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Marie-Aude Fouéré

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11. “Indians are Exploiters and Africans Idlers!”

Identity Formation and Socio-Economic conditions in Tanzania¹

Marie-Aude FOUÉRE

In Tanzania and across East Africa, the identity categories of “Asians” (or “Indians”)² and “Africans” constitute ethnic references imbued with racial overtones through which people commonly identify one another. Although these popular divisions seem to reflect somatic distinctions, they draw primarily from exacerbated cultural and socioeconomic differences as shaped by colonial rule and local modes of categorizing which reflect the ubiquitous presence of racial thought in the region. Present-day Tanzanian society is not a melting pot in which people of different backgrounds would blend together peacefully; it rather exemplifies a plural society or double-faced communitarianism in which people live side-by-side but separately – at least when it comes to “Indians” and “Africans” (Brennan 2012). Indeed, the relatively smooth coexistence of immigrants of Asian descent and Africans established during the colonial era then rhetorically reconducted during the postcolonial socialist period has not been devoid of tensions and resentment which, since the settlement of the first Indian immigrants in the 19th century, have varied

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² Before the partition of India in 1947, immigrants from the Indian sub-continent who settled in Tanzania were referred to by the English term “Indians” or its Swahili equivalent *Wahindi*. Today they are called “Asians” in English and *Wahindi* in Swahili. The Swahili term *Waasia* (“Asians”) is not much in use.

following political and economic transformations. The ambivalent relations between these two groups in relation to conceptions of belonging can mainly be seen in urban centres where most Asian migrants settled. The city of Dar es Salaam where people of Asian origin have a strong demographic and economic weight provides a good vantage point to observe intercommunity relations and explore the way identity categories have been constructed and entrenched over time.

Through an analysis of the formation and reinforcement of “Asian” and “African” identity categories in an urban context, this paper gives insight into the multifaceted concrete, perceived and imagined relationships between social groups. Contrary to culturalist interpretations according to which the impossible integration of Asian immigrants is the result of insurmountable and inherent cultural differences – therefore making of identity an objective entity – this work in anthropology contends that identity formation is the result of processes that can only be understood through a historicized and politicized approach of society. It gives insight into the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial “situations” (Balandier 1991 [1969]) to explore category building and its underpinning drivers. Such a genealogy of identity should contribute to revise binary readings that assert a clear-cut opposition between rich merchants and landlords of Asian origin and the exploited mass of Africans. It will show that the links between the African and the Asian worlds are still fragile and unstable today as a result of elite manipulation of politicized identities in the current context of economic liberalization.

The differential constitution of identities, statuses and socio-economic positions

This genealogy of identity begins with an overview of identity formation against the backdrop of social, political and economic history. The earliest forms of contact between migrants from the Indian subcontinent and people living along the coast and in the islands of Zanzibar, followed by the impact of colonial rule, contributed to building a sharp socioeconomic and cultural divide between these groups.

From migrating merchants to ‘internal aliens’

Since antiquity, the coast of eastern Africa has been a meeting point between people from different regions of the world, primarily from the African interior, southern Arabia, Persia, China and India³. Commercial activities drew together the inhabitants of the coast and Arab and Asian traders. The growth of coastal towns between the 12th and 15th century bears witness to the existence of a flourishing trade: African populations of the hinterland supplied hides, gold, ivory and slaves to Swahili⁴ traders for resale, while foreign traders originating from countries bordering the Indian Ocean acquired these commodities in exchange for fabrics, ceramic, porcelain and pearls. Swahili intermediation was the tacit rule of the game in trade. As stated by Thomas Vernet (2004: 64, my translation) “on the one hand, relations with the people of the hinterland were facilitated by the

³ Navigation on the Indian Ocean is facilitated by the monsoon. From the month of December, winds push boats from the Arab peninsula and from India towards the African coast. From the month of April, sailors are blown back by these winds.

⁴ Without exploring into details the definition of the “Swahili” people, let’s mention here that this term is used to refer to people of black African origin who have been living on the East African coast from the 8th century and, mainly through commercial and social contacts with Arabs, developed a specific Islamic, urban and trade culture characterized by a high degree of spatial mobility and the creation of long-distance trans-national networks (see Horton & Middleton 2000, Caplan & Le Guennec 1991 as well as the introductory chapter in this publication).

cultural proximity that the Swahili culture, profoundly African, shared with them. On the other hand, Islam facilitated trade with foreign merchants, mostly Muslims.” Many testimonies show that the position of middlemen occupied by the Swahili limited direct contacts between suppliers of goods⁵. It is only after integration into Swahili city-states, through patronage links, blood brotherhood or marriage that foreigners from different backgrounds started to mix with each other. Because this integration rapidly led to acculturation through the adoption of the cultural and occupational features of Swahili society (Islam, urbanity, trade), the notion of “foreigner” quickly became irrelevant. This is how, over the centuries, inhabitants of the East Africa interior were gradually incorporated into the Swahili world. The term “African” therefore primarily referred to people who were unfamiliar with the urban trade life at the coast, living in the towns and villages of the hinterland. In the case of migrants from the Indian subcontinent, integration into Swahili society depended upon the type of migration. Indeed, until the middle of the 18th century, migrants from India were primarily merchants specialized in seasonal trade (Bennett 1978, Sheriff 1987) who had no plan to settle permanently in East Africa. Being seasonal migrants, these traders were considered foreigners in Swahili society and regarded themselves as such (Lofchie 1965). If evidence of permanent settlement in Swahili cities was reported in the chronicles of the first observers of the East African coast⁶, the “Asians” of that time belonged to the category of seasonal foreign merchants integrated into the Indian Ocean trading

⁵ For example, according to the Arab geographer Ibn Battuta, occupants of commercial vessels were not allowed to walk the Mogadishu streets freely: “They must live with a trader with whom they are bound to do business together” (Vernet 2004, my translation).

⁶ See Bennett (1978) and Sheriff (1987) about the arrival of the explorer Vasco de Gama in East Africa.

system. They differed more in terms of the type of commodities they imported than in view of any strictly bounded ethnic, racial or cultural identity.

From seasonal mobile foreigners unfamiliar with the Swahili culture, Indian merchants progressively became “internal aliens” in a society structured by old hierarchies that left them little room and weighed heavily on the relationship they could build with the local population. After an on-and-off presence of the Portuguese with little significant impact on trade between the 16th and 18th centuries⁷, the Imamate of Muscat in Oman extended its control over the eastern coast of Africa⁸. 1832, the year when Seyyid Said, Imam of Muscat, transferred his capital to Zanzibar, symbolized the beginning of the decline of the Swahili for the benefit of Omani Arabs. Zanzibar Town, in the archipelago bearing the same name⁹, became the main trading centre of the East African coast. It was at this time that Indian migrants, who had continued to be part of the many traders flocking to the islands until then, were invited by the new authorities to occupy positions of intermediaries in finance and trade between Zanzibar and the African coast (Mangat 1969). In 1819, 200 Indians had permanently settled in Zanzibar; in 1859, their number was almost 2,000. From the early 1860s, the Sultan, in a bid to consolidate his power over the cities of the Swahili coast and his

⁷ From the first half of the 16th century, the Portuguese presence modified the hierarchy of the Swahili city-states and led to the submission to the Portuguese crown through payment of tributes. Yet, the commercial organization and cultural characteristics of the East African coast remained unchanged up to the beginning of the 18th century.

⁸ In 1698, the archipelago of Zanzibar became a possession of the Imamate of Muscat. Arabs from the region of Oman extended their influence on the East African coast all along the 18th century. I am grateful to Iain Walker for raising my attention on historical aspects about the Imamate of Muscat in Zanzibar.

⁹ The archipelago of Zanzibar is made up of two islands: Unguja (commonly known as Zanzibar) and Pemba. In order to avoid confusion, we shall refer here to Unguja as “Zanzibar Island”, while “the archipelago of Zanzibar”, “the islands of Zanzibar” or “Zanzibar” designate the two islands.

control of the caravan trade, made a small coastal market town of little economic importance the main port of transit for goods between the mainland and Zanzibar. Renamed Dar es Salaam, the future metropolis of Tanganyika attracted Indian and Arab traders in the Omani government. In 1887, there were nearly 6,000 Indians in East Africa, half of them in the islands of Zanzibar while the other half settled on the continent.

The majority of Indian immigrants in Zanzibar and then Dar es Salaam came from the southeastern part of today's Pakistan and northwestern India (Gujarat, Punjab, Kutch, Kathiawar, Maharashtra)¹⁰. Being speakers of various regional dialects (Gujarati, Marathi, Kutchi, Punjabi, Konkani, etc.), they belonged to the religions of the Indian world (Hindus, Jains, Parsis, Sikhs, Goans) or to various denominations of the Great Religions (such as Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims, or Christians) influenced by Hinduism. They also represented all the socio-professional statuses of the caste system and adhered to varied local customs. In short, they formed "a sort of small replica of India" (Adam 2006, my translation) that could not easily be reduced to broad common features. As for people who were later referred to as "Africans", they were also internally strongly differentiated. Zanzibar hosted Swahili merchants as well as indigenous people known as Shirazi or Afro-Shirazi¹¹, themselves divided into three main groups, Wahadimu, Watumbatu and Wapemba. There were also slaves originating from the mainland and employed as domestic or farm workers. Swahili society was structured based on the practice of Islam and the adoption of the Middle East Arab

¹⁰ Overpopulation, drought and famine, the monopolization of the public service by the British colonial authorities and heavy taxes were the main causes of emigration from the Indian sub-continent (Iliffe 1979: 139, Gregory 1993: 6-8).

¹¹ The term "Afro-Shirazi" or "Shirazi" refers to people who had lived in the islands of Zanzibar for centuries.

culture rather than with reference to skin colour and geographical origin (Caplan and Le Guennec 1991). The sharing of these characteristics guaranteed their inclusion in the marriage system and the social networks of Swahili patricians.

The Indian minority and indigenous Africans

The earliest forms of naturalized identities and constructed identity boundaries date back to the period when Indians started settling under the Omani and British supervision. Legal-administrative and economic factors combine to explain the reduction of a variety of identities and economic situations into essentialized categories. Unlike the seasonal Indo-Pakistani traders who had previously travelled across the Indian Ocean, Indian newcomers settling in Zanzibar from the beginning of the 19th century had the status of “British subjects”. In islands officially under Omani domination, but unofficially controlled by the European powers¹² (primarily Great Britain), their social life (education, religious practices, legal status) was subjected to the same rules¹³ as those applicable to Indians residing in India, a territory of the British Crown at that time. Following the practice established in India, they were registered under the term “Indians” in administrative documents. The discriminative legal

¹² The Amity and Commerce treaties passed by Seyyid Said with the United States of America (1833), Great Britain (1839) and France (1844) ratified preferential trade agreements and authorized the establishment of foreign consulates in Zanzibar, after which the new authorities of the islands became increasingly dependent upon British control (Deplechin 1991: 15).

¹³ With the creation of the British Agency controlled by the British government of Bombay and the Eastern India Company in 1841, Indians were subjected to tougher legal provisions. There was open racial discrimination against them based on the imperialist principle of “divide and rule”. Specific laws only applied to them. For example, between 1860 and 1869, Indians were not allowed to have domestic slaves (Bader 1991: 168). They were also not allowed to participate in the slave trade.

and administrative status that these immigrants were subject to however secured their preferential treatment: encouraged to volunteer to immigration by the British, they came to Zanzibar to occupy the positions of merchants and bankers in a booming plantation economy¹⁴. Their economic interests, congruent with those of the East India Company, were therefore protected¹⁵. In 1830s, a few Indians were appointed to key economic positions, such as custom inspectors and bankers of the state¹⁶. In addition to these well-off traders, there were also Indian creditors to whom the Omani and Afro-Shirazi landowners of Zanzibar were increasingly indebted. Lastly, many retailers, small landowners, impoverished farmers and craftsmen who settled in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam shared the difficult living conditions of most indigenous Africans¹⁷. The economic situations of immigrants were therefore extremely varied. However, the fact that they were subsumed into a single legal category reduced the perception of the variety of real situations on the ground and contributed to their isolation from other elements of Swahili society.

¹⁴ The cultivation of cloves in Zanzibar was introduced between 1810 and 1820. With coconut trees cultivated for the production of copra (dried coconut almond meant for oil extraction), clove trees were the main source of wealth in the islands at that time.

¹⁵ Writing about Captain Smee's visit to Zanzibar in 1915, Bader (1991: 184) states that the latter, representing the Government of Bombay, came to counter attempts by Omani governors to increase custom duties (see also Hollingsworth 1953). The gradual introduction of the Indian rupee in financial transactions was designed to promote trade with India.

¹⁶ Jairam Sewji was a Hindu Bhatia large merchant in Zanzibar. He was appointed collector of customs duties, head of the port and state banker by the sultan. He financially contributed to the establishment of Indian businesses in Zanzibar. In the 1870s, he was temporarily replaced by Tharia Topan, an Ismaili trader renowned for financing Tippu Tipp's slave and ivory caravans. In Dar es Salaam, it was the Hindu Bhatia trader Ramji Pragji who was appointed to be in charge of collecting custom duties (Gregory 1993: 21, Bader 1991: 168-9, Sheriff 1987: 107-9).

¹⁷ After the abolition of the slave trade (1873) and slavery (1897), British authorities brought Indian coolies to work in clove tree plantations alongside indigenous African peasants and newly freed African slaves. The emigration of Indian manpower was quickly stopped when it turned out to be a lot more expensive than the labor from the African continent (Deplechin 1991: 22-23, 1991 Sheriff: 118-119).

In Zanzibar, Africans were also subjected to strict legal-administrative classifications for the purpose of census as well as social and economic control. Administrative documents identified “Arabs” and “Africans” alongside the “Indians”. The identity category of “Arabs” mainly comprised the Omani who had settled during earlier times, while “Africans” subsumed the rest of the population, hence hiding the high variety of their economic situations. Afro-Shirazi landowners, members of small peasantry working as seasonal workers on clove plantations, slaves or landless ex-slaves (or “squatters”), domestic servants, dock workers, porters (*wachukuzi* in Swahili) and low-skilled craftsmen: all were gathered under the category “Africans”, as the British administration designated them, under the pretext that they were the only true indigenous people of the country (referred to as “Natives”). The display of these identity categories being translated into legal provisions and discriminatory policies, whether in the social and economic sectors, in urban settings or in the realm of ideology, rigidified racial representations of communities, all the more so as they resonated with already deep-rooted hierarchies of Zanzibari society and their underpinning racial thought (Glassman 2011). In spite of its history of cosmopolitanism and identity fluidity, Zanzibar had indeed also created its own racial boundaries – especially between “Africans” and “Arabs” – which vocal local intellectuals of the struggle for independence later reinforced.

This shows how, from the time of the Zanzibari sultanate that was de facto ruled by Great Britain, the political and institutional administration of the islands of Zanzibar and the Swahili coast entrenched identity taxinomies which, for the reason that they were partly congruent with existing community modes of racial categorization, and in spite of the ambivalence of

colonial rule, shaped local conceptions of belonging. The similitude in the material conditions of life between Indians and the small section of urban educated Africans did not reduce their social and symbolic distance. Wealthy Africans were excluded from the Indian monopoly on trade, whether wholesale or retail. And the reputation of renowned Indian merchants and Indian control of the financial system on the islands largely implanted encompassing ethno-religious stereotypes among poor Africans.

In this process of communal identity formation, it is also essential to consider how the Asian newcomers withdrew from the rest of society. Kept at a distance by both Europeans and Africans, Indians indeed also distanced themselves from others by strengthening and even creating new ties within their community, thus hiding their original internal plurality and emerging disagreements while selecting attributes that were susceptible to unite them: their status as foreigners, similar working conditions under the hallmark of trade and finance, and especially shared geographical origin, mainly the eastern part of India. Strong ties were maintained with India, the largest importer of cloves from Zanzibar and the country of origin of commodities transported to East Africa. The call for protection of the Indian traders of Zanzibar by their partners living in India, when Great Britain decided to end the practice of appointing an Indian to the post of Customs Inspector, illustrates the strength of interfamily and intercommunity networks that structured the Indian Ocean trade at that time. Gregory (1993: 20) emphasizes another significant factor that led to the socio-cultural isolation of Indians, namely the desire on the part of modest business families to escape, through emigration, the pre-colonial predatory Indian

state¹⁸. Endogamous marriage practices, residential segregation¹⁹, and exclusive food habits²⁰ also contributed to the social exclusion of Indian families. The social hierarchies determined by the caste system were amongst the root causes of such withdrawal attitudes. This heavily influenced how relationships developed with the African host community, whom Indians compared to the animist outcasts of India. Africans were treated with contempt and relegated to tasks considered most demeaning (Prunier 1998, Dumont 1979 [1966]). It is noteworthy that even humble Indian families of the city employed African staff, whereas the reverse was not possible²¹. In addition, the British authorities in Zanzibar encouraged Indians to establish their own schools, hospitals, churches, credit agencies and insurance companies, social solidarity associations and places of recreation based upon the principles of community segregation.

Indispensable foreigners or internal enemies?

At the end of the 19th century, increasing economic and social control by the British and German colonial powers strengthened communal identification along racial lines. In 1885, the territory of Tanganyika came under the control of the German

¹⁸ According to Gregory (1993: 20), “for centuries in India, they had struggled to preserve their property and conduct business against usurping officials representative of the Mogul emperor and succeeding local rajas and sultans (...). The Asians left India imbued with the concept that the best government is that which governs least”.

¹⁹ Many Asian families settled in the elegant old town of Zanzibar, known as the “Stone town” (*Mji Mkongwe* in Swahili, literally meaning “Old town”), while the majority of Africans resided in the peripheral poor suburb of *Ng’ambo*.

²⁰ The prohibition of eating food prepared by strangers to their community or even their caste (Gregory 1993) limits the participation of Indians in inclusive social activities.

²¹ See Hadjivayanis and Ferguson (1991: 195) who quote a report dating from 1958 noting that “the Asian merchants and commercial class had the largest number of domestic servants in the Protectorate by World War II”. These African workers, often children, were poorly paid, poorly fed and poorly housed, yet they worked tirelessly.

Empire²², while in 1890 Zanzibar became a British protectorate. Throughout the colonial era, the establishment of bounded racial categories separating Indians and indigenous Africans was the result of tightened legal-administrative measures and change in the economic and social life.

Internal enemies during the European colonisation

From 1890 to 1916, the impact of social and economic changes that occurred in the administration of the islands of Zanzibar on people's forms of identification was limited. However, from 1900, the British began to fear the financial clout of Indian merchants and bankers. At this time, it became apparent to the colonizer that clove plantations – legally the property of rich Omani Arabs and Afro-Shirazis – were actually in the hands of their Indian moneylenders. The British took the risk of withdrawing some of the rights Indians had enjoyed as British subjects. No representative of the Indian community was invited to participate in the Protectorate Council, the decision-making body of the British protectorate. These measures strengthened the feeling among Indians that they were the puppets of British power. Treated by the British as a culturally and religiously homogeneous entity on the grounds of an “ethno-racial” definition, they responded by merging into a single community mould. The formation of the first associations along ethnic lines, whether it bears witness to the existence of a true consciousness as an oppressed class (yet structured along racial divisions) or points to the influence of the British administration's hallowed racial ideology, confirmed the pervasiveness of distinct “racial”

²² In 1891, Tanganyika, Rwanda and Burundi formed German East Africa (*Deutsche Ostafrika*).

categories and made visible identities that, until then, had been more bureaucratic tools than truly collective sense of belonging. Considering the economic interests at stake, it is not surprising that the first of these associations was actually the Indian Merchants' Association. Founded in 1905, this association brought together Indian elites keen to defend their economic and political interests and willing to remain in good terms with the British.

In the capital city of German Tanganyika, Dar es Salaam, the Indians who had fled the nit-picking controls of British rule²³ set up their shops and businesses in a town divided by urban zoning in accordance with the *Bauordnung* of 14th May 1891 that imposed urban and architectural obligations (Raimbault 2006). The existence of three major residential areas (Zone I for Europeans – today's business centre, Zone II for Indians – today's city centre, and Zone III for Africans – or Kariakoo) led to spatial, economic and ethno-racial segregation²⁴. The identity categories used in the German administration only partially tallied with those developed by the British in Zanzibar. The main distinction cut across Europeans and non-Europeans (also called *Farbigen*, that is to say, “coloured”). Among non-Europeans, distinction was made between natives (the *Eingeborenen*, or “indigenous”, who included Africans and Arabs) and non-natives (Indians). Though a minority²⁵, Indians had the largest number of

²³ Some large Indian business corporations, such as those belonging to Sewa Hajee Paroo and Alidina Visram, moved into the German territory to evade constraints of the British administration (Bader 1991).

²⁴ Frank Raimbault notes that among historians, the debate is not settled on the relationship between urban planning and racial ideology. According to the author (2006: 43), “in 1891, the settlers' objectives were not to geographically spread a racial vision of a colonial society that was still in limbo. The proof is that many Africans continued to live in administrative and residential districts. In addition, it is not possible to find traces of a desire to impose administrative segregation before 1906.” (my translation)

²⁵ From 1913, the population of Dar es Salaam was about 22,500 people, among them 20,000 Africans and 2,500 Indians. See the 1864 census (Lofchie 1965).

traders, merchants and landowners in Dar es Salaam just as in Zanzibar. Relations of interdependence developed with Africans who were flocking into a rapidly growing capital. Wealthy Indian landowners allowed African migrants to settle on their land in exchange of rent. In the city centre, Indians rented to Africans the houses and rooms they owned. Indians were consequently seen as belonging to those who wielded economic and financial power along with Europeans and large Arab or Swahili families. Even small Indian shopkeepers living downtown, whose standard of living aligned with that of some Africans, remained perceived as foreigners in the eyes of Africans spatially isolated in Zone III, excluded from the official business circles and relegated to the bottom of the social ladder. Harshly treated by their bosses as well as by the colonial administration, Africans could not benefit arrangements with the law that were accessible to Arabs and rich Indians²⁶ due to their ‘generosity’ towards this administration²⁷. The same manifestations of racial inequality were observed in the other regions of Tanganyika. After the relative deployment of Indians in the hinterland following the construction of the railway from Dar es Salaam to Kigoma – a small market town located on the shores of Lake Tanganyika – the transformations affecting Dar es Salaam extended to other towns (Giblin 2005, Iliffe 1979). This shows that urban organization, division of labour and social hierarchies not merely mirrored a colonial society haunted by the racial question but contributed to shaping and strengthening such type of society.

²⁶After debates in the colonial administration in 1906, the governor allowed well-to-do Indians to build houses in European residential quarters (Raimbault 2006: 43).

²⁷ Sewa Haji, a renowned Indian of the 1880s-1890s, donated his land to the German colonial administration on his death in 1897 (Raimbault 2006: 73). During this period, some Indian merchants were much richer than Europeans, and some big names were close to high-ranking colonial officials.

From 1916, the whole of Tanganyika came under British control following the defeat of Germany in East Africa. In the years that followed, many Indians were recruited into the public service as junior officers and into the army, while ongoing voluntary immigration from India led to the influx of small traders, clerks, workers and artisans. The presence and economic success of Indian immigrants became a subject of concern for the British settlers. Between 1920 and 1930, debt and housing mortgage²⁸ ratio of Arab and Swahili large landowners in the islands of Zanzibar reached such a high level that the British authorities decided to put in place legal measures that limited wealth accumulation among Indian traders (including the interdiction to acquire new land through the Clove Bonus Scheme in 1922 and the Alienation of Land Decree in 1934; and a control of issuance of business licenses by the Clove Exporters' Decree in 1934)²⁹.

Considered an “anti-Indian legislation” by the Indians of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, these measures sparked off a major outcry. The British colonial government backed down in 1938 only after commercial pressures were exerted by Indian business partners from India through an embargo on cloves. If it were not for the strong ties they had maintained with India, the East African Indians would not have been able to maintain their economic position in Zanzibar. Yet this event marked a turning

²⁸ From 1880s, one-third of the clove plantations were funded through Indian credits (Bader 1991: 173). Between 1923 and 1935, nearly 500,000 of the 2 million clove trees on the island of Zanzibar were owned by Indian bankers (Mlahagwa and Temu 1991: 158-159).

²⁹ Attempts to curb the economic activities of rich Indians after decades of promotion by the British resulted from fears that Indians might destabilize the official Arab power, consequently generating social disorder and threatening European economic interests. As Mangat recalls (1969: 5), quoting the British Proconsul John Kirk, Indians were nevertheless indispensable to the establishment of British rule during the earlier period of European colonisation: “It was entirely through the Indian merchants that we were enabled to build up the influence that resulted in our position (in East Africa).”

point in British perception of the Indians living in East Africa: this business elite came to epitomize a “necessary evil” of colonial economy who needed to be controlled after they proved capable of overriding measures adopted by the colonial government through the strength of their transnational network (Bader 1991: 174). In the 1940s, Indians were once and for all reduced to a middle class position; they always featured prominently in the economic sphere, but were maintained firmly in political and symbolic dependence.

African excesses against Indian targets

In Dar es Salaam, the policy of spatial segregation that the German powers had put in place was reinforced under British rule. New discriminatory laws were enforced to control African migrants attracted by the opportunities³⁰ offered by the capital city. From the 1920s, the colonial administration used the term *wahuni* in reference to idle Africans driven to Dar es Salaam to seek employment. According to the historian Andrew Burton, *wahuni* included marginal, unfamiliar, uncontrolled and potentially rebellious sections of the urban population (2005: 5-6). Laws were enacted to prevent massive rural exodus, perceived as a threat by the urban wealthy elite, namely Europeans, Indians and the emerging African elite. From 1920, new urban rules (Township Rules) limited Africans’ residency rights and sanctioned disorders that could interfere with public order (vagrancy, prostitution, gambling and betting). The Destitute Persons Ordinance of 1923 authorized to arrest without notice

³⁰Andrew Burton (2005) underlines the gap between the reality of the job market and expectations of upward mobility that drove people from all regions of Tanzania to seek employment in Dar es Salaam.

any person who was “apparently destitute”, that is to say people without a job or a clearly identifiable livelihood. In 1924, urban segregation was reinforced by the creation of a neutral zone, or sanitary corridor, which corresponds to the open space currently known as *Mnazi Mmoja* between Zone II and Zone III. These three areas were informally named to reflect the “races” residing there: *Uzunguni*, *Uhindini*, *Uswahilini*³¹. However, throughout the period of British colonialism, racial and residential segregation remained more of an urban ideal than a reality. Thus, many Indians settled in Kariakoo (Zone III) when Dar es Salaam’s central market was moved there in 1923 – showing, among other examples, that the colonial state was less ambitious and more confused in the field than on paper (Brennan 2012).

The consignment of Africans at the bottom of the social ladder was however further reinforced by the official ban on the transfer of property between Africans and non-Africans within Zone III. In 1944, the arbitrary power that underpinned relations with Africans culminated in the Removal of Undesirable Native Ordinance forbidding all “Natives” (Africans) to walk at night without permission and without light, to hold parties or funeral ceremonies without permission, or to stay in Dar es Salaam for more than a week without official written permission³². In the views of Europeans, Africans were a dangerous class because of their poverty and their alleged idleness. The term “African” became synonymous with “potential hooligan”.

³¹ The names of residential quarters were coined in reference to the collective identity of their main occupants: *Uzunguni*, “European area” (*Wazungu* in Swahili); *Uhindini*, “Indian area” (*Wahindi* in Swahili); *Uswahilini*, “Swahili area”, the latter being in fact an area where all Africans gathered together. These terms are still used today, especially *Uswahilini*, which have become synonymous with “popular areas”.

³² In 1950s, 2,000 people were forcefully moved and returned to their villages (Burton 2005).

If Europeans were afraid of Africans, they were in fact only marginally exposed to direct attacks – assuming that these attacked could have posed a real danger – because of the tremendous social and spatial distance between them. On the contrary, Indians, residing in the intermediary Zone II between the relegated African zone and the European protected area, were in the firing line. Regarded by Europeans as second-class citizens³³, Indians were seen by Africans as privileged people for the reason that they enjoyed particular rights which Africans envied. Small shopkeepers (*dukawallah*) were mainly the targets of violence. They could be robbed in broad daylight. Two major attacks against Indians marked the interwar period. In 1929, Africans attacked with stones and sticks a group of Indians; and in 1937, an angry mob targeted Indian shops in the city centre, stoning windows and robbing shops. However, except for these isolated incidents, few attacks against Indians actually occurred in spite of the widespread fear of Africans among the Indian population (Burton 2005: 137, 181). The Indian press at the time primarily reflected the feeling of fear that affected a population deprived of control on public order – in the the responsibility of the colonizers – and of the legitimacy to belong that autochthony would have given them.

Emergence of common interests against colonial power

Barriers erected between Indian immigrants and Africans began to break down when the nationalist movement gained momentum between 1950 and 1960. While the years between 1920 and 1930 were characterized by Indians' lack of

³³ Among Europeans, the cliché that Indians were dirty was widespread (Burton 2005: 52).

involvement in anti-colonial activities, the 1950s and 1960s decades witnessed the entry of Indians into politics, represented by a minority of radical activists. Restrictions on immigration from India, unequal representation in the organs of the colonial government, daily forms of discrimination (such as lower wages than Europeans or lack of access to senior positions) were the cause of such political commitment alongside Africans. On the mainland, the Asian Association was created by prominent members of the Indian community in order to support the nationalist struggle led by the African leaders of the Tanganyika African Association (TAA), renamed the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in 1954³⁴. However, this participation in the struggle for independence was far from unanimous among the Indians. In Zanzibar particularly, most Indians kept away from the anti-colonial turmoil that gave birth to political parties such as the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP), mainly gathering the Arab elite, and the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), officially the voice of Africans and Shirazis. And on the mainland, although the creation of a political organisation grouping Africans and Indians together was discussed at length, it never materialized.

Moreover, following the partition of India in 1947, internal divisions came to limit Indian anti-colonial mobilization, thus revealing that a large majority of Indians³⁵ actually preferred colonial status quo to the formation of an independent African government. During the discussions on constitutional reforms leading to the independence of Tanganyika, British Governor Sir

³⁴ Influential members of the Asian Association participated in the creation of TANU, though they were forbidden from membership. Moreover, two Indian brothers, Surendra and Tahka Randhir, financed TANU's *Mwafrika* before they created their own newspaper, known as *Nguramo*, committed to the defense of African nationalism (Gregory 1993).

³⁵ According to Surendra Tahker, "eight to ninety per cent of the Asians hated us" (quoted by Gregory 1993).

Edward Twining, who defended the establishment of racial parity³⁶, accused TANU and its leader Julius Kambarage Nyerere of promoting “black racialism” with the objective of ending European dominance and Indians’ economic power (Ilfie 2005). Illustrious members of the Indian community then sided with the colonizers. In 1955, the statement made by Iqbal Chand Chopra in the United Nations that Tanganyika would only be ready for independence after a further twenty-five years could only but arouse the indignation of African nationalists, though it was approved by a large number of Indians. Similarly, the creation of the United Tanganyika Party (UTP) by the British government to promote multiracial politics and thus try to countervail nationalist claims was widely supported by influential members of the Indian community³⁷. Those Indians were referred to as “Asian stooges” by their opponents (Gregory 1993: 109).

During the 1958-59 elections, when TANU presented ten candidates of Indian origin and had three great defenders of anti-colonialism in Tanganyika elected, namely A. H. Jamal, K. L. Jhaveri and M. N. Rattansey, the whole of the Indian community was filled with political enthusiasm. Yet, after these elections, the number of Indian representatives in the government remained very modest. The political rapprochement between Indians and Africans during the period of the anti-colonial struggle, which could have created conditions for breaking identity boundaries, was short-lived. Socialist policies and the africanization of

³⁶ According to racial parity, each of the three “races” in Tanganyika was assigned the same number of seats in the Legislative Council, regardless of their total number. According to TANU, defending the rights of the dominated majority, “multi-racialism meant government for the good of Europeans and Indians and eventually only for Europeans. There were only 3 000 Europeans and settlers in Tanganyika, but they intended to rule the country and exhorted all the inhabitants to live quietly together” (speech delivered by Nyerere on 25th January 1957, quoted by Ilfie 2005).

³⁷ It seems that the Imam of the Aga Khan Ismaili, a wealthy businessman backed by his religious community, financed the party of white settlers, the United Tanganyika Party (Gregory 1993: 109).

government institutions that ensued after the first years of independence were going to put an end to the *entente cordiale* established during the anti-colonial period.

The politics and economics of independent Tanzania

The struggle against colonialism before independence was a rare moment of rapprochement between Africans and Indians in the history of Tanzania, and to a certain extent, in the history of East Africa. During the following post-independence decades, Indians were removed from power and demonized as capitalists and exploiters accused of hampering the growth of nascent African capitalism.

'African socialism' times (1967-1985)

Tanganyika became independent in 1961 and in April 1964, it united with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania. The project of building an egalitarian and non-exploitative society characterized the entire period that followed independence up to the mid-1980s but went through many contradictions. The new Tanzanian nation that official ideology was to build was based on the promotion of national unity and sense of belonging. A detribalized Tanzanian identity indifferent to ethnic and racial origins, tied to one single country, was to replace former divisions resulting from colonization (Nyerere 1967). But this identity, in Tanzania like in the rest of the newly independent African countries, was largely defined in reference to 'African identity' characterized by a common geography, culture and, until that time, what was still called race.

In Tanganyika, the newly elected President, Julius K. Nyerere, opposed racial discrimination upon his entry into politics. True to his words, the first cabinet he named was made up of seven Africans, four Europeans and one Indian: A. H. Jamal. Between 1962 and 1964, nearly half the members of the Asian Association joined TANU following the lifting of the ban on Indians to join the party. Moreover, some members of the Indian community acceded to key positions in the government and public administration: A. Y. A. Karimjee became the Speaker of Parliament; M. M. Devani was made Mayor of Dar es Salaam with D. K. Patel as Deputy Mayor. Yet resentment fuelled by the memories of the privileged positions Indians had formerly occupied combined with Africans' aspirations to take up positions previously denied to them revived old animosities. From 1964, trade unions demanded a rapid africanization of the public service, that is to say, replacement of members of the Indian community by black Africans. In the same year, similar claims troubled the national army and led to a mutiny that was however quickly controlled. According to Tanzanian Africans, the times when black people were subjugated to Indians occupying senior administrative, military and business positions had to come to an end. In Zanzibar, the revolution of January 1964 led to the polarization of socioeconomic conflicts at the community level. People of Arab and Indian origin, perceived as dominant and confiscatory, became the targets of verbal and physical abuse and a majority of them took refuge on the mainland³⁸.

³⁸ Zanzibari citizenship was denied to anyone who had left the islands within two months after the 1964 Revolution.

From the Arusha Declaration of 1967, which defined and put in place socialist policies that would guide the country until the mid-1980s, called Ujamaa or 'African socialism', tensions between Indians and Africans came to the fore again. Although the values of equality and unity were promoted to pacify the country and contain possible explosions of violence, the demonization of "capitalists" together with socialist policies adopted from that time highly contributed to strengthening divisions among the different communities. After the departure of the colonial masters, Indians were seen as the new representatives of the class of exploiters living upon "landlordism". With other privileged groups of Tanzania such as Arabs and the few African capitalists, they were ostracized in a country that aimed to embrace socialism. These groups were regarded as the enemies of the workers. In 1967, the nationalization of private companies hit traders of Indian origin very badly. In 1972, the nationalization of real estate property under the auspices of the National Housing Corporation (NHC) mainly affected Indians, who were the owners of family houses and small shops in the city centre and in Kariakoo neighbourhood. In 1983, finally, the Economic Sabotage Act officially presented as a policy to fight fraudulent deals and smuggling targeted traders of Indian origin. Until today, these three events are remembered by Tanzanian Indians as typical examples of their persecution. The effects of Ujamaa policies on trade led some analysts to proclaim the demise of the capitalist class, particularly the Indian power (Shivji, 1976, Gregory 1993). From 1966, President of Zanzibar Abeid Amani Karume declared that Zanzibaris had to carry along their Zanzibari identity cards though the procedures of their allocation

were not clearly defined³⁹. Arab and Indian minorities, who had always been refused Zanzibari nationality, were the targets of xenophobic political speeches by the president who accused them of being responsible for economic failures and for being enemies of the nation (Crozon 1992). In addition to these racist statements⁴⁰, expulsions, robberies and threats of all kinds took place. In 1969, what is known as the “forced marriages” scandal began as a campaign in favour of interracial mixing but quickly ended up as marriages celebrated under pressure, without the consent of the Arab and Indian families from which girls were forcibly taken away to marry the African men in power. Such measures, attacking the symbols of domination exerted by the formerly politically dominant groups, came as a revengeful conclusion of decades of ethnic and racial differentiation. They resulted in consolidating barriers between Indians and Africans, at the same time reinforcing their status as separate entities and limiting social intermingling between worlds that considered themselves as irreducible foreigners.

Consequently, the socialist period did not lead to the levelling of existing community oppositions already deeply rooted in the Tanzanian social and cultural landscape. Because the people of Indian origin were targeted as capitalist exploiters, they were particularly affected by nationalization policies and expulsions of all kinds as well as subjected to threats and accusations. Unlike Uganda where mass expulsion took place in

³⁹ The rules for granting Zanzibari nationality varied over the years. In 1971 a decree was issued stating that “only people with direct African descent can claim citizenship of the islands” (Crozon 1992: 221).

⁴⁰ In 1970, President A. A. Karume gave a speech in Zanzibar where he criticized the government of the Union and insulted the Indians residing in the country: “What is the fuss about Indians being citizens of Tanzania; what is this stupid law from a no less silly constitution that grants them citizenship? No Indian can be a citizen of Tanzania (...). Let us chase away these dogs that only know how to earn money at our expense under the guise of an alleged Tanzanian citizenship.” (Karume's speech on 29th October 1970, quoted by Crozon 1992: 221, translated from French).

the early 1970s (Mazrui 1976, Prunier 1990, Twaddle 1975), the Tanzanian government decided to give Indians the choice of either staying in Tanzania or leaving the country. Yet, frightened by increasing discriminatory rhetoric and practices, and having lost most of their financial capital, many Indian families made the decision to leave for exile and settle in the United Kingdom, United States or Canada.

Identities, economic liberalisation and indigenisation (1985-2005)

In 1985, Tanzania turned its back on dying socialist public policies and adopted a capitalist system. In response to pressures from international donors, parastatals and public banks were privatized and private investments in tourism and industry grew quickly (Tripp 1997, Bagachwa 1999). The new opportunities thus created were taken up by foreign investors but also benefited Tanzanians who had a strong capital base, namely entrepreneurs, former government officials and politicians. Among them, citizens of Indian origin had a head start because of their early specialization in various economic activities. It is within such a context that old grievances and resentments were once again openly expressed.

The departure of Julius K. Nyerere and the election of a new president, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, marked the radical abandonment of a planned socialist economy⁴¹ and the transition to a free market economy. The adoption of structural adjustment plans

⁴¹ The socialist ideal of economic independence promoted at the Arusha Declaration under the Swahili word *kujitegemea* was referred to as “self-reliance” in English and as “relying on one’s own strength” in French. However, this official slogan did not deter capitalist practices, particularly foreign loans and investments (Batibo & Martin 1989).

supervised by the World Bank and the granting of loans by the International Monetary Fund began turning the wheel towards the liberalization of the economy. These measures were followed by successive programs which completed economic and political deregulation (Economic Recovery Program in 1986, Structural Adjustment Facility in 1987, Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility in 1991). The state allowed for the opening of capital firms, the privatization of industries and parastatals, and the freedom of setting up private companies and banks. Given that in the mid-1980s, over 80% of Tanzania's population had lived on subsistence agriculture in rural areas; that means of financial empowerment had been restricted by socialist policies; and that the industrial sector contributed around 6% of gross domestic product only, it is hardly surprising that liberal policies adopted at that time were in the first place profitable to foreign investors (mainly Europeans, Americans and South Africans). Tanzanians who had accumulated enough capital to take advantage of the new economic opportunities came a distant second: they included Arab businessmen of Zanzibari origin, African public servants and politicians, and, finally, renowned Indian merchants. The rest of the population was nowhere to be seen. The new economic landscape of the 1990s was therefore characterized by the emergence of capitalism in Tanzania which, until then, was almost nonexistent (Heilman 1998a, 1998b). However, among the small class of local businessmen, the minority of African descent quickly found itself lagging behind large traders of Indian origin because the latter were endowed with more financial means, efficient networks and expertise. In this context of economic transition from state-dominated socialism to a capitalist economy open to the richest entrepreneurs, but closed de facto to Tanzanians with insufficient financial means, debates over the

issue of the “indigenization” of the economy in Tanzania began gaining ground.

Between 1995 and 2005, numerous articles appeared in the Tanzanian press about a hypothetical new economic policy, known literally as “indigenization” or *uzawa*⁴² in Swahili (Bancet 2004, Fouéré 2009). The content and modalities of implementation of this policy stirred up much controversy in the economic and political spheres (Aminzade 2003). The term *uzawa* appeared for the first time in the political agenda of the NCCR-Mageuzi opposition party (National Convention for Construction and Reforms-Changes) in 1995, the year of the first multiparty elections since the reintroduction of political pluralism. An article published in the weekly *Mfanyakazi* reported the statement made by its former chairman Augustine Mrema⁴³ during a public rally held in Bukoba town in May of the same year. According to the article, the main objective of the *uzawa* policy was to guarantee the entire population equal opportunities in setting up business projects, particularly through the provision of bank loans. It seems that Mrema was very careful not to make this concept a springboard for the promoters of racial discrimination: according to him, all Tanzanian citizens, regardless of their origin and socioeconomic positions, had to be allowed to participate in the country’s economic growth. Again in

⁴² The Swahili term *uzawa* defines identity resulting from a community of birth, territorial membership and cultural references. Translated into English by “nativeness” or “indigenusness”, *uzawa* used to refer to a sense of belonging to extended families or clans. After independence, *uzawa* was more broadly used to refer to ethnicity. Through a semantic shift, the term has become synonymous with “being African” in general. It should be noted however that this new inclusive identity has actually become much more restrictive, being associated with skin color. Black Africans are the only ones who could claim to be *wazawa* (*mzawa* in singular), that is to say, indigenous or native bearers of *uzawa*. Finally, during the period under consideration here, the term *uzawa* came to designate the process through which Black Africans could strengthen their presence in numbers and capital income in the national economic and financial sectors.

⁴³ Augustine Mrema is the current chairman of the TLP (Tanzania Labour Party).

1995, the DP (Democratic Party) was the second opposition party to adopt the idea of indigenization of the economy in its political agenda. Re-appropriating the term *uzawa*, its leader, Reverend Christopher Mtikila, intended to implement a radical policy involving a strict control of companies owned by non-Africans. Known for his extremist views and his demagogic oratory skills (Prunier 1998, Crozon 1998), Mtikila contributed greatly to radicalize the political concept of *uzawa*. While the period that followed seemed to mark a halt in the rise of xenophobic sentiments, the publication of a pamphlet in 2003 signed by Iddi Simba (former Minister of Industry and Commerce, Member of Parliament and of the Central Committee of the ruling party *Chama Cha Mapinduzi*, or CCM) revived anti-foreigners' mobilization, taking up again the main proposals for indigenization developed by other part leaders earlier: easier access to bank loans for "natives", natives' priority in the purchase of parastatals, etc. By giving preference to citizens of African descent, discrimination based on origin (if not on skin colour) was promoted very openly. Non-African foreigners (including non-Tanzanian Indians), as well as Tanzanians of Indian origin were not only excluded from economic and commercial positions, but were also held responsible for the country's underdevelopment that primarily affected Africans (Nagar 2000).

It is thus notable that over the years and according to its proponents, the *uzawa* policy took on quite different meanings. In the early years when these issues were discussed, opposition parties were concerned about distinguishing *uzawa* and ethnic or

racial discrimination⁴⁴. However, a radical change in the use of this term was initiated by some opposition party leaders or by members of the ruling party, who were promoters of a binary conception of economic development: foreign investment was presented as synonymous with foreign invasion and exploitation that poor citizens would not be able to contain. A second shift occurred when the categories of “foreigners” and “nationals” were explicitly defined: foreigners were holders of foreign passports (mainly Europeans and South Africans), as well as residents of Indian origin who were either Tanzanian citizens or not; only native Africans were considered genuine citizens. The racial overtones of these definitions were further radicalized after Reverend Mtikila introduced the term *gabacholi* (meaning “thief” in Gujarati language) into the public space to refer to Indian large businessmen and traders, thus giving credence to the systematic association between immigrants of Indian origin and predatory behaviours (Crozon 1998).

The *uzawa* policy did not only have unanimous support in Tanzania, but sparked off heated debates, including in the media (Bancet 2004). Many intellectuals and journalists declared that promoting *uzawa* would strengthen collusion between politics and business to the extent that politicians, who were businessmen at the same time, were aiming at grant themselves a free hand in operations of privatization and speculations of all kinds. Others argued that in supporting *uzawa*, politicians and opposition political parties were trying to win the votes of small-scale local private entrepreneurs. For its part, the Tanzanian government, in the name of the founding values of unity and equality inscribed in

⁴⁴ Thus, during his political meeting in Bukoba in May 1995, Mrema insisted that indigenization and apartheid should not be confused (Bancet 2004).

the constitution, reacted strongly by declaring the term *uzawa* unlawful, any violation of the ban being punishable. Meant to discredit opposition parties in the eyes of the national and international democratic opinion, this purely legalistic reaction was also an effective strategy aimed to retain the support of Indian large entrepreneurs who contributed financially to CCM electoral campaigns under the counter, also paying bribes or providing private financial services⁴⁵. Furthermore, the official authorities could take an additional advantage in transforming Tanzanians of Indo-Pakistani origin into scapegoats and making them responsible for all ills afflicting the country, thus diverting public attention from the ruling elite's political logic of accumulation and patronage, as well as from the increase in cases of grand corruption (Fouéré 2008).

Giving the lie to prejudices propagated by *uzawa* proponents, economic development attests that from the 1990s, several leading entrepreneurs of African descent established themselves in the Tanzanian social landscape. An herald of African capitalism, Reginald A. Mengi, the owner and chairman of IPP Media Group, is a good example of successful African entrepreneurship⁴⁶. Former chairman of the National Board of

⁴⁵A business manager of Asian origin, whose name was not released, generously offered to contribute to the wedding costs of former president Benjamin Mkapa's daughter. The latter declined for fear of the scandal which might have ensued. The nature of ties maintained between some African politicians and Asian businessmen as well as the amounts involved are kept secret, only revealed in exceptional circumstances in connection with scandals exposed by the press. This was the case of the "Goldenberg diamonds" scandal in Kenya which damaged the reputation of a few Asian businessmen and several African political leaders in the 1990s (Grignon 1996, Prunier 1998, Otyeno 1998). Such events undermine the reputation of African Asians as a whole.

⁴⁶ IPP Media brings together financial advisory services, bottling plants in partnership with Coca Cola, care products plants and a wide range of media including eleven newspapers, three radio stations and a television station operating in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. The IPP Media Group newspapers include *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Observer*, *The Daily Mail*, *Financial Times* published in English; *Nipashe*, *Nipashe Jumapili*, *Alasiri*, *Kasheshe* and *Taifa Letu* published in Swahili. The IPP Media Group also owns ITV television channel (*Independent Television Ltd*) as well as *Radio One*, *Radio Uhuru* and *East Africa Radio* stations.

Business Accountants and Auditors, Mengi is the current chairman of the Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI) and participates (directly or through the newspapers of his group) in many philanthropic activities as the Commissioner of the Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) and the chairman of the Poverty Alleviation and Environmental Committee (PAEC) or of the National Environment Management Council (NEMC). Besides a few high profile African personalities, there is also a whole world of small-scale African traders who are well represented in the commercial hub of Kariakoo in Dar es Salaam today. Formerly a concentration of Indo-Pakistani commercial activities (Vassanji 1994), Uhuru Street in Kariakoo has changed considerably due to the arrival of many small-scale African traders. The new socio-economic realities in Tanzania are therefore extremely complex, far from the popular belief that reduces them to clear-cut oppositions between Indian merchants and entrepreneurs on the one hand and exploited African employees and workers on the other. Moreover, the indigenization of the economy as a policy was never seriously considered nor planned. A close look at it shows that such the *uzawa* slogan was primarily used among politicians who played the card of national or ethnic affiliations to gain electoral support. It is therefore no wonder that public debates over indigenization have silenced after ten years since their appearance, even if the underlying issues of economic empowerment and national identity are still both relevant and sensitive. However, the fact remains that its emergence in Tanzanian politics contributed to reinforcing identity stereotypes.

Being Indo-Tanzanian and African-Tanzanian in Dar es Salaam today

The sharp divisions between communities which have developed throughout the history of Tanzania are still relevant in collective consciousness today. Internalized identity categories have an impact on daily intercommunity relations, influencing people's expectations and attitudes, which in turn contributes to reconducting these categories at the microlevel. Face-to-face interviews, informal conversations and observations in the field bring to light existing economic and identity tensions that cut across Tanzanian society and are a significant key to understand how it is shaped today.

Cultivating a sense of Indian belonging

In the present city of Dar es Salaam, the history of Indian presence is inscribed on the walls. The city centre features old buildings and houses of Anglo-Indian style with screened facades and finely-worked front walls bearing the names of their builders. The former divisions between the western part of the city (Hindu) and the eastern part (Muslim) still exist. This bipolarization results from the fact that Indian communities give priority to proximity to places of worship and schools as well as to intra-community residency. In the western part of the city centre, for example, Hindu temples of different communities (Jains, Swaminarayan, Bathia, Lohana), community associations and Hindu schools now open to a wider public are concentrated on Kisutu Street. Towards the ocean, people from diverse origins (Indo-Pakistani, Arabic, Comorian, Afro-Shirazi) live in the Muslim area with the Sunni and Shiite mosques at its centre. Almost exclusively Indo-Pakistanis go to the mosques built by the Bohra and Aga Khan Ismaili communities, as only very few

Africans are followers of these confessions. The former power of the Aga Khan Ismaili Muslims is attested by the huge colonial-style building on Mosque Street, which still houses the community's association activities. The vast majority of families of Indian origin send their children to private schools near the centre, such as the Aga Khan primary and secondary schools, Hindu schools of Kisutu street or Al Muntazir Islamic school, or the International School of Tanganyika, a private school that admits children from privileged families (diplomats, expatriates, politicians and big businessmen). The search for quality education that public schools cannot offer (Bonini 2003) and the desire to preserve and enhance social and cultural identity of their own explain the existence of community-based schools.

Recent trends combine with historical developments to give the city centre of Dar es Salaam a special cachet. Shops, bureaux de change, mini supermarkets, restaurants, tea rooms and Internet cafés are mostly owned by managers of Indo-Pakistani origin. Small restaurants offer traditional Indian snacks, such as *chapati*, *sambusa* or *bhajia* (croquettes made from dry bean flour), commonly integrated into the Tanzanian cuisine, or *farari petis*, *sabudanawada* or *batata wada*⁴⁷ only found in Indian cuisine, as well as full dishes and candies that are not available in other parts of the city. Hindu women wearing the *sari*, Bohra women wearing the *burka*⁴⁸ or younger Indian women of all confessions dressed like Europeans usually purchase fruits and vegetables

⁴⁷ These names refer to spiced French fries mixed with onions (*sabudanawada* and *farari petis*) or potatoes (*batata wada*).

⁴⁸ The Bohra *burka* bears little resemblance to the dress of the same name worn by Muslim women, composed of a long black overcoat covering the body from head to toe. Indeed, the Bohra *burka* is a set of two pieces of fabric in pastel shades, one being a sleeveless top matched with a hood meant to cover hair, the other a long skirt reaching to the ankles.

from the small refined open market located on Zanaki Street. In the middle of the afternoon, African nannies can be seen holding the hands of Indian schoolchildren returning from school or going for their extra curricula school activities. In other words, the city centre is a microcosm of India that, at first glance, seems inherited straight from the colonial period.

Urban segregation is still community-based. Indeed, a vast majority of houses in the city centre are still the property of the National Housing Corporation (NHC). Residents, sometimes the original owners of these houses, pay rent to the state. Some families are crammed into dilapidated homes rather than being forced to leave. Until now, strategies for living as one community easily discouraged non-Indians to settle downtown. The practices of subletting rather than termination of leases and overcharging of subleases are common. They facilitate an insidious selection of tenants along community lines. For example in Upanga, a neighbourhood adjacent to the city centre inhabited by a majority of Indian immigrants, the same segregation practices based on price and maintenance of family and community networks can be observed. As for the richest families, they have taken up residence on the peninsula of Oyster Bay, a large residential area shared by European expatriates and wealthy business or political families of Indo-Pakistani, Arab or African origin. Today, however, residents of the city centre and Kariakoo are forced to cope with the sale of NHC-owned houses built at the beginning of the 20th century. Many former owners do not have sufficient capital to buy their homes, and some complain that buildings are being sold secretly. New owners, commonly identified as Zanzibaris or Arabs, acquire these houses, destroy them and replace them with brand new several-storey buildings, cheap replicas of the architectural style of the Arabian Peninsula (Calas

2006). There are numerous tragic stories of families who helplessly witness their family homes being repurchased and destroyed.

The frequentation of social areas also reflects Indian withdrawal from the rest of the society. There is no doubt that differences in standards of living influence, first and foremost, the choice of entertainment spots in town. Hotels and chic restaurants of the peninsula (*Seacliff, Golden Tulip*) are frequented by businessmen, traders, bankers or high level government officials regardless of their origin. The children of the local bourgeoisie are found in highclass nightclubs of the city (*Garden Bistro*). However, there are preferences following community lines. Associations attached to the various religious communities consist of active sports clubs, entertainment groups for women and youth movements. Depending on their socio-economic status, Indians hang out in private clubs, the city's main Indian restaurants (*Anghiti, Village Grill, Khana Khazana*), and the coastal hotels on the North of Dar es Salaam (*White Sands, Jangwani*); or enjoy *tandoori* chicken in small restaurants and on the city centre's sidewalks which are filled with tables and plastic chairs in the evening. On the other hand, local bars and nightclubs of the suburbs, where warm beer, grilled chicken and beef, even pork (*kitimoto*), are consumed while listening to the local Swahili hip-hop (*bongo flava*) latest hits or standards of Congolese music are preferred by Tanzanians of African origin.

The way people make use of Coco Beach on the Masaki Peninsula on Saturday and Sunday evenings illustrates to what extent divisions between communities are entrenched in Tanzanian society. A tacit bipartition seems to have established itself over time. The sandy part of the beach is occupied by young African Tanzanians who come from the suburbs of the city to

swim, participate in fairground games and hang around in the only bar on the beach. Here they relax as they listen to local hip-hop or techno music, sip a soda or a beer, eat kebabs and chips as they play pool. However on the south of the beach, the sand gives way to a small coral cliff overlooking the ocean by a meter or two. This is where small fast-food stands get concentrated at the end of the afternoon, attracting an almost exclusively Indian clientele. Sitting together at a table or on mats as they drink soda, families enjoy *Zanzibar Mix* (also known as *urojo* in Swahili), a warm soup containing chunks of cassava chips, *bhajia* and small pieces of meat, or nibble bites of salted and spicy fried cassava as they watch the sunset. Many remain in their cars, parked across the road along Coco Beach or even on the lawn, near the tables and mats where families relax. Indo-Pakistanis obviously give priority to residential segregation and sociability within their own community.

Stereotypes, construction of the Other and self-construction

Social and urban segregation that currently characterizes the relationship between Tanzanian Indians and Africans is the product of old socioeconomic asymmetries of power as well as of a more recent history of political ostracization, economic witch-hunts and strategies of exclusion. Drawing upon sharp binary social representations, segregation contributes to the endless reproduction of identity categories.

For many Africans, wealth and miserliness go hand in hand among Indians. The preconceived idea that all Indians are rich, through their trading activities, remains resilient despite a multifaceted reality consisting not merely of wealthy traders, but also of teachers and civil servants of modest means, shopkeepers

who cannot make ends meet at the end of the month, and humble artisans. Although they are a minority in their own communities, some families of Indian origin even owe their survival to the philanthropy of their fellow-believers. As for the incriminating cliché concerning miserliness (and exploitation of neighbours), it is a very general stereotype applied elsewhere in the world to many business minorities like the European Jewry or the West African Lebanese for instance. It is obvious that the influence of Indian immigrants on urban economy is still strong today. In spite of the recent and spectacular growth of small and medium African businesses in Dar es Salaam above-mentioned, the majority of businessmen are people of Indian origin. Apart from Internet cafés run by young Indo-Pakistanis, most businesses employ African staff as waiters, cooks, tailors, vendors or guards. In residential apartments, domestic workers are also African. All of them complain about low wages, usually insufficient for a living. Figures vary, not only depending on profession and skills, but also on employers themselves. According to the employees interviewed for this study, these figures would range from 10,000 to 20,000 shillings for house help staff and between 30,000 and 50,000 shillings for other workers, that is, between 6 and 35 euros per month⁴⁹. In comparison to African bosses, big bosses of Indian origin are said to pay their employees badly.

Prevalent stereotypes about Africans among many Tanzanian Indians are the exact opposite of those used by Africans to describe Indians. According to Indians, the prevalence of poverty among Africans is due to the latter's laziness; for this reason, they would not deserve sympathy. Africans would be able to work adequately only if they are urged to do so, reprimanded,

⁴⁹ 2006-2008 figures.

or even insulted. Indians highly condemn laziness because work is an important value to them. Some respondents pointed out that the first Indian immigrants in colonial Tanganyika worked hard to acquire and then maintain or develop their capital. Others recalled the measures taken against capitalists during the socialist period to highlight the importance of financial accumulation through work and protection against political hazards⁵⁰. Unlike the Indo-Pakistanis who consider themselves honest in business, Africans are frequently described as thieves, either by nature or by necessity, in addition to being lazy and profiteers. As a result, African staff members rarely have access to the cash desk in shops and restaurants.

These mutually stereotyped “social caricatures” (Brennan 2012) of behaviours at work lead to the adoption of similarly stereotyped behaviours as well as produce a tacit ethnic hierarchy. Respondents presented several examples taken from daily experience as evidence that such a hierarchy exists in the minds of Tanzanians of Indian origin. It is said that in a shop, an African is always served after an Indian, an Arab or a white man, regardless of the order in which they arrived; he will always wait, even without a good reason. According to Indians, an African does not look for taste in food and would therefore be happy with a badly prepared meal so long as the stomach is filled. An Indian would always condescend to an African, even when both of them have the same level of education⁵¹. Indians would not take public transport to avoid mixing with Africans. Swahili being considered

⁵⁰ In this regard, see also the work of Lobo (2000) consisting of a compilation of life histories of Indian families settled in Tanzania, as well as Oonk (2004).

⁵¹ An African teacher pointed to existing racist attitudes towards Africans, testifying that he used to tutor an Indo-Pakistani student in the garage adjacent to their house, instead of the living room or the office.

an inferior language, Indians would not make much effort to speak it just to highlight that they are different, even superior.

When questioned, most Indians in Dar es Salaam not only deny the existence of such an ethnic hierarchy, but also refute the condescending and contemptuous behaviours attributed to them. The comments they make to their staff would be those of any employer reprimanding an employee for misconduct or incompetence. Rather, philanthropic activities in which many personalities of the Indian community are engaged would bear witness to their compassion for the poor African people and their involvement in the country's development. The opening of Indian private schools and hospitals to the general public, without racial or community discrimination, are highlighted to point to the absence of practices of exclusion. In short, except for a few bad examples, Indians as a whole would treat Africans with due respect. Finally, references to the national ideals of multiculturalism and multiracialism, which are recurrently made to support Indian interviewees' claims for the legitimacy of their presence in Tanzania, explicitly underline that Indian populations are exemplary Tanzanian citizens

In this mish-mash of identity stereotypes and clichés, together with varied personal experiences, incessant rumours, memories of past events and resentments reinforced by recurrent political attacks, any attempt to separate truth from fiction, or reality from lies is already doomed to fail. Indeed, the production of essentialist imaginaries about the 'Other' points to the force of institutionalization and incorporation of distinctions between social groups, maintained by ethnic and racial clichés. These distinctions are inscribed in the physical space and in the division of labour. At the same time, they are part of common sense and are taken for granted. They are therefore considered legitimate

and unquestionable (Bourdieu 1980). Despite the changes mentioned above, the constancy of objective living conditions that separate Africans and Indians and the representations of the Other that ensue from them play a significant role in sustaining socioeconomic and community hierarchies. “Africans” and “Indians” are signifiers referring to two distinct socio-cultural entities, each presupposing the internal cohesion and homogeneity of the other. These categories which guide ways of being and ways of doing in situations of direct interaction are sustained through usage or even deliberately maintained in the public space and in the media. More nuanced statements are held by individuals who, through their positions in the economic, political or intellectual spheres, straddle the statutory barriers and asymmetrical power relations that characterize the usual relationship between these two virtually conflicting entities. In the places of production of the national elite, such as schools and university campuses, as well as in the spaces of the economic, political and intellectual power, where the patterns of encounter between people cease to be strictly hierarchical and localized, common reproduction mechanisms of a radically different otherness lose their effectiveness. Many stories illustrate the porosity of identity boundaries: friendship developed without considering community origin, higher rate of mixed marriages (but unfortunately, this could not be measured), rejection of identification with “Indianness” or “Africanness” in favour of national identity and Tanzanian citizenship. In other words, in social settings where statutory and economic barriers lose their relevance, social and identity rapprochement between Africans and Indians are notable, even though a majority continue to look unfavourably on such social and cultural rapprochement.

A Case Study: Indians and Africans in Aga Khan's Ismaili schools

Schools that belong to the Aga Khan⁵² Ismaili community were established on the East African coast at the beginning of the 20th century. Records indicate that the first school was founded in Bagamoyo in 1895 (Roy 2006: 202). However, the year 1905, marking the opening of a private secondary school for girls in Zanzibar, was chosen as the official date for the inaugural celebration of the centenary of Aga Khan schools in 2005. At the time of their establishment, these private schools were intended to fill a gap in urban public⁵³ schools. They also constituted a way of opposing discrimination in education imposed by the colonial system. Since then, several Ismaili schools were opened in Dar es Salaam: a nursery school (Aga Khan Nursery School, AKNS), a primary school (Aga Khan Primary School, AKPS) and a secondary school (Mzizima Secondary School, AKMSS). A Medical University affiliated with the Aga Khan Hospital was added to these educational institutions. All these facilities are located in Upanga neighbourhood. Plans have been underway to establish a campus (known as Academy⁵⁴) not far from the University of Dar es Salaam, comprising all academic buildings.

⁵² The Aga Khan Ismaili, also known as Nizarites or Aga Khanists (Adam 2002, Morris 1958), are Shiite Muslims who converted to Hinduism. They came from the Middle East and settled in India from the 14th century. Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan is the 49th Imam of the Ismaili community. See the chapter written by Colette Le Cour Grandmaison in this book.

⁵³ At the time, mission schools were mostly found in rural areas and their objectives were to educate and evangelize African masses (Buchert 1994).

⁵⁴ The establishment of Aga Khan Academies (places comprising primary and secondary schools, sometimes universities) is part of a vast program of creation of an integrated network of private schools started in 2000. The first group of such schools was opened in Mombasa in 2003. Apart from Dar es Salaam, other Academies are planned to be established by 2013 in the following cities: Nairobi, Kinshasa, Antananarivo, Bamako, Maputo, Kampala, Kabul, Osh (Kyrgyzstan), Khorog (Tajikistan), Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Damascus, Salamieh (Syria), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Mumbai, Hyderabad and Karachi.

The laying of the foundation stone took place in March 2005 in the presence of the Aga Khan and former President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa. This school project is part of a general redeployment of the Ismaili community activities in East Africa and in the world at large⁵⁵.

The Aga Khan schools are places of production and reproduction of the Tanzanian elite, the majority being Indian. Originally established for children belonging to the Ismaili community, they later opened doors to other Indo-Pakistani communities. All the same, Ismaili children still have priority when it comes to admission and indigent Ismaili families are helped financially. Aga Khan schools also host a few African students, mostly Tanzanians, but also of foreign origin (Ugandans and Kenyans). Among these African students, many of them are teachers' children as one child is entitled to free education. The relationship between students follows patterns of hierarchy and distancing present in Tanzanian society. Thus, *in situ* observations of social interactions between Mzizima High School students revealed the existing dichotomy between Africans and Indians. In the classroom as well as in the playground, students generally gather together based on community criteria, together with criteria of gender and social origin. Indo-Pakistani students fill the whole classroom while those of African origin tend to cluster around a few desks, boys on one side and girls on the other. Among the Indo-Pakistani students, social origin or

⁵⁵ The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) was founded by the Aga Khan in order to promote the growth of a Muslim social conscience. The network strives to promote activities without discrimination based on gender, origin, religion or political affiliation. Within this AKDN network, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) contributes to the maintenance and renovation of old buildings and public buildings considered a local heritage. In Zanzibar, AKTC funded the renovation of the old Ithnasheri dispensary built in the 1890s by the Ismaili merchant Tharia Topan. AKTC also contributed to the rehabilitation of the Forodhani public square on the seafront of Stone Town.

community membership plays an important role. Several young girls described how friendship was based on their parents' socioeconomic status even though they belonged to the same socio-religious community. Children from mixed marriages are generally grouped with students of African descent in the classroom, but tend to stick together during free time. Teachers attest that they had trouble organizing joint activities, some students refusing to hold hand with African students.

Among the staff working at school, similar spatial divisions can be observed. At lunchtime, Hindu women are the first to go to the refectory. Then African women, African men and men of Indian origin arrive in small groups and sit separately. European administrative staff and the few Ismaili interns of Canadian nationality tend to stay apart. The same divisions based on community and gender can be seen during meetings, assemblies and school celebrations. However, some individuals or groups get along with these different groups more easily. This is the case with some men of Indian origin who are fluent in Swahili and are seemingly at ease in both worlds: Indian and African. African women constitute the most mobile group because they fit as Africans among Africans and are more accepted as women among women of Indian origin. As expected, the strongest divide is observed between African men and Indian women, who rarely interact directly. The school staff insist that negative statements about people of different origin are never heard. However, some African teachers attested to having heard racist remarks from senior administrative staff in private. Implied accusations of laziness and incompetence are said to be rampant in this paternalistic organization.

Ceremonies organized for the staff are not immune to the rules of separation that have developed in Aga Khan schools.

Thus, the 2005-2006 school year ended with a prize-giving ceremony in recognition of years of service in the school. The ceremony was organized at Diamond Jubilee Hall⁵⁶. The hall was decorated for the occasion and tables accommodating between six and ten people had been put in place. The ceremony included a series of entertainment shows prepared by the staff, a speech by an official of the Central Educational Service (Aga Khan Education Services Tanzania, AKEST), awarding of certificates and gift vouchers as a reward for years of service, and dinner. Since no measures had been taken regarding the arrangement of the staff invited for dinner, the staff took their seats based on the usual groupings of community origin and gender. During the shows, African staff proposed a song in Swahili which included the famous hymn “*Nakupenda Tanzania*” (Tanzania, I love you), a hackneyed patriotic refrain in praise of Tanzania. On the other hand, Hindu women had prepared traditional dances performed in *saris*. The presence of some Indian women in the group of the Swahili singers and one African woman in the group of Hindu dancers could not dispel the obvious polarization of these activities. During dinner, negative comments from African teachers and assistants, who were expecting traditional Tanzanian cuisine⁵⁷, were recurring for the reason that only Indian dishes in spicy sauce were served. These words of protests, combined with a strong disappointment about the value of gift vouchers, fuelled dissatisfaction and feeling of lack of recognition for the work accomplished by the African staff.

⁵⁶ The Diamond Jubilee Hall was built in 1997 by the Aga Khan network in Malik Street, in the Upanga neighbourhood. It can be rented for exhibitions, concerts, conferences, fashion shows and private parties.

⁵⁷ It is noteworthy that cookery is highly controversial. Aga Khan schools use the services of a caterer for lunch. Any change in the composition of a typical Tanzanian meal leads to numerous complaints from the African staff. As a consequence, no dishes of the Indian culinary tradition are served.

Practices of segregation that underpin interactions between staff of African descent and staff of Indian origin partly result from asymmetrical power relations developed in the school. The administrative staff managing the school is predominantly Ismaili while a majority of teachers are African. This asymmetry is interpreted by some African teachers as discrimination in employment. The few positions of administration and management allocated to non-Indians do not satisfy people who resent discrimination against Africans. To the teaching staff, the appointment of Ismaili staff in positions of management of school equipment and the scrupulous monitoring of this equipment are proof that Africans are perceived with suspicion, viewed as thieves and profiteers. Moreover, in primary school, only Indian female teachers are put in charge of classes of the highest grades while African female teachers are implicitly excluded from them. In addition to these informal practices in job allocation, salary inequality has been harshly criticized by the African staff. Significant differences in salary exist even when the post and the applicants' experience are the same. Upon their hiring, some European teachers requested and received higher wages. These facts are known despite the general opacity surrounding salaries scales. They have prompted Africans to join hands in feeling that they are not simply underpaid, but are also explicitly treated as a lower class because, as expressed by an African teacher, they are "always treated as the house keepers of Indians".

The introduction of new teaching methods openly led to tensions which were usually voiced only among members of the same racial group. Since 2005, the Aga Khan schools have begun a transition to become International Schools. This change in status necessitated school restructuring, especially a shift from the Tanzanian national curriculum, followed since the establishment

of these schools, to the International Baccalaureate Curriculum which is imposed by the International Baccalaureate Organization and whose proper implementation is to be confirmed after inspection. The first signs of discontent among African teachers emerged after the dismissal of some colleagues and the hiring of foreign personnel from India, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya and Europe. However, the fear of being dismissed limited teachers' protests. Increased monitoring of the work of teachers, in advance of and during classes, was badly received but accepted with resignation as a necessary step in the restructuring of the school. Sharp reactions from African teachers were observed during trainings and seminars organized to introduce the staff with changes in teaching methods. Presented by trainers from the United States or Great Britain, these new teaching methods which no longer consist in providing children with pre-packaged knowledge but in promoting inquiry-based teaching, raised much concern among teachers. Compelled to get rid of teaching practices suddenly declared anachronistic, if not harmful to children, teachers feared they might be judged incompetent by a school which had previously expressed its confidence in the quality of their teaching. In this atmosphere where professional skills were questioned – and exacerbated by a wave of dismissals without notice – the African staff felt that the administration evaluated them not merely on the basis of strict professional skills, but also along identity lines.

The administration of Aga Khan schools and the relationship that has developed between staff members provide a good vantage point to illuminate broader divisions that have split Tanzanian urban society. In this school microcosm, not only are social divisions replayed between people who have incorporated the operational modes of a segregated society, but local struggles

also reproduce the differential perceptions of community categories.

Conclusion

In Tanzania, identity clichés and stereotypes that circulate about Indians and Africans point to the institutionalization and incorporation of identity category distinctions. These essentialist identities, which are now part of a popular discourse about culture and race, are the products of historical construction rooted in early precolonial local divisions and structures of hierarchy; they also owe deeply to the legal ordering and workings of colonial rule since the mid-19th century. The colonial policies adopted associated with the urban ordering of the cities and socioeconomic developments that affected the country drew almost impermeable boundaries between Indians and Africans, in order to make of Tanzania “a Black man’s country” (Iliffe 1979: 262). The decades following Tanzania’s independence entrenched these barriers, making Indians “vulnerable to scapegoating” and underlining their “essential foreignness” (Brennan 2012: 8, 22). Indeed, the socialist ideology of nationbuilding contributed to the stigmatization of Indians, considered heinous exploiters of the poor and powerless African mass. Regarded as a minority of “insiders and outsiders”, Indians self-built as a foreign minority by maintaining identity specificities through the strengthening of collective consciousness and the preservation of imported socio-cultural attributes, though strong feelings of belonging to the Tanzanian nation developed upon which their claims to national loyalty and citizenship have been grounded until today.

Today, despite the emergence of a black African middle-class, differences in cultures and lifestyles between Africans and

Indians as well as persisting deep-rooted social representations of hierarchy and distinction contribute to the daily reproduction of identity hierarchies and social distancing. Regularly reconstructed in the public space, in politics and in the media, often fuelled by personal experiences, rumours, past memories and political claims, these concrete, perceived and imagined relations of power influence people's expectations and attitudes in common situations of interaction. Instead of untying breaking up the social hierarchies and imaginaries which have crystallized until today, daily social contacts and exchanges tend to reconstruct them. Therefore, outside close elite circles in which living conditions, socioeconomic interests and a sense of distinction from the rest of the mass bring people of all origin together, bridges between the African world and the Indian world appear to be virtually nonexistent.

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Nakupenda Tanzania (« Tanzania, I love you »)

Tanzania, Tanzania, nakupenda kwa moyo wote, (« Tanzania, Tanzania, I love you with all my heart »)

Nchi yangu Tanzania, jina lako ni tamu sana, (« My country Tanzania, your name is so sweet »)

Nilalapo nakuwaza wewe, (« When I sleep, I dream about you »)

Niamkapo ni heri sana ee! (« In fact, it is happiness when I wake up! »)

Tanzania, Tanzania, nakupenda kwa moyo wote. (« Tanzania, Tanzania, I love you with all my heart »).

BROUILLON