa, Pemba, 24-11-2018.

[130] Examples of this are e.g. the scenes of sexual instruction that Thompson (2015) describes, where (especially older women's) language is vulgar and highly explicit (see e.g. 191, 193; also: Hirsch 1998: 65). During the wedding celebrations that I took part in, especially on the busses transporting the female guests of the groom's side to the house of the bride, several (middle-aged to older) women seemed to be competing amongst themselves to make the loudest and most juicy comments. On one occasion, a popular song by the Tanzanian musicians Diamond Platumnz and Rayvanny, *'Mwanza Nyegezi'* (so provocative that is was banned by the National Arts Council of Tanzania (BASATA); cf. Matiko 2018), was blasted on full volume, and young and old women joined in the chorus "*Ehh nyege, nyege.*" (*'Ehh, horny, horny'*), while others danced suggestively in the centre aisle of the bus. At the end of the song a middle-aged woman hollered, "*Tumepata nyege, sasa tutombowe!*" (*'We have gotten horny, now let's get fucked!'*), reaping loud laughter and affirmative shrieks from the entire group. (Fieldnotes, December 20, 2018)

[131] *"Wazanzibari hatukuzoea kuwa uchi, mfano kama tumezoea kujitanda hijabu. Unamkuta Mzanzibari amevaa mtandio wake vizuri, na ni mstiri mzuri, hilo ndo kesi ya kizanzibari."* (Interview 1 with Nuru, Unguja, 19-01-2019)

[132] Even members of the Christian minority in Zanzibar, be they Zanzibar-born or immigrants from the mainland, often do cover – like e.g. my respondent Joyce, when out in public. Bi Rehema also explained covering as such a

Islamic identity and (global) Muslim culture that many of them felt; just like men all along the Swahili coast, many Zanzibari women are aspiring to become better Muslims, and thereby gain prestige and honour (*heshima*) within their society (cf. Demovic 2016: 6-7; Larsen 2013: 76; Larsen 2015: 210; Nuotio 2006: 206; Stiles & Thompson 2015: 1; Thompson 2011: 431). Being Muslim is an extremely crucial component of 'Zanzibariness' (cf. Demovic 2007: 156; Larsen 2013: 76) and, as Nuru put it above, women express this publicly and proudly in the ways that they dress (cf. Demovic 2007: 71; Fair 1998: 84). In addition to covering in public and performing the required prayers at home, several of my female respondents regularly attended private qur'anic lessons, which speaks to these women's profound personal commitment to their faith.

Furthermore, the question of the division of labour between men and women is central to discussions on gender and gender relations in the isles. In my conversations with informants there typically was a tendency to first describe the 'ideal' – the norm as stipulated by *utamaduni* (culture) and *dini* (religion) – followed by a statement that highlighted how things had changed. Good examples would for instance be the following statements by Subira and Nuru, both young, professional, working women:

> *According to culture and religion, women stay at home, they protect the family. Men go outside and 'search risk'. These days things are changing a bit though.[133]* (Subira, Unguja)

> *Because at first, the position of women was that they were housewives, also persons to be searched for. Meaning the man is roaming about and struggling for her, to bring the woman her needs and those of the family in general. But right now, it has become different. Meaning the woman is struggling, the man is struggling.[134]* (Nuru, Unguja)

In these statements, the (formerly) strong connection between masculinity and the ability to provide is clearly highlighted (cf. Larsen 1995: 64). Sufficient maintenance of the family by a husband through provision of clothes and food, lead to legitimate authority over women (ibid.: 208), and insufficient provision is a reason women could (and can) claim a divorce for in front of an Islamic judge (*kadhi*) (McMahon 2015: 34). However, due to the substantial changes taking place in Zanzibar since the 1980s – chronicled in Chapters 2 and 3 – the costs of living, as well as people's dependency on cash have been on the rise. Consequently, nowadays a double

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fundamental feature of Zanzibari culture (which to her, in its essence is Muslim) that even Christians assimilate to it (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018; see also: Anwar n.d.).

[133] *'Katika utamaduni na dini wanawake wanakaa nyumbani, wanatunza familia. Wanaume wanatoka kutafuta risk. Siku hizi inabadilika kidogo lakini.'* (Notes from Interview 1 with Subira, Unguja, 25-12-2018)

[134] *"Kwa sababu mwanzo, nafasi ya wanawake ilikuwa kama ni mama wa nyumbani pia mtu wa kutafutiwa. Kwamba mwanume anahangaika, ampelekee mwanamke mahitaji yake na familia kwa ujumla. Lakini saahivi imekuwa ni tofauti. Kwamba mwanamke anahagaika, mwanaume anahangaika [...]."* (Interview 1 with Nuru, Unguja, 19-01-2019)

income is often necessary to navigate financial and economic uncertainties. It is thus inevitable for most women to contribute to the household income – 'to roam about and struggle' like a husband. (Demovic 2007: 233 & 2016: 12, 19; Keshodkar 2013: 139, 144) These new economic pressures – often referred to as *'maisha magumu'* (the difficult life) (Keshodkar 2013: 58; Larsen 2009: 26) – and the rising numbers of educated women, are clearly leading to a shift in local ideas about gender and gender relations (Keshodkar 2013: 139-141). While in the past it might have been honourable for women to stay inside, practice seclusion, and take care of 'home affairs', the definition of *heshima* (honour) in terms of work and female movement outside of the house is transforming to include more diverse ways of life and work (ibid. 144-147).

It should be noted, that the concrete exercise of, and meanings accorded to seclusion or veiling (as a form of 'mobile seclusion'), as well as the attached notions of female *heshima* and mobility, have always been characterized by significant variation and fluidity in Zanzibar: concomitant with historical developments like Omani settlement and British colonialism (cf. Alpers 1984: 678, 681; Askew 1999: 81; Fair 1994: 82, 84, 86), the emancipation of former slaves (Fair 1998: 81-84), the entry of certain groups of women into the workforce (Decker 2014: 1, 4, 8) or economic liberalization, growing foreign influence through tourism and a re-connection with the global Muslim world (Caplan 2015; 100; Demovic 2007: 262, 269; Demovic 2016: 6; Fuglesang 1994: 15, 197; Nuotio 2006: 191, 202, 206; Turner 2009: 238, 260-261), seclusion practices increased, receded, or changed. This was (and is) also usually dependent on factors like urban or rural residence, class, or ethnicity, which provide for variation not only across time, but also space.

Overall, it can be said that, although the premise of the 'essential' difference between men and women, dependent on their biological sex, is widely shared, the consequent gender roles, gender relations and surrounding religious and cultural ideologies are subject to profound negotiations in present-day Zanzibar. Frictions and clashes, but also overlaps and contradictory attitudes between and towards different currents of opinions are perceptible. I would like to point out here, that these tensions should not be understood over-simplistically as a clash of 'tradition' and 'modernity'; as I demonstrated above, gender ideologies and roles have always been in flux. They are socially and historically constructed, just as ideas about what is 'traditional' or 'modern' at a certain point in time and space. I would thus argue that additional to navigating a tension-ridden, unpredictably political context and an uncertain environment, Zanzibari women often navigate the field of different and clashing ideas and ideologies of what

it means to be a good Muslim woman (read: Zanzibari woman) today – in their everyday lives, and in relation to 'the political'.

Motherhood as institution and resource, as well as mothering as a practice are central constitutive aspects of Zanzibari womanhood which, even though they seem quite 'stable' as concepts, have also undergone significant change in recent years. This is what I turn my attention to now.

(5.3) *'Who compares to mother(s)?'*: Motherhood as Institution in Zanzibar

Who compares to mother(s), honour for mother(s),
that suffering of carrying me for nine months in your stomach,
my compassion for you mother,
what shall I give you, honour for mother(s),
mother, you suffered the day you put me out in the world,
what shall I give you, the price of your upbringing, I cannot pay it.
Mother, who compares to mother(s), who compares to mother(s)?[135]

The notion, that the 'natural' and biological differences between men and women translate to psychological distinctions and differences in the individual disposition of men and women, is reflected in local ideas about motherhood as well: Mothering is thought to come 'naturally' to women and to lead to their more peaceful character. While women might be thought of in a 'deficient' way (i.e. *less* reason, *less* self-restraint), the more positive share of their assumed characteristics lies right within these 'deficiencies': having less self-restraint, they are more emotional and thus more sensitive to the needs and emotions of others. Nurturing and mothering are therefore thought to be 'in their nature'. (Fuglesang 1994: 89-90)

In general, children, and thus parenthood, are, and have been, highly desired by both men and women in Zanzibar in the present (Beckmann 2015b: 61; Larsen 2015: 222), as well as in the past (McMahon 2015: 37). For women, the importance of motherhood and childbearing is such that complete status as an adult woman can only be fully attained as a mother (and, ideally, a wife) (Beckmann 2015a: 199-120; 2015b: 61; Fuglesang 1994: 256; Keefe 2016: 123-125, Kielmann 1998: 141). Of course, this strong emphasis on (biological) motherhood in Zanzibar leaves women struggling with infertility, prolonged single status, or simply choosing to remain childless and/or unmarried, in a difficult position. Bi Sauda, for instance, reported to me that she was divorced two times – within the second and first year of marriage respectively – because she failed to conceive. Both her and my research assistant agreed that this was a prevalent

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[135] *Nani kama mama, heshima kwa mama/Yale mateso ulinibeba miezi mitisa tumboni mwako/pole sana mama/Nikupe nini, heshima kwa mama/mama, uliteseka siku ya kunitoa duniani/nikupe nini, thamani ya malezi yako siwezi kuyalipa./Mama, nani kama mama, nani kama mama?* (Christian Bella ft. Ommy Dimpoz: "Nani Kama Mama"; see YouTube 2015a)

occurrence in Zanzibar[136] (see also Kielmann 1998: 141-142). It is however commonplace for women who, for whatever reasons, are not biological mothers, to be involved in the raising of children of the extended family, who might live as permanent or temporary foster children in their household; a widespread practice throughout much of the African continent (Grant & Yeatman 2012: 279-280; Lawson et al. 2016: 2-3). The mobility of children outside of their birth family is quite normal in Zanzibar and is usually purpose-driven and targeted; for reasons like better educational opportunities and care or the divorce, migration or death of the biological parents (Demovic 2007: 160; 236-237; Gaydosh 2019: 1667; Kielmann 1998: 142; Lawson et al. 2016: 3, 14; McGruder 1999: 25). A number of my respondents talked about being raised by, and living with a range of different relatives throughout their childhoods when they recounted their life histories to me, and one of my still childless informants told me that,

> *[…] in terms of children I have them, whom I raise. I have the children of my sister and the children of my brother. I take care of them in the mornings [to get them ready] to go to school, and in the evenings, I am with them there [at home]. On that account, I can join in childcare.[137]* (Nuru, Unguja)

The high prevalence of child fostering and joint childcare might thus 'soften the blow' of childlessness in Zanzibar, while it also unburdens individual mothers from shouldering the sole responsibility of childbearing and -rearing (see also Demovic 2007: 236-237).

I cannot say much about the status of women who are childless by choice or who fail to form a relationship with their children for whatever reasons, because only two of my 25 respondents did not have any children of their own (yet). Be that as it may, Bi Salama made an interesting remark when I asked about the whereabouts of her children after she was divorced; what I expected to be a painful topic, since they stayed separated from her with her ex-husband's mother, did not seem to bother her much. She claims that her separation from them was due to the fact that, *"I only knew how to give birth. […] I myself only know how to give birth".[138]* The apparent nonchalance with which she talked about this issue, as well as the giggles her response subsequently elicited from herself, my research assistant and a neighbourhood woman who was also present during the interview, stuck with me. I suspect that the amusement was both directed at the fact that Bi Salama's lack of a relationship with her children was indeed unusual, but at the same time not completely unheard of for those present. The implied difference between the 'knowledge' required for the performance of birthing work and reproduction, and that for actual

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[136] Interview 1 with Bi Sauda, Unguja, 24-10-2018.
[137] *"[…] kwa upande wa watoto ninao, naolea. […]. Ninao watoto wa dada, […] na watoto wa kaka […] Nawashugulikia asubuhi kwa kwenda shule, na usiku nakuwa niko nao pale. Kwa hiyo naweza kujumuika kwenye ulezi."* (Interview 1 with Nuru, Unguja, 19-01-2019)
[138] *"[…] ilikuwa mimi najua kuzaa tu. Najua kuzaa tu miye."* (Interview 1 with Bi Salama, Unguja, 22-10-2018)

mothering, speaks to an acknowledgement on the part of Zanzibaris that mothering is in fact learned and performed, not an automatic or 'natural' instinct.

There however still seems to be a degree of ambivalence, as to who 'counts' as a 'real' mother in the context at hand: In Swahili, the term 'mama' can mean mother, as well as maternal aunt[139]. It is also used as a polite address of women in general, and the term '*akina mama*'[140] is commonly employed as a synonym for '*wanawake*' (women). In a longer discussion about motherhood with one of my key informants, Bi Rehema, I asked her whether *mama* and woman are interchangeable in Swahili – giving as examples that I was often politely approached as *mama* by people who did not know my name, and that she herself in our first interview called several women (amongst others childless German chancellor Angela Merkel) '*yule mama*' (that mother). After a moment of reflection, Bi Rehema replied by narrating the succession of life stages that women in Zanzibar typically pass through:

> *For us here, there is the girl child, then we have the kigori [a girl before her first menstruation]. Then she enters into being a girl. After being a girl, she becomes a woman. Woman – mother; mother – grandmother. Yes. So, these are like statuses for certain times. But you classify her according to the age. But it can be that she is in the state of being only a woman, you see, and you can just call her 'mama', or 'mama' may be the same as woman. But a mother is the one who has given birth. She has given birth.[141]*

Bi Rehema did not completely resolve the vague distinction between classifying any adult woman as *'mama',* or merely women who actually have had children. In practice, this is of course not always common knowledge, so people will use age as an orientation and assume that women of a certain age are most likely mothers. Therefore, I was called *mama*, and other women of a higher age are referred to as such, even though, some (like chancellor Merkel) might not have children of their own. In Zanzibar, the percentage of women past the child-bearing age who have remained without children is extremely low: in 2012 it was valued at 5,2% for the age group of 45- to 49-year olds – which can be estimated to amount to only around

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[139] Although in this context, sometimes the qualification *mama mdogo* (small mother) or *mama mkubwa* (big mother) is used to specify that an aunt is meant, as well as to qualify whether it is an older or a younger sister of the mother. When the aunt is addressed directly however, typically just *'mama'* is used. On the Tanzania mainland, and along its Swahili Coast, it is also common to address women as '*mama*' plus the name of their first-born child and not with their own name, as soon as they have given birth (see e.g. Keefe's (2016) naming of her respondents). In Zanzibar this does not seem to be as prevalent. The only family I knew, in which this was practiced was that of a Muslim migrant couple originating from the mainland.

[140] '*akina*' usually denotes a group of people that share a certain attribute: *akina mama* = women, mothers; *akina baba* = men, fathers; *akina Hannah* = Hannah's people, i.e. Hannah's (extended) family. (cf. Höftmann & Herms 2010)

[141] "*[…] [K]wetu sisi, […] kuna mwanamke mtoto, […] halafu tuna mwanamke kigori. Halafu anaingia anakuwa msichana. Msichana halafu ndo anakuwa mwanamke. Mwanamke – mama, mama - bibi. Eh. Sasa hizo ni kama vyeo kwa wakati fulani […]. Lakini ilikuwa ni […] zile age unampanga. Lakini anaweza akawa katika hali ya kuwa ni mwanamke tu, umeona, unaweza tu kumwita mama, au mama akawa ni mwamnamke. Lakini mama ni yule ambaye amezaa. Amezaa.*" (Interview 3 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 23-01-2019)

700 women in absolute figures (0,1% of the total female population in 2012[142]) – being a woman while *not* being a mother is certainly out of the norm in Zanzibar. For Bi Rehema, the successive progression from girl to woman, mother and grandmother is thus a natural evolution, in the sense that every woman *must* become a mother, as also implied in Subira's quote at the beginning of this chapter.

In her explanation, Bi Rehema firmly accentuated the centrality of experiencing birthing labour for attaining 'authentic' status as a mother in Zanzibar: "*But a mother is the one who has given birth. She has given birth.*". Karina Kielmann (1998) confirms this, claiming that in Pemba, generally speaking "[…] [the infertile woman] is considered useless *because she has not experienced labor pains* and is often treated with contempt by her husband's relatives […]" (141; my emphasis). In contrast to scholarly assertions that "[…] one becomes a mother by practicing motherhood, not by giving birth" (Beckham et al. 2015: 167; see also: Ruddick 2009: 306), Zanzibari notions of motherhood seem to centre on the formative experience of pregnancy and birthing labour – the ultimate self-sacrifice of one's own body to another being. Although other avenues of attaining motherhood status are practiced, this points to a somehow 'deficient' status of other-mothers without any biological offspring, after all.

In general, mothers – be they biological, adoptive or co-mothers – are highly respected and idealised in Zanzibar and Tanzania as a whole (cf. e.g. Beckham et al. 2015: 170). This is for example reflected in the pop-song that I quoted at the beginning of this subchapter. Building around the adage '*Nani kama mama?*' (Who compares to mother(s)?) it underlines the exceptional self-sacrifice and strength of mothers and stresses the eternal *heshima* (honour) due to them (see also Beckmann 2015a: 126; Larsen 1995: 209, 274)[143]. The proverb and song however also place the entire responsibility of caring for children exclusively with mothers, as, implicitly, no one else *could* perform mothering work like them (cf. Schalge 2004: 152). This illustrates the fundamental ambivalence of motherhood as an institution; it may simultaneously be a source of respect and high social standing, and a crushing burden that can develop into a 'trap' for some women.

In Zanzibar, with its predominantly Muslim culture, the respect and honour reserved for mothers might be especially pronounced, since, as Peteet writes, "Islamic discourse elevates mothers to near saintliness […]." (2002: 136). In line with this, Bi Rehema invoked Islamic

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[142] This percentage is based on approximate calculations, guided by NBS (2013: 23-25) and SMZ (2019: 9) statistics.

[143] And it is surely not the only, or first artistic interpretation of this: a YouTube search for 'Nani kama mama' yields countless other songs, by renowned Tanzanian musicians and groups, as well as several religious lectures on the topic (see: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=nani+kama+mama).

doctrines when I asked her about the position of mothers in Zanzibar: "*We have received this from our Prophet Mohammed – peace be upon him,*"[144] she replied. She then went on to recount one of the most important hadiths on motherhood:

> […] A man came to Allah's Apostle and said, 'O Apostle of Allah! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me? The Prophet said, 'Your mother.' The man said, 'Then who?' The Prophet said, 'Your mother.' The man further said, 'Then who?' The Prophet said, 'Your mother.' The man said again 'Then who?' The Prophet said, 'Then your father.' (Schleifer: 1996: 8)

Bi Rehema provided three arguments for the special status of mothers, which are not given within the hadith, but which she connected to the three 'positions' accorded to mothers by the Prophet: first, she invoked the experience of pregnancy (*uja-uzito*), and second the pain of childbirth (*uchungu*), qualifying them as solitary ordeals: "*This is hers alone, there is no one that can help her […].*"[145] The final argument Bi Rehema gave was the breastfeeding (*kunyonesha*) of the child which is required for two years by the Qur'an (see also Schleifer 1996: 69). Again, this highlights the exclusive self-sacrifice expected from mothers, who like the four "noble mothers of paradise" – Mary, Asiya, Khadhija and Fatima – are supposed to "[donate] their own bodies, identities and internal volition" for the higher purpose of motherhood (Kueny 2013: 109).

(5.4) *'The bitterness of the child is known only to its mother'*: Mothering in Zanzibar

The bodily experience of birthing labour with its transformative pain and danger (see Beckmann 2015b: 59, 61; Haws 2009: 55) – a liminal experience *par excellence* – is thus a central feature of the practice of mothering in Zanzibar. The notion of 'bitterness' is central in this context: *uchungu* is the Swahili term for labour contractions and other pain associated with birth, but also for bitterness (both taste-wise and emotional), pain, anger or sadness (cf. TUKI 2001; Mohamed 2011; Murungi 2013)[146]. The proverb quoted in the subheading above, '*The bitterness of the child is known [only] to [its] mother.*' ('*Uchungu wa mwana ajue ni mama*'), plays on this ambiguity: meaning on one level, that only a mother could know the pain of giving birth (cf. Farsi (1958) 1973: 45), on another, that she knows the troubles and struggles related to raising a child, and on yet another level, that the mother, through the close bond formed with her child during pregnancy, birth and by virtue of (ideally) being its primary caretaker most

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[144] "*Hii tumepata kutoka kwa mtume wetu Mohammed,* [in Arabic:] *Sall'Allahu alayhi wasalam.*" (Interview 3 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 23-01-2019)
[145] "*Lile ni lake peke yake, hakuna mtu anayeweza kumsaidia […].*" (ibid.)
[146] *Uchungu* interestingly also has a 'political' component: Zanzibar's first president Abeid Amani Karume gave a famous speech on citizenship only being attained through feeling *uchungu*, i.e. the bitterness and pain of and for one's country (cf. Arnold Koenings 2018: 183).

intimately knows his or her pains and challenges and can comfort them best[147]. Additionally, the proverb could also be related to the agony of losing children that – in the opinion of some – is primarily borne by mothers as well (cf. Caplan 1995: 135).

These strong associations drawn between birth, struggle, bitterness and children are abound in Swahili culture. They are for instance reflected in the custom of feeding new-born babies honey and aloe – "to show […] that 'life is both sweet and bitter'" (Beckmann 2015b: 64; see also Farsi (1958) 1971: 32) – and the practice of giving girls a bitter liquid to drink during female puberty rituals in Mafia, making them throw up, which symbolizes, amongst others "[…] the bitterness of adult life, as well as the state of pregnancy" (Caplan 1976: 27). Askew (1999) cites a song that Swahili mothers sing for brides:

> Congratulations, my child, congratulations!/And I should be congratulated - congratulations!/*The bitterness of motherhood*/Silence, my child, stop crying/The womb that bore a daughter pains terribly/It pains terribly. (93; my emphasis)

Another variation of the proverb above is cited in the Swahili stories collected by Edward Steere in the 19th century: "The bitterness of the child is on the hips of the mother." *("[…] uchungu wa mwana ni katika nyongani mwa nina."*; Steere (1897)1920: 60). Steere, however, translates *uchungu* as "weight" here (ibid. 61), which, additional to the above discussed interpretations, invokes the emblematic (and, to a degree, stereotypical) image of *the* 'African mother,'[148] carrying her child on her hips or lower back. On the other hand, it could also refer to the weight carried during pregnancy and to the weight of responsibility of caring for a child. References to the suffering of mothers are also prominently made in the pop-song quoted further above (e.g. *'the suffering of carrying me in your stomach […]'*).

Thus, it is the *uchungu* that transforms the *mwanamke* (woman), to become *mama*: the *uchungu* of birthing labour is obviously central, although the pursuit of maternal goals for a certain child by anyone committed primarily to these aims (i.e. mothering as a practice separate from birthing labour) will come with its own *uchungu. Uchungu* experienced for (or about) children in this way, ideally deepens the bond between mother and child (see Schalge 2002: 125). This abundance of *uchungu*, in my opinion, constitutes the distinguishing feature of the

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[147] Sometimes, the proverb also reads '*mzazi*' instead of '*mama*' (e.g. Mohamed 2011; Wamtilia 2016), so technically both parents could be meant. Often '*mzazi*' is however simply translated as 'mother' (see e.g. Farsi (1958) 1973: 45). Of course, the proverb might also be deployed in a more removed sense as "the difficulty of [something] is best known to the sufferer" (Mohamed 2011: 782).

[148] This stereotypical image is harshly criticized by the Swazi feminist Patricia Mc Fadden (1998) who writes, "As political activists, are we going to reproduce the stereotypes of African women on batiks and tapestries sold in the curio shops, the stereotypes of us as either pregnant, carrying a baby on our backs, or both? While African men are represented through images of dancers and musicians, *why can't we see African women doing other things besides being birthers and reproducers?*" (no page numbers; my emphasis)

mothering experience in Zanzibar, and makes for the exceptional status of mothers, as highlighted by the dictum *'Nani kama mama?'* (*Who compares to mother(s)?*).

Ideologically and traditionally, mothering was (and to a degree, still is) an intensely gendered activity on the Swahili Coast. The notions on the division of labour between men and women reproduced by Nuru and Subira (p. 84) are reflected in ideas about parenting as well: fathers are the providers that go out to struggle (*kuhangaika*), to be able to cater to the needs of their family, while mothers, as caregivers and protectors of children, stay close to the home. This traditional allocation of responsibilities is based on Islamic marriage laws, stipulating that the husband has to 'maintain' his wife (or wives) and children (foodstuff, shelter, clothes), while the wife takes care of the everyday childcare and household tasks. (Beckham et al. 2015: 166; Demovic 2007: 240-241; Demovic 2016: 12; Gaydosh 2017: 1370) In this model, mothers preserve children (*maternal goal 1*) by minding them, preparing food, distributing it fairly, and monitoring their health; they foster children's growth (*maternal goal 2*) by promoting their enrolment and attendance in secular school and *madrasa*, and by involving them in a growing set of household responsibilities; and finally mothers ensure children's social acceptability (*maternal goal 3*) by actively instilling them with morals, or encouraging them to imitate them, for instance in their own performance of *heshima* (c.f. Poblete 2007: 154-158). Within this framework, mothers are deeply dependent on the ability and goodwill of husbands to supply them with resources like foodstuff or cash for health and educational needs, and on the overall social and economic context that could for instance limit male abilities to provide, or might cancel out mothers' own efforts to reach maternal goals (e.g. by presenting children with 'moral temptations', see e.g. McElroy et al. 2010: 134-135). Most authors claim that in Tanzania and Zanzibar today, this 'ideal' model is hardly adhered to anymore:

> In spite of the fact that many interviews (particularly with young, newlywed women [in Zanzibar]) began with the idealistic statement that the husband provided 'everything,' more detailed accounting of daily incomes demonstrated that no heartholds in my sample met this ideal. (Demovic 2016: 12)

> Participants [in southern Tanzania] […] described the 'ideal' mother as one who stayed at home with her children, and was financially supported by their father. However, many participants had sole responsibility for their children's material needs. As […] [one respondent] explained, 'If you have children, you have responsibilities.' (Beckham et al. 2015:170)

Tanzanian and Zanzibari mothers overall, seem to increasingly act and see themselves as breadwinners; Schalge (2004: 145) asserts in this context that "[…] work is becoming an essential element integral to the definition of mothering" (see also Beckham et al. 2015: 170; Creighton & Omari 2000: 6; Demovic 2007: 233; Keshodkar 2013: 144). She explicitly connects this shift to the deterioration of the economic situation in Tanzania since the late 1970s

(Schalge 2002: 210, 212; see also 210). This means that mothers today are bearing more and more extensive responsibilities; the author writes that in Dar es Salaam's informal settlements of the 1990s, "[…] the majority of all household work falls to female members. Additionally, the burden of securing adequate household funds is primarily a woman's domain" (Schalge 2004: 153; see also 154; 2002: 134). Besides, mothers and children (and even possible grandchildren) remain in relationships of monodirectional (financial) care longer, as dependants struggle to become independent in the persistent state of economic uncertainty (Schalge 2004: 153). For Zanzibar, an argument could be made, that this trend of female 'self-maintenance' is not necessarily new; Decker (2014) describes that from the late 1920s onwards, due to what they perceived as their 'economic vulnerability' to their husbands, female teachers already

> […] placed enormous value on their ability to buy clothing for themselves and their children, pay their children's school fees and contribute to the cost of housing, all of which traditionally fell under the husband's responsibility to provide 'maintenance' for his wives and children. (2014: 9)

This is what I will focus on in the following subchapters.

(5.4.1) *"Most of the time it was me alone who struggled for my children…"* - *Kuhangaika* as Maternal Virtue and Capacity in Zanzibar

Women in the islands seem to have always contributed to household maintenance, e.g. through horticultural or farming activities, income from rental properties, businesses, or the sale of prepared food (Askew 1999: 89; Larsen 1995: 89). The shift that has been observed in the mothering practices of women in Tanzania and Zanzibar recently is thus rather one of scale in times when the economic vulnerability of women to husbands has been enhanced by political and economic uncertainty, than an unprecedented and truly fundamental transformation of the gendered division of labour.

I argue that in this context, the maternal practices and strategies of Zanzibari mothers are characterized by what I call '*kuhangaika*-activities': I introduced *kuhangaika* in chapter 3 as a local equivalent of Vigh's concept of social navigation. As should become quite clear from the quotes further below, the verb *kuhangaika* carries a myriad of meanings and possible interpretations. It could, for example, be translated as *to go here and there without knowing what to do* (Wamtilia 2016) and as *to roam* or *wander about* (Knappert & van Kessel 2010; Lazaro 2017). Another bundle of meanings lies in the semantic field of worry, anxiety and strife (*to be worried, anxious*, *confused*, *restless, distraught, to suffer*; Höftmann & Herms 2010; Knappert & van Kessel 2010; Wamtilia 2016), while it can also be translated as *to be busy* or *to labour away (under pressure)* (Knappert & van Kessel 2010; Lazaro 2017; Mohamed 2011;

TUKI 2001; Wamtilia 2016). TUKI (2001) further offers *anxiety* or *worry (over affairs, much work etc.)* as a translation for the corresponding noun (*hangaiko*). Which translation is suitable, depends very much on the context of a statement; in general, a sort of composite form of all these different terms – *'to roam about and struggle'* – seems to be fitting fairly frequently.

In principle, most Zanzibaris today, regardless of gender or paternity status, have to *kuhangaika* in order to meet the growing need for cash in the present, as well as to gain the resources they require to place themselves in favourable positions to 'get on' in the future (e.g. by attaining education, or connecting themselves to the 'right' people; cf. Larsen 2009: 11, 18, 20). During my research, it was nonetheless striking to me, how frequently the word was related to the actions of women and mothers in the interviews with my female respondents:

> *Because me myself I managed my life and my children by myself. Most of the time it was me alone [who] struggle[d]* (nahangaika) *for my children and my parents. […] Now I myself am a 'person who searches', I know that I am with a husband, but me myself, [I am] like a man here, on the inside. Because I struggle* (nahangaika) *[for] myself [in] my life.*[149] (Bi Pili, Unguja, November 2018)

> *Like for example me here, I am already married. I have already gotten children. So, my big responsibility is [that] I first take care of my children. I am already prepared, that [since] I am a mother, I am the guardian of the family, and that struggle and anxiety* (kuhangaika) *is there because [since I have become] a mother, I wish to always take care of my family.*[150] (Leila, Unguja, February 2019)

> *But the father, he is not [the one that is] roaming about* (anahangaika), *you find the woman is the one [who] is constantly up and down, up and down. So truly it is the woman who has a lot of responsibilities I should say.*[151] (Bi Rehema, Unguja, January 2019)

Typically, the *kuhangaika*-activities women are engaged in are both aimed at themselves, as well as at their children and other people they feel responsibility for, as becomes especially clear in Bi Pili's statement. Something that is further evident is the fact that the female *hangaiko* my respondents claimed to pursue as mothers (or that they attributed to women in general), were explicitly and implicitly contrasted with a male failure or deficit of performing the same. *Kuhangaika* seems to have been connotated as a male activity previously, connected to the male duty of marital provision. Bi Pili makes this explicit by connecting her own inner 'masculinity' (*"I am like a man on the inside"*) to her active struggles on behalf of others. In line with Schalge

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[149] *"Kwa sababu mimi kama mimi nilikuwa namudu maisha yangu na watoto wangu peke yangu. Muda mwingi ilikuwa mimi peke yangu nahangaika na watoto wangu na wazee wangu […]. Sasa mimi mwenyewe ni mtafataji, naijua kuwa niko na mume, lakini mimi mwenyewe, kama mwanaume humo ndani. Sababu nahangaika mwenyewe maisha yangu."* (Interview 2 with Bi Pili, Unguja, 14-11-2018)
[150] *"[…] kama mfano mimi hapa, tayari nimeshaolewa. Nimeshapata watoto. Kwa hiyo jukumu langu kubwa kwanza ni kuwashughulikia watoto wangu. […] mimi nimeshakuwa tayari kwamba mimi ni mama, ni mlezi wa familia, na […] ile kuhangaika kuna kwa sababu tayari nimeshakuwa mama napenda muda wote nichunge familia yangu."* (Interview 1 with Leila, Unguja, 16-02-2019)
[151] *"[…] lakini yule baba yeye siyo anahangaika, unakuta mwanamke ndiyo saa zote yuko up and down, up and down. Kwa hiyo kwa kweli mwanamke anakuwa […] ana majumuku mengi niseme."* (Interview 3 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 23-01-2019)

(2002 & 2004), I would argue that the major shifts of the 1990s, prolonged uncertainty and the monetarization of many of the services on which families depended, generated '*worry, anxiety, or restlessness*' on the part of women, who increasingly supplemented – or bore in its entirety – the household income by '*labouring away*' or '*becoming busy*', in order to be able to ensure the immediate survival of children, as well as to facilitate their movement into futures as successful and acceptable adults.

In Zanzibar, the *kuhangaika*-activities of women as mothers might increasingly entail their entering into public working spheres in which women's presence was denounced as indecent in the past, and very commonly involves a diversified range of different smaller means of income 'here and there', often based in the informal sector[152] (Demovic 2016: 10, 16). Even lines of work that are perceived as extremely shameful may be justified by putting them in terms of women acting as "[…] mothers, doing whatever was necessary to care 'for the children'" as Beckham et al. demonstrate for female sex workers in Southern Tanzania (2015: 170). In Zanzibar, however, *kuhangaika*-activities are usually very carefully weighed against family and community dynamics, the above outlined local understandings of female respectability, morality, and women's personal commitment to Islam. Demovic, for example argues that few Zanzibari women work in places where they would come in close contact with 'morally polluting' tourists, even though the tourist industry would be a promising source of cash income, as "[women] favor […] economic strategies that […] [are] viewed as congruent with local moralities, particularly as related to gender roles […]" (Demovic 2016: 4; see also: 2,6; Demovic 2007: 155-157; Schalge 2004: 151). Being considered honourable and respectable – a good Muslim woman – is important to mothers, especially in rural areas, as the marriage choices available to their children (i.e. their social acceptability) and their access to community land on which they can grow food for consumption (to ensure children's preservation), are intimately tied to their own reputation (Demovic 2016: 7).

Kuhangaika-practices of course differ for women of different backgrounds in the archipelago; while some of the women I interviewed in rural Pemba grew vegetables for household consumption or exchanges with neighbours, and engaged in plaiting sifting baskets (*ungo*) for sale (Fieldnotes 27-11-2018), Subira in urban Unguja had a fulltime formal job, toyed with different ideas how she could make economical use of a piece of land she owned on the edge of town, while at the same time heading her own NGO and being politically active. In Ruddick's terms, I would suggest that in Zanzibar, the first component of my composite

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[152] Schalge (2002: 212) argues that this diversification is also a strategy to cope with the inherent uncertainties of the informal sector.

translation, the '*struggle*' became a maternal virtue, while successfully '*roaming about*' would be a capacity, that, as Schalge suggests, at least in the context of (urban) informality, requires an attitude of *ujanja* (cleverness)[153] (2002: 16 & 2004: 151). Overall, I would classify the successful struggle (*hangaiko*) on behalf of children through different means as an intermediate maternal goal, necessary to fulfil other superordinate demands in the current context by maintaining the material conditions for children's preservation and growth in Zanzibar. Motherly *hangaiko* actively challenges and innovates 'traditional' mothering practices and motherhood ideology stipulating that women as mothers should be 'people of the house', restricting their care taking tasks to this space only. As such, these practices are an excellent example of mothers negotiating prevalent social, cultural and economic circumstances, for the sake of bringing about the best possible results for their children and families (cf. Maher 2010: 835) – in short, of maternal navigation.

(5.4.2) Light Men, Heavy Women? – Maternal Vulnerability in Zanzibar

Sitting on Bi Hasnaa's baraza in Pemba, shortly after we have been left alone by my nosey 'research assistant', I inquire whether people in the village fight because of politics. Bi Zahra negates. I proceed to ask whether she thinks that women are more peaceful than men, and she agrees. Bi Hasnaa enters the conversation and explains that this is because women will always stay with the children and cannot easily flee from a place. Men can and will readily leave everything and everyone. There is firm agreement by the other women around. (Fieldnotes 27-11-2019)

Mothering work in Zanzibar not only takes place against the backdrop of economic and political uncertainty but often also in light of women's considerations about the reliability and trustworthiness of their husbands or partners. In conversations with my respondents, the image of '*wanaume wepesi*' ('light men') was often evoked. Like Bi Kauthir who declared that '*[t]he man can run away, but a woman cannot without her children. The man is light, the woman needs to carry the children.*'[154], or Bi Hasnaa above, many Zanzibari women claimed that men were likely to leave women and children unsupported under the impact of stressors like economic or political crises. In their opinion, women as mothers had much more complex

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[153] Schalge defines maternal '*ujanja*' (cleverness) as follows: "Cleverness is essential for urban living and survival. It is based on wit and intelligence*, but just as importantly, it includes elements of cunning and deceit*." (2004: 151; my emphasis)

[154] *'Mwanaume anaweza kukimbia, lakini mwanamke hawezi bila ya watoto wake. Mwanaume ni mwepesi, mwanamke anahitaji kuwabeba watoto.'* (Notes from Interview 1 with Bi Kauthir, Unguja, 08-02-2019)

decisions to make in relation to their children, and often would stay put, dealing with the consequences of disaster *and* male abandonment simultaneously.

This unfavourable image or male (un)reliability is echoed in some of the literature on Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast: Decker explained the immense value the female teachers in the colonial era accorded to their financial independence by referring to women's 'economic vulnerability', caused by the common risks or divorce, abandonment, or widowhood (2014: 9-10, 65). The instability of Zanzibari marriages that I already referred to in Chapter 3, may – as Stiles writes – be ascribed to an "inherent irresponsibility" of men, by women and *kadhis* alike (2005: 587). Additionally, husbands that women are still married to, might be perceived as 'errant' (cf. Demovic 2007: 12, 128), possibly because they divide their time and financial resources between the households of several wives and/or possible girlfriends (ibid. 151)[155] or because of labour dynamics, like the lengthy trips along the East African coast that some fishermen take, leaving their wives to cater for family needs for months on end (Nuotio 2006: 196). Under the impact of exacerbated economic uncertainty in the region, men are increasingly perceived to abandon their responsibilities for family maintenance – as Schalge's urban respondents on the mainland highlighted time after time: *"'The children's fathers scorn us. Men run from their responsibilities.'"* (2004: 153).

The different authors however also note that women do not remain passive in the face of the uncertainty of men's long-term support: Stiles outlines how elderly women in her sample began to develop and employ strategies in order to protect their material interests over the course of several consecutive divorces (2005: 587), while Demovic describes that due to the uncertainty "[…] whether or not an errant husband arrives with food to cook" (2007: 128), women in rural Unguja adopt farming strategies that favour many smaller harvests for household consumption in times of spousal neglect over larger harvests for cash (ibid.).

When I confronted Leila, a young mother of two daughters living in a village just outside of Zanzibar City, with the image of '*light men*', she explained and expanded it, suggesting that,

> *[…] men automatic[ally] in their hearts, don't have a lot of love for the family. That is why you find us women agreeing to a lot of things. I cannot go away and leave my children. But a man can go and leave the children.[156]*

Initially, I was quite surprised by Leila's bleak reply (*"men […] don't have a lot of love for the family"*); she had visited me together with her husband before our interview, and they had struck

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[155] At times in quite far removed places: my landlord in Stone Town for example, alternated between the households of his wives in Zanzibar Town and Oman roughly every three months.

[156] *"[…] wanaume automatic […] nyoyo zao wanakuwa hawana mapenzi sana na familia. Ndo maana unakuta wanawake sisi tunakuwa tunakubali mambo mengi. Mimi siwezi kuondoka nikawaacha watoto wangu. Ila mwanaume anaweza kuondoka kawaacha watoto.* (Interview 1 with Leila, 16-02-2019, Unguja)

me as a couple that was uncommonly open in showing their affection for one another, holding hands throughout the evening, even when out in public. Leila was her husband's second wife and when I first met her at a wedding, we broached the topic in a joking manner. I professed that, hypothetically, I would prefer to be the first wife in a polygamous marriage, but the women around me disagreed strongly: being a second wife was better *'because she is loved more'* they pointed out, darting glances at the quietly smiling Leila. (Informal conversations, 28-12-2018) Notwithstanding, life as the supposedly 'favourite' wife still meant dealing with an often-errant husband for Leila, as he spent significant amounts of time in town with her co-wife, as well as on work trips. Although there was certainly love and affection in the relationship, Leila retained a 'realist' outlook on the longevity of *any* man's commitment to his family and children, which could also be said to be reflective of the generalized lack of interpersonal trust between the sexes, mentioned by both Schalge (2002: 272) and Creighton and Omari (2000: 11) in their works on Tanzania. In our interview, Leila continued her elaborations:

> [L]et's choose an example, maybe if an accident happens. Like there was the time when the ferry sank, the MV Spice. If you look inside [you will see that] many of the people who died are women and children. Because when the accident has already happened, the man saves himself, him for himself. But a lot of women died because they could not leave their children. Because [as] women we have accepted motherhood, [so] you must take care of your family. A man cannot.[157]

Leila's referral to the sinking of the MV Spice Islander in 2011 vividly underscores her point: the dramatically overloaded ferry was on its way from Zanzibar Town to Pemba when it capsized and sank in the Nungwi Channel, costing the lives of more than 1,000 people (Khelef 2012). I could not find official numbers about the gender or age of the victims of the wreckage, but it is reasonable to assume that a large number of them were in fact women and children: few women in Zanzibar know how to swim (cf. Simai 2016), and survivors have claimed that a particularly large number of women and children boarded the ferry that day (Tume ya Kuchunguza 2012: 18). Studies confirm the generally higher risk of mortality for women and children in shipwrecks – despite the famous dictum 'Women and children first!' (Elinderand & Erixson 2012: 5-6, 8).

By choosing this example, Leila made clear that, in her view, women as mothers tend to think of risk or hazards in an extended sense: to accept or agree to motherhood (*-kubali umama*), means to be aware of one's primary responsibility in ensuring the preservation of children –

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[157] *"[…] hebu tuchukulie mfano, labda kumetokea ajali. […] kama kulikuwa kuna kipindi kulizama meli, ile ya MV Spice. Mle ukiangalia watu wengi waliokufa ni wanawake na watoto. Kwa sababu tayari imeshatokea ajali ili mwanaume tayari […] anajiokoa yeye kama yeye. Lakini wanawake walikufa wengi kwa sababu hawawezi kuwaacha watoto wao. […] Kwa sababu wanawake tumeshakubali umama lazima ushughulikie familia yako. Mwanaume hawezi."* (Interview 1 with Leila, 16-02-2019, Unguja)

which at times trumps self-preservation – set against an equally strong awareness of the lesser to non-existent commitment of fathers to this goal. Leila put the duties ensuing from the agreement to motherhood in terms of *'tak[ing] care of [the] family'*, using the verb *kushugulikia* – which in this instance refers to immediate preservation and child survival. However, both Mohammed (2011) and Murungi (2013), offer *'kushugulikia'* as a synonym of *'kuhangaika'*; it could thus be inferred that *'taking care of the family'* may include the whole range of maternal demands, activities and struggles I introduced previously.

During our interview I missed the opportunity to probe further why Leila thought that men love their families or their children 'less'; a quote from the interview with Bi Rukia in Pemba however provides an indication in this respect:

> *So, it is the mother who knows more that bitterness and pain* (uchungu) *of the child, [...]. Now if there happens to be any problem, the father is quick to be able to run away from it. But for the mother it is not easy, because all the children lean on her [...] So, this is what is meant, that women, or mothers don't like chaos because they are the ones who are affected more than men. So, we usually do not want confusion, chaos, trouble to happen because we want to protect our children.*[158]

It is thus again *uchungu* – 'the pain and bitterness of the child' – that is at the root of a mother's stronger love and protective commitment to her children; both on the level of its meaning of 'birth pangs' – as one of Schalge's respondents claimed: "*'Women are more likely to stay and suffer for children because they have given birth to them, there is a stronger tie, they have already suffered to give birth to them.'*" (Schalge 2002: 125) – as well as on the level of the *uchungu* experienced in daily mothering work beyond birthing labour. If we speak in instrumentalist terms, Zanzibari mothers make much larger investments of their time and energy into care-taking activities and the 'struggle' for their children than Zanzibari fathers typically do. This, additional to the stronger affection imagined to evolve through pregnancy, childbirth and daily care, would make it harder to simply abandon them.

In her statement above, Bi Rukia connected the image of '*light men*' to the occurrence of *'[ma]tatizo'* (problems), *'zogo'* (commotion), *'fujo'* (chaos) or *'vurugu'* (disturbances). Like most of my respondents, she used these terms to euphemistically refer to possible (political) upheaval and violence. Bi Farida was a bit more blunt in this respect, explicitly mentioning battles (*mapigano*) and conflicts (*migogoro*):

> *If you look at countries that have battles, like look at them in Yemen right now. In Yemen right now the battles that happen mostly affect children. The mothers are the ones [who]*

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[158] *"Kwa hiyo mama ndo anayojua zaidi ule uchungu wa mtoto, [...]. Sasa likitokezea tatizo lolote, baba ni mwepesi kuweza kulikimibia. Lakini mama si rahisi, kwa sababu watoto wote walimelemea yeye, [...]. Sasa ndo maana, ikawa wanawake, au wamama huwa hawapendi lile zogo kwa sababu wao ndo wanaoathrika zaidi kuliko wanaume.[...] Kwa hiyo sisi kuwa hatupendi kutokezee zogo, fujo, vurugu kwa sababu tunataka kuwahami watoto wetu."* (Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018)

struggle and suffer (<u>wanahangaika</u>) *with the children, [and] the men, you don't see them. So, it is you and your children. So [as] women we love peace and I think it is not [only] the women of Zanzibar, even in the whole world. Because the men run away from us, they do not remember us, [and] they are the ones who cause the conflicts.[159]*

Although she started out with an example from a 'distant' place, Bi Farida's switch to the second person singular (*"[i]t is you and your children"*) combined with the rest of her statement, show that she imagined the pattern of male abandonment in conflict to be a universal one. She connected the observed absence of Yemeni men from the sites of their families' suffering and struggle to the expected behaviour of Zanzibari men – or men in general – should a similar situation occur elsewhere; in the end, it would always be *'you and your children'*. Hence, for mothers, the consideration of their own vulnerability, i.e. the different aspects of their identity and social background impinging on their capacity to anticipate, cope with and recover from the long and short term impacts of hazards (Drolet 2015: 478) – be it in a situation of violent conflict or human-induced catastrophes like the sinking of the MV Spice Islander – involves a vision that is inclusive of children and *their* specific vulnerabilities. Mothers in Zanzibar thus recognize that vulnerability is unequally distributed and significantly influenced by gender and social location (Drolet 2015: 478; Neumayer & Plümper 2007: 551). What is also implicit in the different quotes is the fact that men, through the action of fleeing, enhance the exposure and vulnerability of their left-behind partners and children even further; in 2001, when security forces cracked down on opposition members and the general population in Pemba and parts of Zanzibar Town, "[..] hundreds of men fled their homes to avoid arrest, [and] many women who were left home alone faced violence at the hands of security forces and their CCM accomplices" (HRW 2002: 33). Vulnerable without a male protector, and exposed as the families of presumed opposition supporters, women and children were raped, beaten, and extorted and their property looted (Amnesty International 2002: 11, 21, 44; HRW 2002: 32-33). It is probable that Bi Rukia, who lived in one of the most affected areas of Pemba when I interviewed her, was a witness to such actions, while Bi Farida made a direct reference to the 2001 violence in Zanzibar Town before she reached her conclusions about maternal vulnerability – recalling how she, heavily pregnant at the time, tried to convince male opposition supporters in her neighbourhood to desist from joining the protests. Given the frequency of low-level politically motivated clashes, and the instances of state-sponsored

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[159] *"Ukiangalia nchi ambazo zina mapigano, kama angalia Yemen saa hivi wao. Yemen saa hivi mapigano ambayo yametokea yanawaathirika wengi watoto. [...] Waakina mama ndo wanahangaika na watoto, wanaume huwaoni wao. Yaani ni wewe na watoto wako. Kwa hiyo wanawake, tunapenda sana peace na nadhani siyo wanawake wa Zanzibar, hata ulimwengu mzima. [...]. Kwa sababu wanaume wanatukimbia, hawatutambui, wao ndo wanaosababisha migogoro."* (Interview 1 with Bi Farida, Unguja, 31-10-2018)

assault detailed in chapter two, it can be reasoned that at least some of the Zanzibari women I interviewed spoke from experience when they constructed the image of '*light men'* in the face of violent conflict.

Some of the statements of the women I cited above, included a sort of conclusive remark; *'So as women we love peace […]'*, '*[…] mothers don't like chaos […]'*. This, in my opinion, signals an ideal of a maternal attitude of conflict avoidance, again, in marked contrast to men who *'are the ones who cause the conflicts'*. I would argue that this is – at least in the above explanations – not necessarily thought of as an 'innate' female or motherly quality; rather, this behaviour is constructed to evolve from the context of male unreliability. 'Peacefulness' – and here peace is defined 'minimally' as the mere absence of open conflict (cf. Ruddick 1989: 245) – is thus a strategy to deal with maternal vulnerabilities in the face of the always looming possibility of political violence in Zanzibar.

(5.5) Conclusive Remarks

In this chapter I have shown how definitions of womanhood and motherhood as institution have been in transition in the past few years, dependent on the overall political and economic context. Motherhood has been shown to be an ambivalent status and identity, that both excludes and includes, empowers and disempowers. Mothering as a practice in this context, is a complex and active endeavour that often requires a balancing of different maternal demands, ideologies of 'good' mother- and womanhood, flexible reactions to the unpredictably of life and the behaviour of fathers and partners, and pre-emptive measures to counteract extended maternal vulnerabilities. In Zanzibar, motherhood and mothering are intimately connected to ideas about self-sacrifice and struggle, often subsumed under the term '*uchungu'*; however, positive emotions like love, affection or the joy motherhood could bring, should of course not be relegated to the margins; after all, *'The laughter of the child is the light of the house.' ('Ucheshi wa mtoto ni anga la nyumba.'*; Farsi (1958) 1973: 45).

Nevertheless, in recent years, mothering work in Zanzibar seems to be dominated by different navigational activities, that are summed up under the term '*kuhangaika*' (to struggle and roam about). In the last chapter of this thesis I will explore how some of these dynamics and symbolisms play out in the political sphere.

(6) Maternal Subjectivities, Maternal Thinking and Maternal Navigation: Politicizing Motherhood and Mothering in Zanzibar

The tremendous reverence reserved for mothers as part of the institution of motherhood and as expressed in popular dictums like '*Nani kama mama?',* can be – and has been – a viable
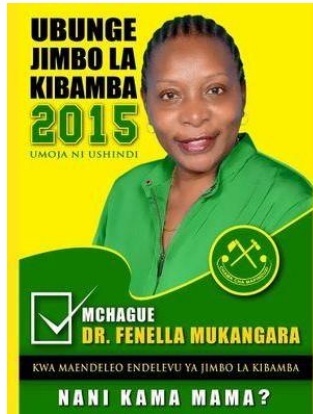
Fig. 7: An example for 'motherist' campaigning strategies in Tanzania - election poster for Fenella Mukangara 2015. (Screenshot from Twitter 18-08-2019 (cropped); see Mukangara 2015)

resource for women as they strive for positions of power or make claims for (political) rights in Tanzania, Zanzibar and other places around the world (see e.g. Alidou 2013: 39, 101; van Allen 2009: 63; Chuchryk 1989: 139; Geiger 1997: 59-61,79; Kron 2016: 580, 582; Tibbetts 1994; Tyler 2013: 213-214). Women might make references to actual or fictional motherhood to frame their political demands, giving them legitimacy and wider resonance. Highlighting their important social roles as mothers in public political discourses enables (some) women to speak from an extremely powerful subject position. (van Allen 2009: 63, 65-67, 71; Kron 2016: 580, 583; Tibbetts 1994: 35, 37, 44-45) The moral authority attached to motherhood surely plays a role here (Marotta 2010: 992; Saint-Germain 1993: 123, 134). At the same time, motherhood can be – and has been – a dominant reason why women have been side-lined in political processes (Marotta 2010: 991), which my respondent Bi Halima confirmed for the Zanzibari context:

> *There are people whose thoughts [are] a bit limited. They feel 'Ah, better [choose] this man, he is able, this woman does not have the ability.' Now he considers that 'Ah a woman [is] a housewife, [for] a woman, at times the husband will disagree, a woman [might have] children. But he feels that the man is always free.*[160]

Bi Halima referred to the responsibilities and duties mothers (and wives) are commonly perceived to have, which could be seen by potential voters as curtailing them in their roles as professional politicians.

Additionally, it has been noted that when women make political claims from a 'maternalist position' – i.e. centring on values like care and nurturance (Kutz-Flamenbaum 2010: 713) – they often focus heavily on children's needs and rights, while commitments to their own interests as mothering women and female citizens often come up rather short (Marotta 2010: 991-992; Brush 1996: 430). Lastly, it is important not to overlook other reasons and drivers for women's political activism, even if female political activists make explicit and implicit claims

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[160] *"[...] [K]una baadhi ya watu ambayo fikra zao kidogo finyu [...]. Wanahisi 'Ah, bora huyu mwanaume, anaweza, huu mwanamke hawezi.' Sasa anakuchukulia kwamba 'Ah, mwanamke mama wa nyumbani, mwanamke mara mumewe atakataa, mwanamke labda watoto.' Lakini anahisi huyu mwanaume yuko free wakati wote."* (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)

to their motherhood in the prioritization and framing of their political demands (cf. Tibbetts 1994: 45, 48).

Unfortunately, I can say very little about the ways in which motherhood figures in the political discourse of female Zanzibari (party) activists as they enter into dialogue with each other, the electorate or the press: I stayed in the archipelago in an inter-election year, and political activities like public campaigns or rallies were largely dormant or outright forbidden (see Chapter 2). My plan to visit the Zanzibari House of Representatives to observe female CCM-politicians during sessions was frustrated by the refusal of the Office of the Second Vice President to grant me permission to do so (see Chapter 4).

Based on the data I was able to collect I can however testify to the different ways in which Zanzibari motherhood ideology and mothering practices with their leitmotif of *uchungu* emerged in many of my respondent's narratives, as they spelled out their political positioning and motivations, as well as their personal attitudes towards the high-risk context of Zanzibari politics to me. In the following, I will thus examine how maternal subjectivities figured in the political thinking of some of my respondents, and how they used motherhood as a resource to add legitimacy to certain demands and claims. In the second part of this chapter, I will focus on two varieties of attitudes and strategies that some interviewees adopted while navigating Zanzibari politics as maternal thinkers.

(6.1) *"She is the one who knows more about the problems in society"* – Politicizing Maternal Subjectivities

Maternal subjectivities – or 'maternal thinking' as Ruddick has termed it – are those attitudes, values, ways of looking at the world, the knowledge and standpoint that develops as people engage in mothering work as one of their primary daily preoccupations (cf. Ruddick 1989: 9-10, 23-27). These subjectivities are of course also the products of discourse and structures of power as reflected in the institution of motherhood in society (cf. Lester 2013: 835). Maternal subjectivities may play a role in the political sphere, in that they might shape what demands are made and how they are framed by women (or people) who mother (cf. Tibbetts 1994: 45). When I asked my Zanzibari respondents whether they thought women 'do politics' differently than men, some suggested that the experience of mothering leads to an increased awareness of and familiarity with a wider range of issues in society – in contrast to men. These maternal subjectivities were connected to the frequent maternal encounters with pain, bitterness, struggle and challenge:

So, it is the mother who knows more [about] that bitterness and pain (underline)(uchungu) *of the child, [she] is the one who knows more about the problems that [affect] a person in society.*[161] (Bi Rukia, Pemba)

A mother has three offices[162]*, so she can know the problems of here and there and there. A father only has one office. [...] [A] woman is already plagued by many challenges and she understands many issues through [these] challenges.*[163] (Bi Rehema, Unguja)

Additionally, some of my respondents – especially those who were middle-aged and still politically active – expressed that their political efforts principally aimed at the coming generation(s); speaking about the issue of youth unemployment Bi Halima for instance explained:

I myself am an older person now. Even in terms of employment, I am heading towards retirement [rather than] to be employed. But mainly I fight for our youth, mine and those of my fellows.[164]

Bi Rehema voiced her views in a similar manner. Lamenting the continuous loss of Zanzibari sovereignty within the structure of the Tanzanian Union, she argued,

A person who has already reached an age of 50, then you look to today, tomorrow I will [already] depart, but our children, grandchildren, and all the generations that will come – we don't want to reach a place [where] they are slaves in their own country.[165]

It is clear that for these two senior party activists, the pivotal future-orientation of their private maternal work and maternal subjectivities became an important guide in their public political work and goal setting as well (cf. Cohn 2013: 55; Oyěwùmí 2016: 216). In the following two subchapters, I will take a closer look at the ways in which maternal subjectivities and maternal thinking figured in the political opinions, demands and reasonings of some of my respondents.

(6.1.1) *"Many of our children don't have anything to do."* – Politicizing (Failed) Maternal Navigation in the Context of Youth Unemployment

[...] many of our children don't have anything to do. [...] There are children, they have studied but right now they do not have work; engineers, civil engineers, I don't know

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[161] "*Kwa hiyo mama ndo anayojua zaidi ule uchungu wa mtoto, ndo anayojua zaidi yale matatizo yanayomkumba mtu katika jamii.*" (Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018)

[162] This was a metaphor Bi Rehema had established in the course of our interview: in Bi Rehema's opinion, a mother goes to her 'normal' office in the context of formal employment, while at home, household work (2nd office) and child care (3rd office) await her. This triple burden gives her more skills and knowledge (*uwezo*) but naturally also leads to fatigue and stress (cf. Interview 2 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 19-11-2018).

[163] "*Mama ana ofisi tatu kwa hiyo anaweza akajua matatizo ya hapa na hapa na hapa. Baba ana ofisi moja tu. [...] tayari [mwanamke] anakumbana na challenges nyingi na anaelewa mambo mengi through that challenges.*" (Interview 2 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 19-11-2018)

[164] "*Mimi saahivi ni mtu mzima. Hata [...] kwa ajira, mimi naelekea kustaafu, siyo kuajiriwa. [...] lakini kubwa napigania vijana wetu, wangu na wa wenzangu.*" (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)

[165] "*[...] [M]tu ameshafika miaka hamsini tena, unatazamia leo, kesho nitaondoka, lakini watoto wetu, wajukuu na vizazi vyote vinavyokuja - hatutaki wafike pahali wao ni watumwa katika nchi yao.*" (Interview 3 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 23-01-2019)

which degrees, there are plenty, they are on the streets. Others became mamantilie[166], others I don't know [...].[167] (Bi Rehema, Unguja)

A lot of our children have already studied, they will [just] sit around, there is no work. That Maalim Seif [168] told us, [if we vote for him] there will be many [new] jobs.[169] (Bi Sauda, Unguja)

In many interviews, I noticed that my respondents not only highlighted their identity as mothers when I asked them about their personal lives, but also invoked 'children,' when they talked about the issues that inspired their political activism and decision-making, as well as their policy preferences. An especially dominant concern and grievance – particularly for supporters of the opposition – was the issue of youth unemployment. Currently, about 27% of Zanzibaris between 15 and 24 are unemployed, while the rate for 15 to 35-year olds lies at 21,3%[170] (SMZ 2019: 7). Besides, there is also a significant number of Zanzibaris who are 'underemployed' (11,9%; ibid.) – meaning that they do not work the amount of hours they would prefer to work, or not according to their acquired skills (Scott 2015) – which Bi Rehema addressed in the quote above by referring to the absurdity of university-graduates becoming '*mamantillie*'. In the context of overall job-scarcity, many Zanzibaris furthermore perceive job allocation – especially government employment – as deeply politicized:

[R]ight now, we have many children, they have already finished universit[y], [but] there are no jobs. And especially if it is known that it is a child from Pemba, or the child of an opposition member.[171] (Bi Rukia, Pemba; see also Bakari 2001: 134, 251; Keshodkar 2013: 143)

Bi Hasnaa likewise claimed that – although people in principle interacted and cooperated amicably in her village – employment remained an area in which discrimination based on political alignment stubbornly persisted (Fieldnotes, 27-11-2018; see also Moss 2017: 183). Further, several women alleged that in order to gain (government) employment these days, a '*child*' would have to present their CCM-membership card[172].

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[166] lit.: *'Mama, put [food] for me'*: usually female workers in the informal sector, selling meals or pre-cooked snacks, typically from shacks or other non-permanent structures; profits can fluctuate tremendously, and the work is commonly associated with lower class women, struggling to get by (cf. Schalge 2002: 219-220; see also Lazaro 2017; Murungi 2013).

[167] "[...] watoto wetu wengi wanakuwa hawana cha kufanya [...] Watoto wapo, wamesoma saa hivi hawana kazi, maengineers, macivil engineers, sijui madegree gani wako tele, wako huko barabarani. Wengine wamekuwa ni mamantilie, wengine sijui [...]" (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[168] She means the (now former) CUF secretary-general and five-times presidential candidate Seif Sharif Hamad. Having worked as a teacher as a young man (Burgess 2009: 194-195), many people respectfully refer to him as 'maalim'.

[169] "[...] watoto wetu wengi wa[me]shasoma, watakaa, kazi hamna. Yule [...] Maalim Seif alituambia [...] ajira zitakuwepo nyingi tu." (Interview 1 with Bi Sauda, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[170] Both much higher than the overall unemployment rate of 14,3 % (SMZ 2019: 7).

[171] "[...] saa hivi [...] tuna watoto wengi wameshamaliza universities [...] hakuna ajira. Na hasa akijulikana kama ni mtoto wa kipemba, au ni mtoto wa mpinzani." (Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018)

[172] see: Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018; Fieldnotes 22- & 23-11-2018, 31-01-2019.

After listening to several women narrate their political concerns about youth unemployment in very similar ways, I found it notable that even though they were speaking of young people who would be at least in their late teens or early twenties[173], my respondents almost universally characterized them as '*watoto*' (children). I think that by using this label, the women meant to point to the youth's continued (financial) dependency, and thus, their incomplete status as adults. The possessive pronoun sometimes employed (<u>our</u> *children*) further indicates that concerns did not only aim at the speaker's own offspring, but at the '*children*' of Zanzibar in general. Lastly, by invoking '*children*' and their problems as a focal point in their political decision making and prioritization – hence conjuring up the ideal of the concerned mother caring for her child(ren) – women related to Zanzibari youth and the issue of unemployment through the lens of their own mothering experiences and mothering aims; in short, by way of their maternal subjectivities.

While most women spoke in broad terms about this subject, two of my respondents directly invoked their own children to me as examples: Bi Halima, referring to her son who sat with us during our interview, said: "*Today my child – this one here – he has studied, he has numerous certificates, he studied a great deal. Now he [just] remained behind with his fellow destitutes [i.e. other unemployed youth].*"[174] Bi Rukia expressed her frustrations in similar terms when speaking about her son:

> [My son] here has a degree, he studied communication engineering. He already finished the year before last. He is here. There are no jobs. And every year I have paid, something like two million shillings for him. (embittered:) Think about that: money that you have lost educating a child. Now he has no job, he has his needs, a great deal of them. Isn't it true that in European countries if a child is 18 or 20, they will start depending on themselves? This is a 27-year old child, and he still depends on his mother.[175]

By referring to their private concerns with the '*destitute[...]*', educated-but-un(der)employed youth, both Bi Rukia and Halima meant to illustrate the overall situation but also managed to convey their personal feelings of embitterment more immediately to me. Bi Rukia's statements additionally directed me towards considering the wider context in which women's grievances regarding youth unemployment should be examined. By citing the lost investment in her son's education (*"Think about that: money that you have lost educating a child."*) she alluded to an

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[173] Given that part of the pronounced grievance is that these 'kids' *'have already studied'*.
[174] "*Leo mtoto wangu huyu hapa, [...] kasoma, [ana] vyeti tele, kasomea mambo chungu nzima. Sasa kabakia na wenzie maskini [...].*" (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)
[175] "*Huyu hapa wa kwangu, ana degree, kasomea mambo ya [...] communication engineering. Kamaliza toka mwaka juzi. Yupo. Hakuna ajira. Na kila mwaka nilikuwa namlipia kama milioni mbili. [...] Fikiri pesa uliopoteza kwa kumsomeshea mtoto. [...] [Sasa] [h]ana kazi,[...] ana mahitaji yake, chungu nzima [...] Nchi za Ulaya si ndiyo, mtoto akifika miaka kumi na nane, ishirini, tena si anajitegemea? Huyu mtoto wa miaka ishrini na saba tena anamtegemea mama bado.*" (Interview 1 with Bi Rukia, Pemba, 26-11-2018)

important aim of maternal practice in Zanzibar: numerous of my informants remarked that a vital part of a mother's responsibility and concern lies in '*kuwasomesha/kuwaelimisha watoto*' (educating children)[176]. In general, education is highly valued in Zanzibar (Stiles 2005: 585; Larsen 2015: 214), and mothers – additional to teaching children good behaviour (*adabu*) and morals (*maadili*) at home – are expected, and pride themselves in sending their children to madrasa (*chuo*) and in taking them as far as possible through the secular school system[177] (Demovic 2007: 212-213; Larsen 2015: 277; Nuotio 2006: 199; Saleh 2004: 147). Bi Rukia's comments further touched upon the – at times quite significant – costs of facilitating children's education. Even though school fees for both the primary and secondary level have been officially abolished in all Tanzanian public schools (in 2002 and 2015 respectively), indirect costs for transportation, school materials, uniforms or examinations, and semi-voluntary 'contributions' (*michango*) demanded by some teachers continue to pose a challenge for families (BBC 2015b; Decker 2014: 43; Gaydosh 2017: 1371; HRW 2017: 49; Salim 2019a: 15). Additionally, many of my respondents – amongst them Bi Rukia – raised and educated their children precisely within the time frame between the introduction of school fees in the late 1980s (cf. Aminzade 2003: 48-49) and their later abolishment. It can hence be imagined that these mothers often struggled and worked under great pressure to accumulate the required amounts. My respondent Nuru narrated these dynamics as follows:

> *[A] child needs to be educated* (anataka kusomeshwa)*. The father struggles and roams about* (anahangaika)*, the mother struggles and roams about* (anahangaika)*, [so] we get the money for the fees to go and pay [them] for the child. It is necessary* (anahitajika) *for the child to go to university, so the father struggles* (anahangaika)*, the mother struggles* (anahangaika)*, we go and obtain the tuition fees to go [and] pay [them] for the child.*[178]

The fact that Nuru employed the verbs *kutaka* (to want, need) and *kuhitajika* (to be necessary, to be needed) here, reamplifies that facilitating a child's education through the virtue and capacity of *kuhangaika,* can be understood as a separate parental or maternal aim in Zanzibar – in the sense that 'children *demand* that they be educated, regardless of the costs' (cf. Ruddick

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[176] Cf. e.g. Bi Halima, describing the lifegoals of 'the average Zanzibari woman' (also note her use of *kuhangaika*): *"I have aims to do this, I have nothing, [I am] poor, but I have goals to educate my children, I have goals that my children reach the universities to study. It is these goals that will cause you to roam about* (uhangaike)*, to struggle* (ustruggle) *to reach to the place where you want to [be]." ("[M]imi nina malengo nifanye hivi, mimi sina kitu, maskini, lakini nina malengo nisomeshe watoto wangu, nina malengo watoto wangu wafikie vyuo hivi kusoma [...]. Ndiyo [malengo haya] yatakusababisha wewe uhangaike, ustruggle kwa kufikia pale unapopataka."* Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019; see also Decker 2014: 35).

[177] A large number of Zanzibaris seem to have, in fact, conformed to these expectations; in 2012, 84,4% of the population had at least finished secondary education, while net enrolment was at 83% in 2014/2015 (SMZ 2019: 6).

[178] *"[...][M]toto anataka kusomeshwa. Baba anahangaika, Mama anahangaika, tunapata pesa ya ada ya kwenda kumlipia mtoto. Mtoto anahitajika kwenda chuo, kwa hiyo baba anahangaika, mama anahangaika, [...] tunaenda kupata ada ya chuo ya kwenda kumlipia mtoto."* (Interview 1 with Nuru, Unguja, 19-01-2019)

1989: 17) – although the facilitation of education surely also aims at nurturing growth and ensuring social acceptability. Further, even though Nuru paints the picture of a coequal and mutual struggle of father and mother *together*, the unreliability of men in uncertain times – as lamented by many Zanzibari women and examined in the previous chapter – might often have left – and continues to leave – many of them to struggle on their own. As a consequence, the level of education that children were able to attain with their support was a source of great pride for many of my female respondents, which, I contend, is why they mentioned it prominently and frequently during interviews – for instance narrating to me which levels of education their children had reached so far. They clearly saw their offspring's achievements as a testimony to their own successes as mothers. The insight however, that their struggles and sacrifices in the pursuit of this particular maternal goal have yet to pay off – or may, in fact, never do so – explains the frustration that Bi Rukia and Bi Halima expressed on a personal note, and that other women indicated as well in their concerns about youth unemployment. It seems that maternal efforts in navigating the uncertainty and economic decline of the past two decades *for* their children – in trying to ensure their advance into productive and self-reliant futures by promoting their education – have failed for a significant number of Zanzibari mothers. Many feel betrayed by a state and government they expected to facilitate employment, or to at least establish a favourable environment in which other forms of providing for oneself financially would be viable. *"Even if we don't get government jobs, [in the very] least, if [the youth] put their table of peanuts, and [they] sell, [they] should be free! But if you put something [up], the municipality comes, they tear [it] down, they throw [everything] out,"*[179] Bi Halima lamented in this regard. Especially to opposition supporters, it might seem that the CCM-government is (consciously) thwarting the efforts of mothers to mould their children into financially independent and acceptable adults through politically motivated, discriminatory employment practices and ineffective job generation policies.

Another dimension to the maternal prioritization of the issue of youth unemployment that needs to be considered here is that *through* children, women may hope to navigate their own futures: as few Zanzibaris receive formal pensions and most people are dependent on children and other relatives to sustain them in old age (Help Age International 2017: 20-21), the investment in a child's education as a pathway to their reliable and gainful future employment is simultaneously an investment in one's own future preservation. This might be especially pronounced for women; Demovic for instance claims that "[s]uccessfully raising moral and

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[179] *"Hata kama hatupat[i] ajira ya serikali, at least, hata kama kaweka meza yake ya karanga, anauza, awe huru! Lakini unaweka kitu wanakuja manisipaa, wanabomoa, wanatupa […]"* (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)

capable children provides the only secure old age pension available to Zanzibari women" (2007: 114; see also Haws 2009: 7). The strain that Bi Rukia and Bi Halima expressed may thus not only relate to the present financial pressures of supporting their adult sons but might also be expressive of an anxiety about their own financial security in old age. Again, specifically women like Bi Rukia who lost their jobs in state-institutions (and thus most probably their pension rights) due to their political involvement, might have counted on their children to sustain them later in life.

All in all, women's political concern with the issue of youth unemployment in Zanzibar can be understood as emerging from maternal subjectivities – from their experiences as mothers currently struggling, or having struggled in the past, to facilitate the education, employability and generally, the future of their children in pursuit of maternal goals. Maternal subjectivities also influenced the ways in which women expressed this concern: by invoking '*children*', respondents highlighted their own positions as mothers who knew the '*uchungu*' of the youth and were able to *speak for them* with legitimacy[180]. They also implicitly called on the respect they deserve for their maternal sacrifices (see also: van Allen 2009: 67), which should be rewarded by a government that ought to support mothers in their efforts to mould their children into adults capable of supporting them later in life.

I would however also contend that the concern with youth (un)employment voiced by the Zanzibari women in my sample goes beyond protesting the state's impingement on their successful mothering on an individual basis. By speaking up for *all* of Zanzibar's '*children*' ('_our_ *children*'), much like the members of the famous *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*-movement during the Argentinian military dictatorship, they 'socialized maternity' (cf. Guzmán Bouvard 2010: 867), protesting not (only) against individual injustices and instances of discrimination, but against the state of affairs on a larger scale. Their political concerns '*about the children*' were thus complex, building on both maternal care *and* social justice (cf. Tibbetts 1994: 38).

Different than the mothers in other well-known examples, the Zanzibari women I interviewed were not jointly organized in a 'motherist' movement calling for policies to battle youth unemployment; they did not campaign collectively to eliminate party-political discrimination in the labour market. Their individual maternal subjectivities however still

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[180] Of course, the youth also speak for themselves on this topic, sometimes with quite a different take: my respondent Najima, for instance claimed that, *"[...] you find a young person, she has her degree, she has her masters, but she hasn't gotten employment. She sits, she waits three, four, five years. She doesn't look for employment herself. She waits. For what reason? The schools that we went to, to be taught, did not teach us to employ ourselves, we have been taught to be employed."* (*"[...] unakuta kijana ana degree, ana masters lakini hajapata ajira. Anakaa, anasubiri miaka mitatu, minne, mitano, [...]. Hajitaftii ajira mwenyewe. Anasubiri. Kwa sababu gani? Shule tulivyoenda kusomeshwa hatukusomeshwa kujiajiri tumefundishwa kuajiriwa."*; Interview 1 with Najima, Unguja, 11-01-2019)

represented a powerful subject position from which they launched their critique of the governing party. In my opinion, it is by all means possible that a formal, unified movement grows out of these widely shared frustrations about youth unemployment, which – incidentally – not only affect opposition supporters and their families[181]. The current overall context of shrinking political and civil space might even benefit such a development, as women organizing as mothers might be viewed as 'unthreatening' by the authorities and could thus be able to operate under the radar for longer (cf. Chuchryk 1989: 141). It remains to be seen what will unfold here in the future.

(6.1.2) Thinking Maternally: Maternal Subjectivities as a Strategic Resource to Promote Peace and Unity in Zanzibar?

The possible links between mothering, maternal subjectivities and their application on the political stage to promote peace have been controversially discussed in feminist literature (cf. Adams 2010: 727; Frazer & Hutchings 2013: 110-112; Kaptan 2010: 971). Many of my respondents without a doubt thought that there was something to the thesis that women as mothers have specific reasons to avoid conflict and reject violence, which they often justified with gendered vulnerabilities and attached worries about the well-being of children and the wider community:

> [We] women love peace because once chaos happens it is us [who] are affected from the onset.[182] (Bi Farida, Unguja)

> [...] it seems like a woman is someone who is peacefuller [sic], she doesn't like something bad to happen to her children, to her family, even to her neighbour as well.[183] (Bi Raissa, Pemba)

Within my sample, only one woman specified a concrete instance in which she tried to make use of this ubiquitous conjunction between motherhood and peace-building in the context of political conflict in the archipelago; whilst reflecting on her experiences as a CUF representative, Bi Rehema recalled a conversation she had with a female CCM-leader about creating a bipartisan women's organization in Zanzibar:

> I sat her down and I told her: 'Listen here, our problem, not only of the women, [is that] we plague each other with politics. Let's take politics and put it there outside.

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[181] In an informal conversation – before I turned on the voice recorder for our second interview – Bi Pili, a staunch CCM-supporter and government employee, told me about her second oldest son who had left the islands working on a ship and stayed back in Sweden, telling her he saw no future for himself in Zanzibar (Informal conversation, Unguja, 14-11-2018).

[182] *"Wanawake tunapenda amani kwa sababu once unapotokea machafuko ni sisi ambao tunaathirika mwanzo."* (Interview 1 with Bi Farida, Unguja, 31-10-2018)

[183] *"[...] inaonekana mwanamke ni mtu ambaye ni peacefuller, [...] hapendi kitu kibaya pengine kwa watoto wake, kwa family yake, hata kwa jirani zake pia."* (Interview 1 with Bi Raissa, Pemba, 24-11-2018)

(emphatically:) *Let's sit here as mothers. Let's do this and this,' I presented a big proposal. I delivered it. That we should establish a real women's union of Zanzibar.[184]*

The focal point of Bi Rehema's recollection was her emphatic plea to '*sit here as mothers*' in order to forge unity between women on both sides of the political divide. In my opinion, the fact that Rehema explicitly emphasized shared *mother*hood, and not shared *woman*hood, is meaningful: it indicates a notion of common aims, interests and – importantly – morality imagined to develop with birthing- and mothering labour (cf. Akujobi 2014: 371), constituting a basis on which trust between female CUF- and CCM-politicians could be established and mobilization efforts could be founded (cf. Kron 2016: 589). By highlighting an overriding, collective identity (*'mothers'*), Bi Rehema strived to initiate a shift in the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion established by '*politics*' (i.e. party conflict) in the House of Representatives and beyond. She clearly hoped that shared maternal interests in preserving children and upholding favourable conditions for nurturing growth and ensuring social acceptability, could be the basis for joint work towards mutual goals.

The potential of female solidarity based on motherhood and shared mothering experiences in Zanzibar is already mentioned by Corrie Decker: During World War II, when ethnicised rationing policies began stirring up resentment between the members of different ethnic associations and groups[185], female teachers were called upon by the colonial government to organize 'cooking lessons' with women all over the archipelago to demonstrate sensible usages of war rations. Decker argues that the sensitivity of the issue at hand would certainly have led to conflicts in such meetings if attended by men, but that "[…] racial and class politics did not disrupt the women's work. *Women could relate to each other as mothers* responsible for feeding their families during tough times." (Decker 2014: 104, my emphasis) Such an identification with each other, i.e. an assumption of shared aims and morality, can be an important basis for building trust and, by extension peace (cf. Kenworthy et. al 2016: 1044; Lahno 2011 :675).

In Bi Rehema's case, the attempt to use motherhood, mothering experiences, maternal subjectivities and moralities as a resource for building unity and trust among female politicians was not successful. She disclosed that,

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[184] "*Nikamweka kitako [...] nikamwaambia: 'Jamani tatizo letu, si wanawake tu, tunatesamana kisiasa. Hebu tuchukue hiyo siasa tuiweke huko nje. Tukae hapa kama mama! Tufanyeni hivi hivi', nikatoa proposal kubwa. Nikafikishia. Kwamba tuweke umoja wa wanawake kikwelikweli wa Zanzibar.*" (Interview 1 with Bi Rehema, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[185] One of the main points of contention was who should be granted access to rice, which was only allocated to those islanders classified as 'Arabs' by the colonial authorities (Glassman 2011: 99).

[j]ust a few days ago when I was organizing my papers, I happened upon this proposal that I had written. I was told [back then]: 'Well, we will call you, Honourable.' They have not called me even a single day.[186]

I can only speculate about the reasons for the ultimate failure of the initiative; since Bi Rehema placed the presentation of her proposal directly in, or just before an election year, it is probable that, facing the uncertainty of an impending election, few women were prepared to take the risk of investing time and effort in a bipartisan project. It further seems that identities, aims and shared 'morality'[187] as CCM- and CUF-members, as well as deep mutual distrust[188] between the political parties outweighed the symbolic value of their collective identity as mothers. By trying to appeal to an essentialist 'mother figure' that must always choose harmony over conflict (cf. Pankhurst 2004: 20), Bi Rehema ignored the very real differences of interest that existed between mothers supporting and working for CUF or CCM in Zanzibar.

Bi Rehema's recollections already indicate that, even though many Zanzibari women seem to agree that, ideally, peace and non-violence could be a shared concern of mothers, in practice, many other factors contribute to women's behaviour in situations of conflict and friction. Additionally, as I found out, references to motherhood may also be employed to promote views that go quite contrary to this ideal of peace and unity: When interviewing Bi Halima, I gained the impression that by expressing her motherly understanding and sympathy for the 'silenced' youth the way she did, she condoned the use of violence in certain situations:

You know, if a human sees something that bothers him or her, it is better you let them say it. If you 'squeeze' them, they can bear foolish thoughts. I can give you an example. The youth have already gotten tired of life [under] this party [CCM]. *They want change. Now when someone wants to express his or her thoughts, [and] you obstruct them, I tell you that the youngster will come with foolish thoughts now.* (empathically) *[This is] dangerous! [To have] a great percentage of young people that lose hope for [their] lives. This is what brings troubles. So, it is very dangerous that you obstruct them. The danger is that they decide to [have] foolish ideas. You don't know what they will think. So now* (claps) *what will be? You cannot know.*[189]

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[186] *[…] Juzi nilikuwa nikipangapanga makaratasi nikaikuta ile proposal yangu ndo niliandikia. Nikaambiwa, […]: 'Basi tutakuita Mheshimiwa.' […] Hawajaniita hata siku moja."* (ibid.)

[187] Here one could imagine an obligation to remain loyal to 'one's own'.

[188] Distrust, per se can fulfil the same functions as trust, i.e. reducing the complexity of making decisions about the future by "[…] dictating a course of action based on suspicion, monitoring, and activation of institutional safeguards" (Lewis & Weigert 1985: 969). Ruddick also mentions maternal distrust as a preservational attitude mothers may adopt (1989: 118, 177).

[189] *"Unajua […] binadamu, akiona kitu chake kinamkera, basi bora umwachie aseme. […] Kama unambana, anaweza akazaa mawazo bii. […] Mimi naweza nikakukupa mfano moja. Vijana saa hivi maisha wamechoka nayo […] ya chama hichi. Wanataka mabadiliko. Sasa, anapokuwa anataka kutoa mawazo yake […], unamzuia, nakuambia kwamba kijana yule […] [a]takuja na mawazo bii sasa. […] Hatari! Asilimia kubwa ya vijana [wanaokata] tamaa ya maisha […] ndo hivyo inayoleta mabalaa, eh. […] Kwa hiyo ni hatari kubwa sana […] kwamba wewe unawazuia. Hatari [ni kwamba] wakaamua kufanya wazo bii. Hujui watawaza nini. Sasa tena (claps) nini kitakuwa? Huwezi kujua."* (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)

Bi Halima got back to this point *("they can bear foolish thoughts")* several more times during our conversation – claiming that opposition party leaders have always encouraged their followers to stay peaceful but they *"[...] know that people have gotten tired, [and] they are capable of anything"*[190]. Judging from the tone she spoke in, I eventually interpreted her statements to much rather be a barely veiled threat at an imagined CCM-audience (in the sense of: '*you* are the cause of the youth's anger *("you squeeze them", "you obstruct them")*, so you'd better watch out…'), than a genuine expression of fear of violent conflict and its consequences. Both the references to motherhood and the endorsement of violence are – without a doubt – extremely subtle here. Read in the context of our whole interview however, I understand Bi Halima's statements as being evocative of the image of the 'enraged mother' (cf. Mukta 2000: 174), whose anger is powerful especially because there is a dominant notion of motherly peacefulness and moderation[191]. By presenting herself as someone who deeply cares about the youth, understands and emphasizes with their concerns, Bi Halima alluded to the Swahili leitmotiv of the caring mother who knows and feels the troubles (*uchungu)* of her children almost physically. Taking into account the later invocation of her own son, the pronouncement that "[…] *mainly I fight for our youth, mine and those of my fellows"* (see p. 104), and the fact that *'the youth'* (*vijana*) were her go-to example throughout our entire discussion, I find it reasonable to argue that Bi Halima launched her critique of the status quo from a maternal position. Finally, it is from here that she expressed her sympathy and understanding – if not for violence per se – then for the justifications and reasoning of young Zanzibaris who might choose to act violently against the current government. Batya Weinbaum's claim that "[…] when women feel they must protect *space* for their children, they often are led to support violent conflicts" (1999: 91), adds an interesting twist here: Bi Halima described the current political situation as one of '*being squeezed*' (*kubana*) several times; Lazaro's dictionary (2017) additionally proposes '*to drive somebody in a corner*' or '*confining someone*' as possible translations. By describing the current state of affairs in this way, Bi Halima figuratively referred to the recent reduction of political and civil space in Tanzania and Zanzibar. She forecasted and (again, subtly) endorsed the possibly violent escape of the youth from their unjust confinement.

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[190] *"[...] tunajua watu [...] wamechoka, wanaweza kufanya chochote."* (Interview 1 with Bi Halima, Unguja, 13-02-2019)

[191] See also Bi Halima's own statements later in our interview: "*And if it gets to [the point] – us women, we are very calm people, [in] our nature [...] but if a woman gets to [the point] [that] she is so angry and loathsome that she speaks like me – you should know that we have gone [too] far!"* ("*Na ikifika [...] sisi wanawake ni watu taratibu sana, nature yetu [...] lakini mwanamke akifika kichukia akizungumza kama mimi - ujue tumefika mbali!"*; ibid.)

Bi Halima's perspective stuck out to me as in none of my other interviews or informal conversations anyone had ever explicitly endorsed violence, or even admitted openly to having participated in social or economic boycotts of 'the other side'. Bi Halima certainly broke this taboo in her pronouncements during our interview. To me, our conversation and the conclusions and interpretations I drew from it, clearly demonstrated that motherhood and maternal subjectivities can also be a legitimate position from which Zanzibari women reject non-violence and negative peace (i.e. the absence of armed conflict without a resolution of underlying grievances and frictions; cf. Pankhurst 2004: 11). By making these claims as mothers, Bi Halima and other women may endow them with much greater moral authority (cf. Kutz-Flamenbaum 2010: 715). The same mechanisms are of course at work in Bi Rehema's plea for bipartisan unity, harmony and – by extension – peace. In the end, it is as Jacobson (2000: 181) argues: the relationship between motherhood and peace is complicated – even though they might not actively embrace violence or inflict it on others, mothers may support and legitimize forms of armed struggle; while others may emphatically call upon a shared morality as mothers that compels them to strive for peace and unity. Both do so with the exact same overall motive in mind – fighting for children's future preservation, nurturance and social acceptability.

(6.2) Withdrawal and Holding: Mothers Navigating '*Siasa*' in Zanzibar

In my theoretical framework, I established the concept of maternal navigation as a specific form of navigation which stands out due to the fact that people who mother navigate uncertainty *through* and *for others* – whom they are connected to through relations of care – in the pursuit of maternal goals. Above, I have already introduced one specific local strategy of maternal navigation in Zanzibar: facilitating education and thus future employability of children, often through *kuhangaika*-activities. These navigational practices take place against the backdrop of an uncertain and moving environment that influences the resources required (e.g. school fees), connections needed to be made (e.g. aligning oneself favourably with the ruling party which controls a large share of the labour market) and the resources available (e.g. financial means produced by only the mother vs. those produced by both parents jointly) in and for these navigational efforts. In the following, I will identify two strategies of maternal navigation that I encountered in interviews and informal conversations with several Zanzibari women. These navigational efforts took place in the concrete context of the uncertainties and risks of '*the political*' in the islands. In these specific circumstances, navigation meant spotting risks and vulnerabilities, opportunities and trajectories, as well as developing attitudes and strategies to

safeguard oneself, but – most importantly – one's family and children against potential political dangers and exposure.

(6.2.1) Withdrawal: Bi Sauda and Saida

It is my second day of interviewing, and my research assistant Saida and I are visiting Bi Sauda in the *Ng'ambo*[192] area of Zanzibar City. On the way there, Saida tells me that Bi Sauda hails from Pemba and is a CUF-supporter. Bi Sauda seems reluctant to be interviewed and interacts with me in a peculiar mix of timidity and assertiveness – apprehensively eyeing my tape recorder and me, she emphatically states that she does not want her voice to end up on the radio. I ensure her that this will not be the case, but the feeling that Bi Sauda does not fully trust me or my ulterior motives persists. As a consequence, most of her responses remain rather taciturn, but as Saida and an older male relative, who joins us mid-interview, take over the conversation and dig deeper with their questions, she eventually opens up a bit. Contrary to my expectations that I would meet an enthusiastic CUF-follower, as a matter of fact, Bi Sauda narrates her personal conversion from eagerly supporting the opposition to becoming disillusioned with politics altogether:

> *We were told that life will be good [by the party leaders] […]. But after already missing [out] that first year, I started to be disheartened* [lit. heart-broken]. *At the second one* [i.e. the 2000 elections]*, I said to myself 'Enough, I should leave politics alone again.*[193]

After repeated probing by both Saida and her male relative, Bi Sauda highlights several times that she doesn't *"[…] want any party"* (*"Sitaki chama chochote!"*) and explains that she didn't even registered to vote in the last few elections and doesn't plan to do so in the future, since *"there is no meaning [in] politics"* (*"[…] haina maana yoyote siasa."*). At the very end of our interview, she sums up her reasons for '*leaving politics alone'*:

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[192] Literally: 'the other side'. While in colonial times this denoted the 'African' quarters of Zanzibar town, on the other side of a then-existent creek (today roughly Benjamin Mkapa road) (Glassmann 2011: 37, 66) at the time of my stay most people used the term to describe any 'far out' part of Zanzibar City beyond the historic Stone Town, i.e. the peri-urban areas. Faiza also related the term to issues of gentrification, implying that most 'ordinary' Zanzibaris were pushed further and further away from the city centre and old town. (Fieldnotes, 31-01-2019; see also Folkers & Perzyna (eds.) 2019: 20)

[193] *"Tuliambiwa maisha yatakuwa mazuri. [...] Lakini baada ya kushakosa tu mwaka wa kwanza ule, nikaanza kuvunjika moyo. Wa pili nika[ni]ambia 'Basi, niachie na siasa tena.'"* (Interview 1 with Bi Sauda, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

> *Firstly, I am already an older person now, I don't want those political things again. There [just] comes a lot of noise, and the children are given words here along the way by people, in this manner. I don't want this again.*[194]

The meeting and interview with Bi Sauda left a lasting impression on me. Her disillusionment with the unfulfilled promises of the '*mabadiliko*' (change) expected to materialize with the shift to multipartyism, were carried across well; a number of times during our conversation, she became quite agitated and her bitter disappointment became palpable to me. Additionally, several of my pre-set expectations were challenged: Bi Sauda's claim that she had not voted since the 2000 elections, did not only go against what Saida had mentioned on our way to the interview, but also against what I had read before about Zanzibari politics; namely that most Zanzibaris follow politics extremely closely as for instance demonstrated by their consistently high turn-out during elections (cf. e.g. Moss 2016: 320)[195]. Still, as this interview made obvious, even impressive turn-out figures – a mean of 90.11% in the multiparty elections from 1995 to 2010 (cf. Roop & Weghorst 2016: 192) – do leave a noteworthy group of non-voters. A few authors writing on Zanzibar, like Kjersti Larsen (2004: 132) or William Cunningham Bissell and Marie Aude Fouéré (2018) bring up the practice of nonvoting to avoid conflict and describe a growing disengagement from and a disillusionment with politics, especially after the 2015/16 elections. Overall however, I would argue that non-voters are a group whose perspectives are side-lined in the narratives about politics in Zanzibar; although, as I would argue, their insights could be very illuminating – precisely because high political enthusiasm and engagement are the norm in the society at hand.

In Bi Sauda's reasoning for her withdrawal from '*those political things*', she provides several rationales: profound disappointment and disillusionment (*"I started to be [heart-broken]"*), an emotional fatigue with the political processes as she got older, and, compellingly, an interest in protecting (her) children (*"[…] the children are given words […] I don't want this again'"*). '*To be given words*' in this context, can be interpreted to mean verbal attacks[196] that could also be targeted at kids and teenagers, or involve them as participants. The '*noise*' she associates with political processes in the archipelago, like in other places (see Vigh 2009: 420), does not only denote auditory uproar, but tumult and trouble in general: intra-community and police

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[194] *"Kwanza saahizi nimeshakuwa mtu mzima, siyataki tena yale mambo ya siasa. Kuja sana kelele na watoto huku njiani kutolewa na maneno na watu hivyo hivyo hivyo. Sipendi tena."* (Interview 1 with Bi Sauda, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

[195] With the exception of the 2016 repeat elections that were boycotted by opposition supporters. (Minde et al. 2018: 180; Roop et al. 2018: 255)

[196] Bi Sauda gave some example as to what verbal abuse could amount to: *"Let's say [as] and example, you will say 'CCM are dog[s], CCM are not people' or 'CUF [are] dogs, CUF are not people.'"* (*"Tuseme mfano, mtasema kama 'CCM ni mbwa, CCM si watu', ama 'CUF majibwa CUF si watu […]";* Interview 1 with Bi Sauda, Unguja, 24-10-2018)

violence, or a generalized disruption of everyday life, like after the 2015 electoral stalemate (Ali 2015), which my respondent Faiza described as amounting to a two-week-long 'lockdown' in some areas of Stone Town (Fieldnotes, 31-01-2019). All of this would of course have an especially negative effect on children, who have additionally been victims of politically motivated violence and brutalities in the past (cf. Amnesty International 2002: 11, 21, 44; HRW 2002: 15, 17).

Furthermore, Bi Sauda expressed her withdrawal from politics time after time as based on a no longer existent 'want' for it (see e.g.: *"I don't want politics again"* – *"[…] sitaki tena siasa."*), which I would take to mean both a lack of desire and need for political involvement, as it did not and does not seem to have any positive influence on her life, that of her family or her immediate community (*"there is no meaning in politics"*). Overall, although Bi Sauda's reasons for her withdrawal from politics are certainly multifaceted, concerns about (her) children did play a role in her justification and decision-making process, making her disengagement at least partly an example of maternal thinking.

> *On that second day of interviewing*, after Bi Sauda so firmly claims to be 'done' with politics, my research assistant Saida interjects, and challenges her. *"Say, do you feel that losing hope is the solution? [I]f all people arrive at loosing hope, what direction will politics go in now?!"*[197] she asks in what I feel is a somewhat reproachful undertone. Bi Sauda deflects her question – *"It's not everyone, it's just me."*[198] – which makes us all chuckle a bit. Ultimately however, this exchange does not only make me draw conclusions about my interviewee, but also about my research assistant; I feel fairly certain that Saida is an opposition supporter and that she empathises with, but also slightly disapproves of Bi Sauda's political retreat. To my surprise, in our own interview, Saida reveals quite a different perspective than what I had expected:
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>> *So, resulting from [the fact] that the whole [political] system is not proper, on both sides, people who have a bit of understanding about things, they are in the middle, they don't know which side [in terms of political parties] to go to, because everywhere truly there is not truth.*[199]

Saida clearly counted herself as part of the group of people '*in the middle*' she described. She also shared with me that she did not vote in the last two elections – once because she was not

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[197] *"Je, unahisi kukata tamaa ni suluhiso? […] Sasa kama watu wote wanafikia kukata tamaa siasa inaelekea wapi sasa?"* (Interview 1 with Bi Sauda, Unguja, 24-10-2018)
[198] *"Si wote ni miye tu."* (ibid.)
[199] *"Kwa hiyo kutokana (na) kwamba ile system nzima sasa hivi haiko vizuri kwa upande zote […] watu ambao wana[…] uelewa wa mambo, wanakuwa wanakaa katikati, hawajui waende upande upi kwa sababu kote kwa kiuweli hakuna ukweli."* (Interview 1 with Saida, Dar es Salaam, 01-03-2019)

in Zanzibar at the time anyways *"[…] but even if I would have been there, I think that I wouldn't have voted because I felt that there was no truth, that there are just lies and whatnot […]* "[200]. She explained the line of thinking of non-voters like her, saying that they would typically reason: *"'Better, if life just goes on. If it is CCM okay, if it is CUF – okay.' What we want is that people don't fight each other, [that] they don't kill each other, that's is. [That] we live in quiet."*[201] Although in this instance Saida expressed an indifference to what party would win in an electoral contest, in the longer passage of our interview cited in the introduction it became clear that Saida weighed an opposition versus an incumbent win very carefully in terms of the dangers that would emanate from either one for herself and her children, dreading both CCM's oppressive violence (*"[…] will CCM really agree to leave from power just like that?"*), and the potential of the opposition running out of patience at their constant questionable losses (*"[…this situation that every day CCM wins […] will it not maybe happen one day, that those of the opposition will also come to bring trouble?"*).

Even though – again, influenced by my own pre-set expectations – Saida's revelations surprised me, it is certainly quite reasonable for both her and Bi Sauda to come to these conclusions and to withdraw themselves from the divisive sphere of 'the political' in Zanzibar as maternal thinkers. In her testimony, Saida also worked out well, that as a mother primarily committed to the aim of preservation, she was caught between a rock and a hard place – none of the two political options, guaranteed sustainable *'liv[ing] in quiet',* a primary precondition for successful mothering. Her reflections on this complemented Bi Sauda's testimony: instead of the '*noise*', upheaval and '*heart-break*' that politics bring, they both preferred stability and peace, for their own sake and that of their children, even if that would mean a departure from democratic procedure and principles (or what currently passes as such in Zanzibar). Their conclusions and ultimate withdrawal from politics derived from slightly different standpoints however: Saida, a middle-class academic, claimed that for her and others in her position, it is '*hav[ing] a bit of understanding'*, i.e. an awareness of these very principles and standards and the ways that *both* political parties disregard them, that leads to disenchantment. Bi Sauda, who left secondary school in tenth grade upon first getting married, expressed her withdrawal as (amongst others) resulting from the emotional pain of seeing her preferred party loose repeatedly in dubious circumstances.

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[200] *"[…] lakini hata ningekuwepo nafikiri singepiga kura kwa sababu naona kama hakuna ukweli […], kama kuna unwongo na nini tu […]"* (ibid.)

[201] *"'Bora maisha yaende tu. Ikiwa ni CCM – sawa, ikiwa ni CUF – sawa.' Sisi tunachotaka, watu wasipigane, wasiuane, tu basi. Tuishi kwa utulivu.'"* (ibid.)

It is important to note, that it would not do justice to either of the two women introduced here to understand their behaviour and mindset as 'apolitical'. In fact, both women were politically interested and involved in the past: Bi Sauda was carried along by the excitement of the first and second election that promised positive change (*mabadiliko*), while I think that it is not completely far-fetched that Saida who, according to her own testimony, elected CCM in 1995, might have given CUF her vote at least once – which is maybe why she could switch so effortlessly between the discourses of the followers of the opposition and the incumbent[202]. Both women were still well informed about current political developments, and Bi Sauda professed that she still felt pain (*maumivu*) when people were discriminated against or suffered for political reasons.

Even though Henrik Vigh's (2009) concept of navigation is very much connected to movement and motion, I feel that 'staying put' like Saida and Bi Sauda did in the past few elections, is a prime example of (maternal) navigation; as Whyte (2009: 259) states very aptly "[…] navigation can also involve immobility!". Both women identified the risks that the political conflict posed to their lives while simultaneously considering their extended vulnerabilities as women *and* as mothers *("I am a woman. But in addition, I am a mother.")*. Saida also expressed the uncertainty she felt about the political future and its implications very well – her apprehension, tentativeness and even fear about the explosive potential of Zanzibari politics. Becoming a political agent, especially on the side of the opposition would lead to exposure and increased vulnerability, which is usually transferred to one's wider family as well. Due to the seemingly no-win situation that presents itself in this polarized context, immobility and withdrawal seem like the safest way 'out', although they are by no means perfect strategies. I would argue that that for Bi Sauda and Saida the maternal demands of preserving and nurturing children – which work best in stable and harmonic environments – added to their individual decisions to withdraw from '*political things'* (– they were not the only reasons, however). Whether the women's withdrawal is a sustainable solution remains to be seen.

(6.2.2) Holding: Habiba

One morning during my stay in Pemba, I am sitting at the back of the house in the outdoor kitchen with Habiba, my 'host aunt'; her children are around, washing dishes and cleaning up after breakfast. We talk about the political leaning of her family, and Habiba tells me that she still remembers vividly how her father was taken away and imprisoned because

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[202] This was especially noticeable in our back-to-back interviews of CCM-stalwart Bi Khadija and CUF-politician Bi Rehema in October 2018.

of his association with CUF. Other men from the neighbourhood died in police custody in those days. While we talk, an older neighbour enters the courtyard wearing a green *kanga* picturing the current president Ali Mohamed Shein (CCM). Knowing my research interest, Habiba tells the woman half-jokingly that I want to know her political opinion. As a response, the neighbour exclaims '*CCM yadumu mileleeeee!*' (*CCM – [may] remain [in power] forever!*), like you could maybe hear it at an election rally, and laughs. Neither Habiba, nor her teenage sons join in the laughter and the atmosphere suddenly feels tense. After the woman has left, I tell Habiba that this kind of issues are exactly what interests me; how people manage to live together after all that has happened. She looks at me blankly and simply answers, '*Vibaya*' (*Badly*). Yes, she will greet this particular neighbour and interact with her amicably; she even has allowed her to celebrate the wedding of one of her children in their large sitting room. But this is mostly because Islam commends that you must love your neighbours. Habiba also hopes that if she is friendly, the neighbour might help her out, too – but this expectation has already been disappointed, for example, when she had to deal with the local authorities on behalf of her sons in the past. (Fieldnotes, 28-11-2018)

This encounter I witnessed in Pemba, was one that left a lasting impression on me. It was the very first (and only) time that I was able to observe the tension resulting from party conflicts openly play out in front of me in an everyday situation. The neighbour's nonchalant wearing of CCM-party attire while entering Habiba's space that day, already seemed like a provocation to me – given that on other occasions Habiba marked her house clearly as 'belonging' to CUF[203].

Habiba's neighbour's exclamation that day could certainly have been understood as a failed attempt at humour, testified to by her own laughter at the 'joke' – Habiba obviously did not find it amusing. I sensed that the sudden tension was also caused by the fact that we had just discussed the painful issues of political oppression and violence directly affecting Habiba's family and community. The neighbour was of course not privy to this particular conversation, but surely had knowledge about the fact of Habiba's father's political imprisonment. It additionally seemed to me that, even though the woman as a CCM supporter clearly belonged to the minority in her neighbourhood (and town), she was a force to be reckoned with; someone

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[203] On the weekend before, I had witnessed a group of neighbourhood women convening the weekly meeting of their saving's group (*hisa*) in Habiba's sitting room. Their cash box was prominently placed on, and later wrapped in a CUF-party flag. When I asked my host about this, she told me that it had been a CCM flag before. Since the meetings were held in her sitting room however, it had to be changed – there would be no CCM flags in her home. The neighbourhood lady in question was part of that saving's group and had been attending that day, although in neutral clothing, as far as I could tell. (Fieldnotes, 25-11-2018)

to keep on the right side of, and to a degree, she acted like this. I for instance, noted down that she *'behaved as if the place 'belonged' to her'*. (Fieldnotes, 28-11-2018)

Despite Habiba's obvious disapproval of her neighbour's behaviour that day, she kept quite in the moment and subsequently shared her plans to retain a harmonious and cooperative neighbourly relationship with the woman in the future – also for the sake of her children. Her reference to dealings with the authorities in this context is, in my opinion to be interpreted to imply the kind of *'affairs'* that Faiza mentioned (see introduction), i.e. receiving a birth certificate or ID which would also be important in gaining access to government services like education. As already mentioned, the first step in most of these processes lies with regional authorities, the *shehas* or local police branches, which are tightly connected to the ruling party. The support in a certain matter by a well-known CCM-supporter in one's circle of acquaintances could without a doubt help to have *'affairs'* go more smoothly.

Habiba's behaviour in this particular situation, and the insights she shared with me directly after, immediately came to my mind when I read about the maternal attitude of 'holding' that Sara Ruddick describes:

> To hold means to minimize risk and to reconcile differences rather than to sharply accentuate them. Holding is a way of seeing with an eye toward maintaining the minimal harmony, material resources, and skills necessary for sustaining a child in safety. […] Protective mothers often take on themselves the task of holding together relationships [...] on which their children depend. (1989: 78-79)

A key word that strikes me regarding the encounter I just described is the term 'minimal harmony'; Habiba was not able to go as far as to laugh at her neighbour's 'joke' but she did not reprimand her, or picked a quarrel at this point. In her envisioned future behaviour towards the neighbour, Habiba communicated her commitment to 'hold' onto the relationship, to preserve 'minimal harmony'.

Mothering and its care work, as Ruddick argued, are substantially shaped by an awareness for the need of connection (1989: 46, 130), especially – as Schalge and Vigh would probably add – in uncertain times (Schalge 2004: 155; Vigh 2009: 420-422). 'Holding' is thus a way to make sure that established connections and relationships remain active and beneficial, in order to protect and preserve children; even if this means cutting back on one's own needs and wants (cf. Ruddick 1989: 79). Holding, in my opinion, is a good example of maternal (and social) navigation; much like the mobilised, de-mobilized and re-mobilized youth Vigh researched in Guinea Bissau, Zanzibari mothers' holding consisted of cautiously navigating social ties and networks constituting possible resources (or potential obstructions) in individuals' desires and needs to 'get by' and 'get on' in a context of uncertainty (Vigh 2009: 421-422 & 2010: 159). Again, the distinctiveness of the described practice lies in its focus-setting: Bi Habiba and other

maternal practitioners did not primarily 'hold' to enable and enhance their own trajectories, but those of their children and others they were connected to through relations of care.

In her work, Ruddick considers holding onto relationships with close kin, like fathers or grandparents, as well as with professionals directly involved in the training and nurturance of children (e.g. teachers), as chiefly important for successful mothering (1989: 79). In the particular case at hand and – I would contend – in the Zanzibari context in general, the social networks to be attended to by mothers are much more far-reaching. In particular, personalized connections to ruling party and government institutions can be vital for '*tak[ing] care of affairs in peace*' on behalf of one's dependants or oneself. Additionally, rather than merely representing a 'fundamental attitude of protectiveness' and thus belonging to the first maternal goal of preservation (cf. Ruddick 1989: 79), I would argue that Habiba's holding-strategies furthermore aimed at being able to facilitate her children's transformation into acceptable and successful adults in possession of identity papers, a good education and favourable prospects in the labour market.

Habiba's behaviour, and holding in general, are further reminiscent of the attitude of civility or tentativeness, that Whyte and Siu describe: open confrontation was avoided in order to maintain a relationship on which Habiba and her family depended, or might become dependent on in the uncertain political future (Whyte & Siu 2015: 28-29). Questions of trust also suggested themselves to me: in her last comment, Habiba made clear that in the past, her attitudes of holding and civility have not yielded the results that she had hoped for. Different than in an ideal trust-relationship, the trustee (her neighbour) could not be held accountable for actions that seemed to break the trust (Lahno 2011: 675) precisely because holding onto the relationship took precedence in the careful navigation of local (power) dynamics. This could also explain the neighbour's brazen behaviour.

I would say that overall, Habiba's holding-practices need to be analysed in light of her relative position of vulnerability in terms of power, resources and exposure. Being unwell healthwise and unable to work outside the house, Habiba ran a small food vending business from her home. She had told me, that once before the local *sheha* had obstructed her in these activities, forbidding her to set up stall on the street in front of her house (Fieldnotes 22-11-2018). Local authorities, and by extension the ruling party, its local members and possible informers in the neighbourhood thus had the power to undermine her efforts in trying to provide for her children from her anyhow weak position. Furthermore, Habiba and her family were clearly exposed as prominent supporters of the opposition party, testified to by the political imprisonment of her father that she had recounted to me. Even though Habiba strongly believed

in the electoral dominance of CUF – saying for instance that CCM *'[…] has already been defeated'* (Fieldnotes 22-11-2018) – she was aware of the high probability of continued CCM-rule – demonstrated by the very act of holding onto the relationship with her neighbour.

As Vigh argues, (social) navigation depends on an actor's social location and his or her perception of their own power to control the movement of their environment (Vigh 2009: 430). From the specific position that she was in, Habiba was not able to socially shun her neighbour; an amicable relationship still represented a potential 'way out' of Habiba's own situation of (political) exposure and vulnerability – although, a very unreliable one, as the pay-off for her holding-practices remained uncertain. By explicitly invoking her children in this context, Habiba highlighted that her decision to 'hold' was in large parts made from a maternal position and motivated by her commitment to fulfil maternal aims like preservation, fostering growth and ensuring social acceptability. On the whole, Habiba had to mind local power relations and her own vulnerabilities in her everyday (maternal) practices, even if that meant to accept provocative behaviour in her home and holding onto a relationship that was perceived by her (as of yet) as one-sided and unfulfilling.

Still, Habiba's characterization of the manner that people lived together in as '*badly*', shows that her 'holding' and 'civility' were only able to bring about superficial harmony and reconciliation, in which additional small and big grievances were continuously accumulated. This was certainly not state of 'active connectedness' that Ruddick suggests as a 'maternal' definition of peace (1989: 183, 218).

(6.3) Conclusive Remarks

In this chapter, I hope to have shown the myriad and diverse ways in which motherhood, maternal subjectivities, and mothering may figure in Zanzibari women's narratives about their political decision-making, in their critique of the current regime's policies, or in political discourses about peace and radical change in Zanzibar. Likewise, I explored how their 'maternal standpoint' influenced some my respondents' navigational efforts in the environment of tension and uncertainty characterizing politics in Zanzibar. The different elements of maternity often act together, in the sense that motherhood as institution and its rich symbolism and ideology may serve as rhetorical means in public discourses, while concrete mothering experiences and ensuing maternal subjectivities can serve as the basis from which to draw inspiration for participating in the discourse in the first place. Motherhood and mothering additionally act in highly ambivalent ways, as they might push women to be become politically active (e.g. on behalf of unemployed youth), while, at the same time, considering their maternal

vulnerabilities could be the cause for certain women's withdrawal from political matters, such as voting.

The empirical examples I introduced here hopefully merely represent the beginning of a scholarly exploration of Zanzibari women's perspectives and subjectivities as mothers; they however already demonstrate the potential of motherhood and mothering to gain power and relevance outside the private sphere of individual families. A thorough analysis of women's rhetorical strategies during campaigning activities, e.g. in the house-to-house campaigns several of my respondents mentioned, or in more formal political contexts would certainly give more valuable insights as to how and why references to motherhood and mothering experiences are made. More research also needs to be conducted to assess how prevalent attitudes and practices like 'holding' or 'withdrawal' are in Zanzibar, and whether they are always connected to a maternal positioning. Other maternal navigational strategies, also of more active engagement with formal politics, could likewise be uncovered in the process.

(7) Conclusion

For example, even me personally, I can say [that] I am a bit apprehensive about CUF taking a position because I fear that there will be trouble maybe. You see, eh? Because I don't know. Because – will CCM really agree to leave from power just like that? You can ask yourself that. It is not something that is easy. [...]. But I also have [these] thoughts, I say [to myself], on the other hand, some day really, this situation that every day CCM wins, CCM wins, will it not maybe happen one day, that those of the opposition will also come to bring trouble? (Saida, Dar es Salaam/Unguja; see p. 1 for full quote)

The fundamental feeling of being torn between two undesirable options, and the concomitant experience of uncertainty expressed by my research assistant Saida above – already quoted at the very outset of this thesis – quite adequately sets the background against which most Zanzibaris must make decisions about their actions. Her fears and paralysis, confronting the almost inevitable *'trouble'* emanating from actors on either side of the political divide, is undoubtedly shared by many female and male inhabitants of the archipelago[204]. The focal point of Saida's account however is the proclamation inspiring the title of this thesis: *"I am a woman. But in addition, I am a mother, who has a family, so I fear these problems."* This statement points strongly to the perception of a specific gendered, a maternal vulnerability in the face of political risks, as well as a unique perspective on one's exposure to them, connected to femininity, 'ha[ving] a family', and wanting to shield it from harm, which represents the core argument of this thesis. Some might now say that the insight that a mother would want to protect her children under uncertain and difficult circumstances is self-evident, 'natural', or even clichéd. In my opinion, however, these matters deserve a closer examination and analysis, since the underlying motivations, reasons and the concrete actions mothers in different contexts take, are, in fact, complex and varied. Within this thesis, I attempted to untangle some of these issues. In the following, I trace the two main objectives I established in my introduction and examine how they contributed to the overall endeavour of answering my main research question:

How do Zanzibari women navigate (political) uncertainty and what role do motherhood as institution, and resource, as well as mothering as practice, play in their navigation?

(7.1) Re-claiming Women's Spaces in Zanzibar's Political Past and Present

> *'Women have no idea about politics! You need to talk to men!'*
> (Fieldnotes, 28-09-2018)

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[204] See e.g. Afrobarometer 2016/2018: 45,8% of male Zanzibari respondents and 72,66% of female Zanzibari respondents replied 'a lot' to the question whether they feared to become a victim of political intimidation of violence during election campaigns.

Even now, over a year later, I distinctly remember the smirk on the face of the employee at the Chief Government Statistician's Office in Zanzibar as he delivered these words to me, and my own irritation, as I bit my tongue and gave the hint of a smile at his 'joke'. Nevertheless, as much as I disagreed with his perspective then, there were indeed times during my fieldwork in Zanzibar when I came close to taking his advice; realizing how much easier it seemed to be to spontaneously strike up conversations about sensitive political topics with the male Zanzibaris I met on the streets, markets and *mabaraza* all over the islands, while even setting up interviews with women proved difficult, if not impossible, at times. But did women's frequent silence concerning politics really mean that they had *'no idea'* about it? The data I was eventually able to co-create with respondents suggest otherwise: as I detailed in Chapter 4, I came to see that in polarized and tension-filled circumstances, there is an abundance of reasons to remain 'silent'. For many Zanzibari women it was not their ignorance of political matters – as the employee at the government office implied – but actually their knowledge of the extended consequences of 'exposure' in the current political context, and their constant scrutinizing of the same, which made them cautious about their utterances to me.

Despite, or maybe precisely because of my partly difficult experiences, I left the islands profoundly impressed by conversations and interviews with a number of highly involved female political activists, as well as with ordinary Zanzibari women who related to politics in unique ways – proving that man and many others who had met my research topic with raised eyebrows and wry smiles wrong. In sum, I would hope that my insights in this respect will initiate a rethinking in the scholarly and societal outlook on Zanzibari politics. In contrast to suppositions that in Zanzibar, "[…] politics are seen as mostly reserved for men" (Moss 2016: 326), I was able to firmly re-establish the active and diverse roles Zanzibari women have filled in (electoral) politics in the islands since their onset by means of intensive literature research, interlaced with my informants' testimony in Chapter 2. This showed that the active involvement of some of my female respondents is certainly nothing out of the ordinary. Further, the absence of other parts of the female population from the political sphere cannot satisfactorily be justified solely with a reference to confining local gender ideologies, but needs to be more closely investigated, for instance by reading it more carefully against the prevailing political context and atmosphere.

Describing some of the more recent developments, I emphasized the massive shrinking of political and civil space in Zanzibar and Tanzania mainland since the last elections in 2015/2016, which has significantly added to the uncertainty characterizing the everyday lives of Zanzibaris since the extensive economic, political and societal shifts of the mid-1990s. Most people in Zanzibar today must carefully navigate both economic decline *and* political tensions.

I argued that even though this holds true for both men and women, female respondents in my sample developed unique perspectives, attitudes and strategies in this context, in which their roles and identities as mothers, local ideologies of motherhood, maternal subjectivities and standpoints, and individual and collective mothering experiences often took centre stage.

(7.2) Taking Maternal Voices Seriously

Over the course of fieldwork and during my writing process, there were several clashes between what crystallized out of interviews, informal conversations and check-backs with people, and what I found in the scientific literature on female life and gendered identities along the Swahili Coast: as delineated at the beginning of Chapter 5, relatively few texts examine motherhood more than just in passing. It seems to be so taken for granted that Zanzibari women become mothers, that the meaning of this transformation is hardly ever seriously investigated. This bias is certainly part of the distortion and silencing of women's voices as mothers (cf. Bush Trevino 2010: 1005; Ruddick 1989: 127; Schalge 2004: 152) that I set out to counteract within this thesis as my second objective.

Using the differentiation between motherhood as institution and mothering as practice established in feminist writings as an analytical basis, I engaged with their local expressions in the Zanzibar archipelago in Chapter 5, in order to better understand the maternal standpoint from which women made decisions about their political involvement. Overall, I hope to have made sufficiently clear that both motherhood and mothering experiences are diverse, complex, highly contradictory and constantly in flux, even though there are strong ideas about their 'naturalness'. As that, my findings line up with what feminist scholars have written about motherhood and mothering elsewhere (see e.g. Arendell 2000).

In response to the demand to take the context of mothering and motherhood seriously, which I argued was characterized by generalized uncertainty and gendered vulnerabilities in Zanzibar, I developed the concept of maternal navigation, combining notions of mothering as a practice in pursuit of maternal goals, with ideas about how people experience and deal with uncertainty in their everyday lives. This was deemed especially fitting, as mothering under any circumstances can be understood as an activity with highly uncertain outcomes, constantly engaged with the unpredictability of life in general (Arendell 2000: 1197; Oyèwùmí 2016: 216; Ruddick 1989: 73, 209).

Motherhood as institution in Zanzibar was shown to be entangled with notions of (appropriate) womanhood and full adult status, as well as connected to religious and cultural ideology. Zanzibari mothers who mother 'right' are the recipients of enormous respect and

honour in society. Nonetheless, the weight of these expectations can be a burden both to mothers and to those who 'fail' to become the same. Motherhood and women's experiences with this institution are thus deeply ambivalent.

My data further testified to the fact that mothering as a practice in Zanzibar is characterized by transformative experiences of pain, bitterness and self-sacrifice that are commonly subsumed under the term *'uchungu'* – which can refer to the pain of birthing labour, but also to the struggle of pursuing maternal goals throughout a child's life. These struggles are often described by the verb '*kuhangaika*', denoting activities aimed at providing for children and their futures in the context of generalized economic and political uncertainties. Additionally, the image of '*light men*' illustrated specific maternal vulnerabilities caused by unreliable male partners and their widely perceived failure to provide for and protect their families. Many Zanzibari mothers thus envision their own vulnerability to be inclusive of that of their children and take these extended vulnerabilities into their considerations about the future and about the risks of political conflict.

As show in Chapter 6, in the wider political context, motherhood as institution and resource, mothering as practice, as well as ensuing maternal subjectivities, function in complex and at times contradictory ways: on the one hand they can be a push-factor – nudging women onto the political stage, e.g. to speak up for the youth *('our children')* or to campaign for sustainable peace under which children could be preserved and nurtured more easily, all the while drawing on the rich symbolism of motherhood as a resource. At the same time, motherhood and the maternal aim to preserve children and uphold the conditions for their nurturance may be an obstacle to active involvement as Saida's and Bi Sauda's withdrawal tactics demonstrated.

The question, whether maternal thinking and acting could be the key to lasting political peace on the islands cannot be answered conclusively. Even though some respondents made attempts to employ references to shared motherhood to promote peace on a political level, and the maternal 'holding' strategies I introduced could be thought of as – albeit unstable – tactics to create and maintain harmony on a more personal level, the record of maternalism as a force for peace in the archipelago is mixed, even in the small sample I examined. As the closer analysis of my interview with Bi Halima showed, the feeling that life chances are withheld from specific groups of 'children' only, may also entrench mothers in their polarized, partisan positions and might even result in them spurring youth on to take extremer measures.

Overall, thus, the answer to my research question is that motherhood as institution and resource, as well as mothering as practice, are used in varying ways in Zanzibari women's navigation of the tension-ridden, conflict-laden and uncertain environment. Formal politics and

voter decisions might be manoeuvred by making references to motherhood ideology and mothering experiences explicitly, giving certain demands or political priorities more weight. The navigation of political tension in their everyday lives may be maternal in the sense that it keeps in view the localized goals of maternal practice, takes into consideration concomitant extended vulnerabilities, as well as the overwhelming need for connection for successful mothering as a whole. Mothers think and actualize possible 'ways out' of uncertainty that benefit and protect both themselves, their children and other people they are connected to through relations of care, depending on their own social and political standing.

My data and analysis have clearly shown that even though the concrete manifestations of maternal positioning, thinking or navigation differed and were at times contradictory, for most of my informants, their status as mothers and their experiences of mothering in Zanzibar were central to their outlook on the world and, often, for their sense of connection with other women. By taking maternal voices seriously and examining them more closely, my research showed that there still remains a lot to uncover concerning this aspect of gendered lives in the Indian Ocean and beyond.

(7.3) Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The limitations of my research project are clear – I have only talked to a small sample of local women, 25 in total, most of whom, moreover, were located in the urban centre of only one island of the archipelago, Unguja. How much and in what ways my insights are generalizable surely warrants more research. Methodologically, a longer immersion into the life of a host family would certainly have yielded different insights about political tensions and (maternal/female) strategies of easing them in everyday life than the relatively inflexible method of formal interviews[205]. Finally, motherhood and mothering were emergent themes in my research, which means that there is still much to be desired in terms of the depth of my examination of these topics in the local context. Taking into account the shortcomings in terms of sample size, methodology and depth, further inquiries in the same direction are certainly relevant.

Another angle of inquiry, that is often bypassed in studies on gender is the investigation of male perspectives as gendered, not as 'the norm' (cf. Clifford 1986: 18-19; Stiles & Thompson 2015: 12, 18-19). As I mentioned in the introduction, the more I occupied myself with maternal thinking and mothers, the more questions I asked myself about fathers and their 'paternal'

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[205] Although in the polarized context of Zanzibar, staying with a host family, would also involve the danger of potentially only gaining access to 'one side' of the divide.

outlook on the world. It would certainly be extremely interesting to examine paternal self-image, subjectivities, positioning and thinking, which – given the cultural and religious emphasis on male provision and maintenance in Zanzibar – have probably undergone massive change recently, alongside the shifts in mothering practices.

All in all, despite the shortcomings and the many "stones left unturned' (cf. Berckmoes 2013: 128) during my fieldwork and within this thesis, I hope that my study is nonetheless valuable. By putting women back into the picture and taking the maternal voices I heard seriously, I hope to have added a new angle to scholarly thought about politics, gender and gender relations in Zanzibar and to have challenged common assumptions about the same. My analysis also shows that the subject matter at hand is complex; there are no simple or straightforward answers here, e.g. in terms of the potential of maternal 'peace politics'. Given that childbearing and child rearing will most probably remain a central part of ordinary people's lives all around the globe, I can only agree with Sara Ruddick's hope that she expressed in 1989, imagining "a future in which maternal thinkers [of all genders] are respected and self-respecting […]" (Ruddick 1989: 127) and in which their perspectives and attitudes are taken into account in scientific debates and analysis.

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(9) Appendix

(9.1) Annex 1: Translation of the Inscription of the 'agitation board' at *Maskani ya Kisonge*

(see p. 2, figure 1)

Sauti ya Kisonge

Hongera Dr. Shein kwa kutekeleza asilimia zaidi ya 70 ya ilani ya CCM ukiongeza upanuzi wa barabara ya Mwanakwerekwe na Ujenzi wa mtaro wa maji taka mji mzima[.] Tuwaache wapinzani wahangaike na sare zao kama wasambazao vijora mitaani[.] CCM Daima Kisonge oyee Tz oyee!

The Voice of Kisonge

Congratulations Dr. Shein for accomplishing more than 70 percent of the CCM manifesto if you add the broadening of Mwanakwerekwe[206] street and the construction of the sewage system in the entire city. Let's leave the opposition to roam about with their uniforms like vijora-sellers[207] in the streets. CCM forever, Kisonge oyee, T[an]z[ania] oyee!

---

[206] Mwanakwerekwe is a district of Zanzibar City. One of the main roads leading out of town to Western Unguja goes through Mwanakwerekwe.

[207] *Vijora* are a type of house dress, made from cheap fabric; often said to be see-through and thus without *heshima* (honour) (see e.g. YouTube 2019a). The insult here clearly refers to the practices of parties to pass out clothes or cloth in party colours for free during campaigns. The message claims that in contrast to the concrete achievements of the CCM-government, CUF politicians are desperately trying to lure in voters with cheap, low-quality gifts or promises that no one wants.
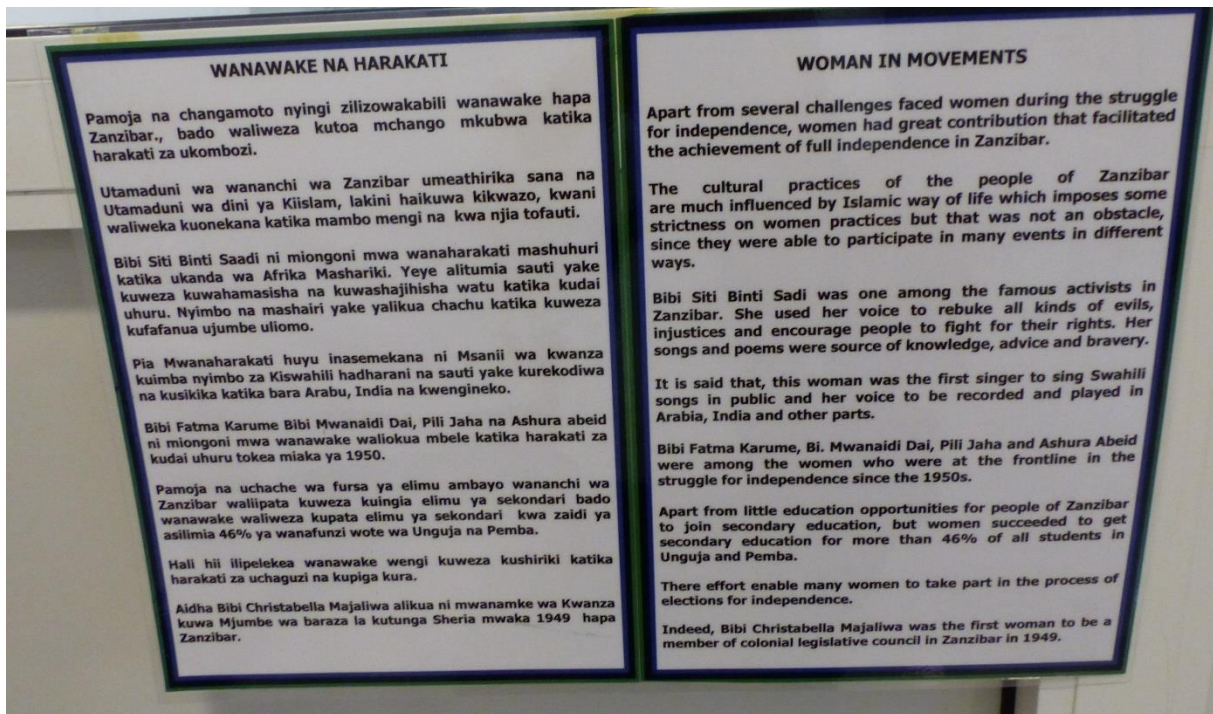
(9.2) Annex 2: "Wanawake na Harakati"

WANAWAKE NA HARAKATI

Pamoja na changamoto nyingi zilizowakabili wanawake hapa Zanzibar., bado waliweza kutoa mchango mkubwa katika harakati za ukombozi.

Utamaduni wa wananchi wa Zanzibar umeathirika sana na Utamaduni wa dini ya Kiislam, lakini haikuwa kikwazo, kwani waliweka kuonekana katika mambo mengi na kwa njia tofauti.

Bibi Siti Binti Saadi ni miongoni mwa wanaharakati mashuhuri katika ukanda wa Afrika Mashariki. Yeye alitumia sauti yake kuweza kuwahamasisha na kuwashajihisha watu katika kudai uhuru. Nyimbo na mashairi yake yalikua chachu katika kuweza kufafanua ujumbe uliomo.

Pia Mwanaharakati huyu inasemekana ni Msanii wa kwanza kuimba nyimbo za Kiswahili hadharani na sauti yake kurekodiwa na kusikika katika bara Arabu, India na kwengineko.

Bibi Fatma Karume Bibi Mwanaidi Dai, Pili Jaha na Ashura abeid ni miongoni mwa wanawake waliokua mbele katika harakati za kudai uhuru tokea miaka ya 1950.

Pamoja na uchache wa fursa ya elimu ambayo wananchi wa Zanzibar waliipata kuweza kuingia elimu ya sekondari bado wanawake waliweza kupata elimu ya sekondari kwa zaidi ya asilimia 46% ya wanafunzi wote wa Unguja na Pemba.

Hali hii ilipelekea wanawake wengi kuweza kushiriki katika harakati za uchaguzi na kupiga kura.

Aidha Bibi Christabella Majaliwa alikua ni mwanamke wa Kwanza kuwa Mjumbe wa baraza la kutunga Sheria mwaka 1949 hapa Zanzibar.

WOMAN IN MOVEMENTS

Apart from several challenges faced women during the struggle for independence, women had great contribution that facilitated the achievement of full independence in Zanzibar.

The cultural practices of the people of Zanzibar are much influenced by Islamic way of life which imposes some strictness on women practices but that was not an obstacle, since they were able to participate in many events in different ways.

Bibi Siti Binti Sadi was one among the famous activists in Zanzibar. She used her voice to rebuke all kinds of evils, injustices and encourage people to fight for their rights. Her songs and poems were source of knowledge, advice and bravery.

It is said that, this woman was the first singer to sing Swahili songs in public and her voice to be recorded and played in Arabia, India and other parts.

Bibi Fatma Karume, Bi. Mwanaidi Dai, Pili Jaha and Ashura Abeid were among the women who were at the frontline in the struggle for independence since the 1950s.

Apart from little education opportunities for people of Zanzibar to join secondary education, but women succeeded to get secondary education for more than 46% of all students in Unguja and Pemba.

There effort enable many women to take part in the process of elections for independence.

Indeed, Bibi Christabella Majaliwa was the first woman to be a member of colonial legislative council in Zanzibar in 1949.

Fig. 8: "Wanawake na Harakati"/"Woman [sic] in Movements"; Museum of the Revolution, Zanzibar City (Photograph by the author 19-02-2019)

(9.3) Annex 3: Information Document given to Prospective Respondents[208]

Information on Research Project "Women, Politics and Community Relations in Zanzibar" (MA Thesis)

Background and Purpose

I am a Master's Student of African Studies at Leiden University in the Netherlands. As part of my studies I am conducting research in Zanzibar, which will be the basis of the master thesis that I will compose upon return to the Netherlands.

There is a striking gap in research about Zanzibari politics and community relations: the roles and perspectives of women. Most studies on modern Zanzibari politics have not been able to include an equal number of men and women in their samples. In my thesis I want to explore the lives of women in Zanzibar, their views on and experiences with politics, social issues and community relations in their everyday lives. I am also interested to know how women reach out to formal politics with their problems. I have decided to conduct interviews in several rounds (three at least) which will build upon each other.

I want to cover questions and learn about topics like:

- women's lives/life experiences in Zanzibar

- What are women's issues here?

- What role do women play in politics? What role does politics play in women's lives?

- What are the views of Zanzibari women on Zanzibari politics?

- How do women see community relations? What role do women have in maintaining and stabilizing these relationships?

- How do women reach out to formal politics?

I hope to interview 10 women in each of the five regions of Zanzibar (Urban, Unguja North, Unguja South, Pemba North and Pemba South), totalling around 50 respondents. Respondents are chosen based on their place of residence and their willingness and availability for conducting interviews. I would also be happy to participate in 'women's activities' (whatever that would include in the view of my respondents) and conduct participant observation.

What does participation in the project imply?

For the most part, data will be collected during several interviews, which will last around an hour each. They can be held in English or Kiswahili, according to your own preference. In the first rounds of interviews there might be a research assistant present in order to help me with the interviews. If you object to this, please let me know in advance.

The interviews will be conducted in a place of your own choosing, which can be at your home or mine, in a public place like a café or restaurant, etc.

Due to the fact that I am a student I will unfortunately not be able to remunerate you for your time. I can try and shorten or divide up interviews so that you only have to spend half an hour of your day.

What will happen to your data?

Your name will be anonymized in my thesis or any other writing produced from the data. This means that I will either refer to you by an alias or with your respondent number. I would

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[208] Most respondents received a translated version in Kiswahili.

however like to include some key information about you (e.g. XY is a 35-year-old married woman, lives in X with her husband and three children. She does Z for a living). You can decide after the interview which facts I may include and which I should anonymize.

I will either record the interview on my audio recorder or take notes during the interview. You decide which you would prefer. Both notes or audio recordings will be kept safe and I will make sure that no one has access to them but me. Audio recordings will be transferred to an external hard drive after the interview, which is secured with a password and locked away in my room. The same goes for notes. If you wish to see and edit my transcripts and notes before I use them as data, I will bring them by for you to access them.

Your interview recordings, transcript or notes will be given a unique number that will help me in matching personal information and interview. A list with these numbers and the personal information (name, age, nationality, place of residence, occupation) will be kept separately from recordings, transcripts and/or notes on an USB stick, again secured with a password, and locked away safely.

Please know that your participation in the interviews is voluntary. You can drop out at any point in the process, without giving me reasons. That means terminating an ongoing interview at any point, or dropping out of the research entirely. This is completely up to you. You can decide whether you want me to be able to use the data collected up to this point or delete it completely. You can also decline to answer questions.

I have obtained a research permit for this project by the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar which has approved of my topic and my research questions.

If you agree to participate or have any other questions, please feel free to contact me:

Hannah Schild

WhatsApp, Text, Call: […]

Telegram: […]

Email: […]

Facebook: […]