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The social construction of risk for AIDS and the politics of identity and survival in urban Tanzania

by

Chris Lockhart

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

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PREFACE (ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS)

I would like to acknowledge the many people in various parts of East Africa who have graciously welcomed me into their homes and lives. Without their kindness and thoughtful assistance, none of this would have been possible.

I am also equally indebted to many people at the University of California, San Francisco and Berkeley. I would like to particularly mention Gay Becker, Judith Barker, John Ogbu, Philippe Bourgois, Linda Mitteness, and (at the University of Washington) Edgar "Bud" Winans. Their guidance and support over the years have always been appreciated.

Gary Becker

ABSTRACT

Previous studies have shown that the East African country of Tanzania is experiencing a serious AIDS crisis. Unfortunately, AIDS research in Tanzania and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole continues to lack a true anthropological approach. It is suggested that the problematization of risk should be a central feature of such an approach. Despite a large body of work dedicated to the study of risk, AIDS researchers (including anthropologists) have largely ignored risk or taken it for granted. The major approaches to risk are reviewed in order to situate the specific perspective developed here, which is defined around the central idea of a "risk conjuncture." This idea is used to gain a better understanding of AIDS, risk, and sexual decision making processes among a particular group of women in Mwanza, Tanzania, where intensive ethnographic fieldwork was conducted for approximately one year. Most of the women can be described as "husbandless" (i.e., divorced, separated, widowed, or simply never married and considered relatively old). These women have not only been identified as a "high risk" group by AIDS researchers, but they are also socially and economically marginalized by the general public throughout East Africa and highly stigmatized by being associated with AIDS and sexual promiscuity. The study describes the daily lives of these women and how they have come to form strong social networks through the exchange of both material and symbolic resources. It also highlights the women's continued sexual-economic dependency on men and how it conflicts with core features of an emergent group identity among the women. AIDS, risk, and sex are socially constructed by the women in this context, which can be defined as a *conjuncture* between situated network/group activities, public opinion, and risk constructions reproduced by wider institutionalized forces. The study concludes by outlining an "indirect" AIDS prevention program based upon the social and economic empowerment of the women

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INTRODUCTION

From the beginning, anthropologists were in a unique position to contribute to AIDS research and prevention in East Africa. From the study of traditional health care systems to changing notions of self and sexuality, we were discussing issues directly relevant to AIDS research long before the virus was isolated in 1983. Ethnographic inquiry and methodological applications were perfectly suited for the creation of a distinctly positive dialogue between the Western scientific community and the people whose lives were most affected by the disease. When AIDS came onto the scene, it seemed to underline the most basic message of anthropology (and medical anthropology in particular): there needs to be greater communication and mutual understanding between people if we ever hope to resolve the most pressing health problems in the world today. As odd as it might sound, anthropology and AIDS were a natural fit in so many positive ways.

Given the tremendous opportunities for anthropologists to make a positive impact on AIDS research and prevention in East Africa, it is unfortunate that one of the more prominent features of efforts in this area over the past two decades is an absence of true ethnographic approaches. What happened? While there is no single answer to this question, one of the more significant reasons involves a disciplinary unwillingness to address sensitive and potentially stigmatizing issues like sex and AIDS in the wake of the post-colonial critique. Our own unease left a void in the region that was almost certainly exploited by the rapidly growing and somewhat over-zealous field of public health. There has never been a lack of Western-oriented frameworks with the sole purpose of defining and proposing solutions to Africa's seemingly "latent" problems.

The problems stemming from a lack of ethnographic inquiry into the AIDS epidemic were almost certainly compounded by the reluctance on the part of African governments to admit or even comprehend the full extent of the crisis. Such a deeply rooted and reactionary form of denial is reflected to this day in the views and actions of people on the street. As AIDS becomes

more public and its impact more obvious the response to it has also become more routine, resulting in an uncomfortable and contradictory combination of dismay and dismissal in daily affairs. Few individuals are willing to talk about the disease known in Kiswahili as "Ukimwi" beyond mere finger pointing and the propagation of self-serving stereotypes. The general atmosphere has not bode well for anthropologists, many of whom seemed eager to prove the validity of discipline by abandoning its theoretical roots and transforming it into something that more closely resembled an assumed degree of applicability associated with public health. While there is nothing inherently wrong with research of this sort, it has often been conducted at the expense of a true "anthropology of AIDS," the absence of which was never more detrimental than in East Africa.

It is unfortunate that one can still legitimately ask the question, "What does an anthropology of AIDS in East Africa look like?" One way to answer this question is by pointing out what it does *not* look like. It is safe to say that an anthropology of AIDS does not entail any perspective that leads to *external* constructions of various "groups" of people that have little or nothing to do with individuals living out their daily lives in particular settings. If these accounts (of which epidemiology and public health are the most notable) demonstrate anything, it is the widespread assumption among the vast majority of AIDS researchers that it simply does not matter how people view themselves and others. This belief is truly ironic, given the fact that AIDS, as a sexually transmitted disease, spreads in large part as a result of the subjective and situational classifications and decision-making processes of individuals. Unfortunately, the most pervasive feature of AIDS research involves the ways that people can be classified in terms of "objective" epidemiological characteristics and associated risk constructions. The subsequent "groups" tend to be so massive and abstract that any number of misleading and artificial generalizations can and have been made based solely on expert assessments of risk. Anthropologists should have been the first to point out the impracticality, even absurdity, of macro-level tendencies that led to such things as an "African AIDS pattern." These broad and

out-of-touch categories were more apt to be tossed about by international aid agencies for their own managerial and administrative purposes than for the benefit of people on the ground. Anthropologists should have driven this point home by emphasizing the situatedness of the epidemic itself and the idea that people organize and interact with one another in ways that have very little to do with scientific paradigms and objective qualifications. As important and necessary as they are for AIDS research and prevention, generalizations about social behavior (even those rooted in more "anthropological" characteristics like gender and sexuality) should have been made in places like East Africa only after true ethnographic approaches to the disease were carried out and made available.

In many ways, an anthropology of AIDS in East Africa should be no different than an anthropology of AIDS in any other region of the World. It specifically concerns itself with how people view and act towards themselves and others under certain conditions and asks whether or not these processes have direct consequences for the spread and/or prevention of AIDS. In doing so, the initial discussion centers on specific communities, the types of social relationships that are formed within those communities, and the meanings enabled as a result of those relationships. It also concerns itself with the daily experiences and relationships of individuals as these are conditioned by structural-level processes like urbanization, market penetration, gender roles, and patterns of work. It is based upon a dialogue between macro-level phenomenon and local experience and situating key areas relevant to AIDS research within that dialogue, including sexual exchange practices, patterns of group formation and maintenance, and the construction of risk. While an anthropology of AIDS can be said to exist among specific groups and/or communities in the United States (i.e., intravenous drug users and the gay community), it is comparatively absent in East Africa.

The general failure on the part of anthropologists to focus on the concept of *risk* is particularly telling since it is widely acknowledged as not only a central means of thinking about health and disease for a wide variety of groups in both the expert and public realms, but also as a

deeply meaningful way to form and maintain group boundaries. Anthropologists working in East Africa need to examine how various groups experience, perceive, and act upon risk in both a general sense and in terms of AIDS specifically. We also need to determine where various risk constructions intentionally and unintentionally conjoin (and where they do not) and how these interactions structure the sexual exchange practices of particular groups in both the public and private realms.

In East Africa, risk became a non-issue when anthropologists aligned themselves so closely with public health. As AIDS was problematized in terms of the public health paradigm, the dominant issue entailed overcoming culture in order to impose external and completely taken-for-granted risk constructions for AIDS. Anthropologists were left to fill in the blanks of public health questions that were incidental at best and endorsed a particularly surreptitious construction of the African other. We became an interesting by-line when we adopted a role for ourselves that necessitated a particularly powerful, highly institutionalized, and unquestioned construction of risk. In the end, an anthropology of AIDS failed to emerge in East Africa because risk failed to become an issue. It is not surprising that the literature on risk, which has grown dramatically over the last twenty years, has barely touched upon the AIDS epidemic (in East Africa specifically and sub-Saharan Africa generally) and is dominated by a relatively macro-sociological and Western-oriented approach.

This study moves toward an anthropology of AIDS in East Africa by focusing on risk as a social construction directly rooted in the micro-politics of group identity. Moreover, and in terms of AIDS specifically, risk is significant because it produces and is produced by patterns of sexual exchange that can be shared by members of a particular group. Risk for AIDS is not a simple perception that drives behavior and can be regurgitated by individuals when prompted. Rather, risk for AIDS is a wider part of group norms, values, and ideals actively shared and disciplined in terms of sexual exchange practices. Subsequently, risk can be constituted by daily activities and meanings that are grounded in a spatially and/or socially distinct environment.

While the specific manifestation of risk posed by AIDS may not always be *directly* significant for some groups as it is for others, it is always *indirectly* implicated in processes of group formation and maintenance. An anthropology of AIDS should always consider these processes significant to some degree. At the same time, however, groups who share or are beginning to share an identity where risk for AIDS must be directly confronted and negotiated represent extremely fertile ground for anthropologists working in East Africa (as has been the case in the United States). As this study demonstrates, it also represents an area where generalizations can be drawn and wider applications of an anthropology of AIDS can be made – but only by working from the ground up.

Women who are divorced, separated, widowed, or simply never married are probably not the first group who come to mind in terms of a shared identity that is also directly associated with risk for AIDS. Yet they are connected with AIDS in the popular imagination of people on the street throughout East Africa; an association that is both directly and indirectly supported by Western researchers and State-run public health campaigns. They must face and negotiate a high degree of social stigma at a time when they are becoming a more visible and talked about presence due to a combination of structural-level processes that are compelling them to come together in the urban environment. As this study demonstrates for several social networks in a single neighborhood of Mwanza, Tanzania, such women are negotiating sex and risk for AIDS by forming a group identity around their particular status.

In this study, the women's status is defined by the use of the term "husbandless." It is recognized that to define a group of women as "husbandless" can be somewhat problematic and could easily be read in a derogatory light. While it is not intended to use the term as a way of condoning or reinforcing the negative qualities associated with the women, it *is* used as a means of highlighting the conditions within which stigma and blame are reproduced. Few terms adequately capture the extent of the women's situation, the meanings attributed to their experiences by themselves and others, and how they dealt with them on a daily basis. While

"independent" might be a more generous term, it is misleading because the majority of women did not fall into this category. In fact, it was their continued dependence on men in a variety of forms that had become one of the most telling and determinative aspects of their lives. "Single" is another term that is also inaccurate due to various Western assumptions surrounding a "single woman" that do not necessarily translate to the women of this study. Most notably, "single" implies a degree of availability that the majority of women did not actually desire. Moreover, men were less likely to acknowledge the women in terms of availability or potential than in ways that more closely approximated stigma, disgrace, and risk. The women's presence did not beget ideas of either beginning or renewal as much as a dangerous "end of the road" finality ("used goods" was a phrase frequently attributed to them). Thus, the term "husbandless" is deliberately (and perhaps provokingly) used to highlight the derogatory qualities associated with the women because the ways that they negotiated these beliefs became a fundamental structuring principle in their social relationships, shared sense of self, and particular construction of risk for AIDS. Choosing a more gracious term that did not highlight these processes simply misses the point and smacks of indeterminacy and political correctness.

At the same time, however, defining the women as husbandless underscores their efforts to actively redefine themselves in a distinctly positive manner. From their own perspective, being and becoming a husbandless woman was as much a path forward and toward developing a new kind of potential as it was the embodiment of a deeply rooted form of risk for others. Once again, it was the women's husbandless status rather than their status as independent or single women that best defined this aspect of their emergent identities and how risk for AIDS became an integral part of their group dynamic. The term highlights a deeply self-reflexive process and a shared sense of becoming among the women as they struggled to overcome risk for AIDS by actively redefining themselves in terms of a status that others found so easy to condemn. In the end, the term husbandless effectively captures the contradictions and fragmented nature of the women's personal struggles as well as the situated perspective that others had come to adopt on

them. It addresses *both* the positive and negative implications of their situation in terms that specifically speak to the contested nature of risk and AIDS.

Chapter Overview

The first three chapters of this study can be viewed as providing the background context to the research itself. Chapter One begins with an epidemiological description of AIDS in Tanzania (specifically referencing Mwanza Region when available information warrants) and discusses a more general "anthropological critique" surrounding this type of information and its use in sub-Saharan Africa. While the critique highlights the misleading assumptions and negative consequences associated with epidemiological and public health approaches to AIDS research and prevention, it is also partially directed at anthropology itself. One of its major objectives is to expose the ways that epidemiology and public health (and anthropology) have constructed a powerful form of risk surrounding AIDS that has very little to do with how the disease is experienced on the ground. This leads directly to the material discussed in Chapter Two, which provides the theoretical underpinnings and major approaches to risk that have arisen over the past several decades. By highlighting risk as an increasingly dominant structuring influence from the level of the mundane and everyday to the level of broad historical changes and globalizing processes, this body of work directly informs the particular approach to AIDS adopted in this study. The series of questions that make up this approach are presented at the end of the chapter and can be viewed as a general organizational guideline for the research process and the final product presented here. Chapter Three concludes the background section by providing an historical account of Mwanza Region and the growth and development of the city of Mwanza itself. It also provides the reader with a more nuanced "walk" through the city on a typical day at the time of the research. While the resulting images and impressions are my own and thus inherently biased, they are an important and often overlooked aspect of the research process. In this case, they speak to my own role as an anthropologist and AIDS researcher working among a

relatively segmented group of women who must find ways to survive in a poverty-stricken neighborhood.

The final five chapters form the backbone and content of the research itself. Chapter Four introduces the four social networks of husbandless women who became the primary focus of this study. It demonstrates that each network is the result of strong interconnections that can be distinguished (at least initially) by tracing daily exchanges of material goods and services between individual members. Chapter Five builds upon the material basis for each network and suggests that they also served as a powerful site for the formation and maintenance of a common group identity among husbandless women in general. While their emergent identities were rooted in similar experiences, particularly a series of hardships tied to their husbandless status, the meanings attributed to these experiences resulted from their social network activities and struggle to achieve a legitimate social space within the surrounding neighborhood. From this combined material and symbolic basis, Chapter Six turns to the women's construction of risk for AIDS, which was experienced and practiced in terms of network-neighborhood relations and an urban environment where they could actively draw upon *multiple* risk constructions. The chapter recalls key aspects of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two in order to highlight a "risk conjuncture" in which several dominant external/expert risk constructions "from above" conjoined in various (often partial and unintended) ways with network-neighborhood interactions and the micro-politics of group identity "from below." One result, as Chapter Seven discusses, was a pattern of sexual exchange actively disciplined in terms of the women's group identity that allowed them to construct a type of group immunity and "low risk" stance towards AIDS. From an epidemiological and public health perspective, the characteristics of their sexual exchange patterns, which are defined as an "exchange monogamy," can be viewed as a series of high risk behaviors for AIDS. From an anthropological perspective, however, the overall environment within which these patterns are enacted must be considered because it points to an untapped source of potential with respect to the women's patterns of cooperation, work activities, and

emergent identities. The Conclusion builds upon this idea with an eye towards the wider application of an anthropological approach and new forms of AIDS prevention in East Africa. It proposes a relatively simple AIDS prevention program tailored to the situation and needs of husbandless women and based on the "indirect" approach of social and economic empowerment.



CHAPTER ONE: HIV/AIDS IN TANZANIA

AND THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CRITIQUE

Wazazi wasipoongea nasi kuhusu kujamiiana nani atafanya hivyo? ("If parents don't talk with us about sex, who will?") [public health poster showing a pair of children asking this question with their seemingly indifferent parents sitting in the background]

Wazungu. ("White people") [a taxi driver's joking response to the question posed by the same public health poster as he drove by it]

Introduction

By all accounts, HIV/AIDS has had a devastating impact upon the East African nation of Tanzania. A considerable amount of effort has gone toward explaining the spatial and temporal "shape" of the virus' spread in the country through epidemiological modeling and statistical analysis. In fact, the overwhelming majority of research conducted on HIV/AIDS in Tanzania is epidemiological and/or public health in nature. It is still comparatively rare to find work relating to HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, which is not conducted within the rather narrow, positivist, and distinctly Western-oriented paradigm represented by epidemiology and public health. This absence has led to a rather extensive critique on the part of anthropologists, who have attacked the focus of epidemiology/public health as both biased and misleading. They have also suggested that it has had a negative impact upon anthropologists themselves, who often seem to abandon their own perspective in favor of the more "applied" one engendered by the particular risk constructions of epidemiologists and public health experts. While the anthropological critique highlights the need to refocus the perspective of anthropologists conducting research on HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, there is still little work being done on the "anthropology of AIDS" in the region.

This chapter provides an overview of the major epidemiological characteristics regarding HIV/AIDS in Tanzania. It focuses on geographical aspects of the disease, "high risk" factors/behaviors that have been associated with the disease itself as well as with having multiple sex partners, and epidemiological assessments of AIDS awareness and behavior change in light of

public health efforts. The chapter then sets out to define the major issues involved in the anthropological critique and why this type of work has had such a negative influence in sub-Saharan Africa (and East Africa in particular). It specifically focuses on an overwhelming "biomedical discourse" based on artificial constructions of risk, idealist/cultural versus historical/material perspectives, and a particular absence of women's perspectives and experiences surrounding urbanization, sexual decision making, and risk. Based on these issues, the final section discusses ways in which the anthropological perspective can be refocused — without completely abandoning the information provided by epidemiology — in order to make a more positive contribution to HIV/AIDS research in Tanzania.

HIV/AIDS in Tanzania

Tanzania is experiencing an exceptionally rapid HIV/AIDS epidemic. The estimated number of infected individuals increased from 800,000 (approximately 3.2% of the total population) in mid-1992 to 1,200,000 by December 1995 (National AIDS Control Program 1995). By the end of 1999, the estimated number of infected individuals was 1,300,000 (approximately 3.7% of the total population [World Health Organization 2000]). Of these individuals, 1,200,000 are adults aged 15-49 (approximately 8.1% of the total adult population). The estimated number of adult females who are infected is 670,000 (approximately 55.8% of the total adult population).

An estimated 80 % of all HIV infections in Tanzania occur through heterosexual contact with an infected partner (Mhalu 1989; Heymann and Edstrom 1991). Other major transmission routes in the country include perinatal transmission, which is thought to account for approximately 10% of all infections; blood transfusions, which are thought to account for another 10%; and a relatively small number of infections due to contaminated health care equipment (World Bank 1992). It is very likely that AIDS became the number one cause of deaths among adults in Tanzania as early as 1990 (Chin and Sonnenberg 1991).

Geographical aspects

There are large geographical differences in HIV prevalence rates within Tanzania with the bulk of reported cases coming from the northwestern regions of the country and a handful of the larger urban centers including Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Arusha, Kilimanjaro, and Bukoba (National AIDS Control Program 1994). The first AIDS cases reported from Tanzania came from Kagera Region in 1983 (Nyamulyekunge et al 1985). A population-based survey of that region in 1987 found some of the highest prevalence rates for HIV in the country; rates which closely corresponded to those found in Uganda's infamous Rakai District on its northern border (Killewo et al 1990). The overall prevalence for HIV infection among adults aged 15-54 in Kagera Region was estimated to be 9.6%, though there were dramatic differences between rural and urban areas. HIV prevalence in the main town of Bukoba was estimated at 24.2%, while prevalence for rural areas of the region averaged only 4.9%. When standardized for age and sex, the results showed that urban women were more affected than urban men (28.6% among women and 16.9% for men) while there was no difference with respect to sex in rural areas. On further analysis of the same data set, HIV prevalence was shown to be highest among females from 15-24 years who were living in Bukoba Town (Killewo et al 1994a). When broken down by administrative wards, the same researchers found that the geographical spread of HIV infection could best be described in terms of distance of the ward by road from Bukoba Town. Specifically, the further away from the town a ward was situated the less probable that the people living in that ward were HIV infected. Using specific indicators (e.g., occupation, illiteracy levels, and marital status), the same researchers also showed that the ward within Bukoba Town with the highest social status had the lowest prevalence rates (16.1%) while the ward with the lowest social status had the highest prevalence rates (42%). There was also a highly significant association between HIV infection and the overall incidence of syphilis (Killewo et al 1994b). The overall prevalence of syphilis in adults aged 15-54 was 5.9%, though this figure rose to 13.5% when past infections of syphilis were taken into account. Like AIDS, the highest

incidence of syphilis was found in urban areas and the lowest incidence in rural areas. The age-specific incidence of syphilis infection was highest (21.6%) among males 35 years and older while among females the highest rates (13.1%) were in the 15-24 year age-group.

Similar patterns as those describing the AIDS epidemic in Kagera Region have also been found in neighboring Mwanza Region. An extensive population-based random cluster sample survey was conducted for the entire region in 1990 and 1991 (making Mwanza one of only a handful of regions in East and Central Africa where a relatively rich set of epidemiological data on HIV/AIDS are available for the general population). It was estimated from this sample that 42,000 adults aged 15-54 years were infected with HIV (Barongo et al 1992). Forty percent of these HIV positive individuals lived in Mwanza Town, 20% in roadside settlements, and another 40% in the regions rural areas. Overall prevalence for Mwanza Region was estimated at 4.6% and when adjusted for the previous spatial categories was reported at 2.5% in rural villages, 7.3% in roadside settlements, and 11.8% in Mwanza Town. Prevalence was highest in women aged 15-34 years and in men aged 25-44 years, with a peak prevalence rate of 20% in women aged 25-34 years who lived in Mwanza Town. For women in the more constricted 15-24 year age cohort living in Mwanza Town, HIV-prevalence was estimated at 16% (Mosha et al 1993). Overall, HIV infection was 1.5 times more common in women than men. Estimates based on a separate sample of 12 rural communities in Mwanza Region (also taken in 1991 and 1992) and consisting of adults aged 15-54 years showed an overall increase of rural prevalence rates from 2.5% to 4.0% in just one year (Todd et al 1997). The proportion of adult deaths attributed to HIV infection was 35% overall and 53% in those aged 20-29 years. Overall, HIV infection increased adult mortality by more than 50% in the sample population. The authors concluded that the epidemic had not yet stabilized among rural inhabitants of Mwanza Region.

High rates of syphilis were also estimated from Barongo et al's (1992) population-based sample of 4,173 individuals aged 15-54 years. Overall estimated prevalence of past or current syphilis was 14.9% for men and 15.8% for women (Mosha et al 1993). Of these, 54% and 59%

respectively had active syphilis, giving prevalence estimates of 8.1% and 9.4%. While there were no significant differences in the prevalence of either past or current syphilis between the urban and roadside strata, prevalence in the rural stratum were significantly lower than those in the urban and roadside strata combined.

Although the best and most detailed epidemiological data on the AIDS epidemic in Tanzania has come out of Mwanza and Kagera regions (a reflection of the epidemic itself combined with the focus of externally-funded research projects) there are some limited data to compare HIV prevalence rates in these regions with those found in other regions and urban centers in Tanzania.[1] In Dar es Salaam, HIV prevalence increased from 4.7% in 1987 to 9.4% in 1990 (National AIDS Control Program 1992). Also in Dar es Salaam, a cross-sectional study of 2,285 women attending 3 family planning clinics in 1991-1992 produced an HIV prevalence of 11.5% (Kapiga et al 1994). Estimates of HIV infection in Mara Region (which borders Mwanza Region on the North) are significantly lower than those reported for Kagera and Mwanza, with an estimated prevalence of 2.6% in rural areas and 8.8% in urban areas (Konings et al 1994). The prevalence of HIV infection in the general population of Moshi district (which coincides with the town of Moshi for the most part) was measured between 0.1-3% (Nkya at al 1988). These estimates were based on a sample population composed of blood donors, however, and are probably not representative of the general population. Since very early on, the areas recording the highest HIV prevalence estimates have been, in order: Kagera, Mwanza, Mbeya (on the main transportation route from Dar es Salaam to Zambia), and the city of Dar es Salaam itself (Chinn and Sonnenberg cited in World Bank 1992).

High risk factors/behaviors

A variety of important risk factors and risk behaviors have been significantly associated with HIV prevalence as well. In their population-based HIV prevalence study of Mwanza Region, Barongo et al (1994) found that HIV infection was significantly higher in those who had traveled from rural villages and roadside settlements to Mwanza Town in the previous two years.

Newell et al (1993) also found travel to Mwanza Town in the previous two years to be significantly correlated with syphilis prevalence for women in the same sample (but not men). HIV prevalence and travel were also significantly associated for women in Quigley et al's (1997) sample of 12 rural communities in Mwanza Region. A similar relationship was also found among sample populations in Kagera Region (Schmutzhard et al 1989; Killewo et al 1990). For Barongo et al's (1994) sample of urban factory workers and their spouses in Mwanza Town, HIV prevalence was higher among men who were born in Kagera Region.

A significant association between HIV prevalence and being separated, widowed, or living apart from one's spouse was also found among men in the sample of factory workers in Mwanza Town (Barongo et al 1994). In the population-based sample of Mwanza Region (Barongo et al 1994), HIV prevalence was also higher in both sexes (though particularly for men) among those who were separated, divorced, or widowed than for those who were single or married. Association between being separated, divorced, or widowed and prevalence for syphilis was also significant in the same sample, though for men only (Newell et al 1993). Quigley et al's (1997) sample of 12 rural communities in Mwanza Region also showed a relationship – though for both sexes this time – between HIV prevalence and being widowed or divorced. In a somewhat related manner, HIV prevalence was reportedly higher among men who had not been married for more than 5 years in Barongo et al's (1994) sample. Upon further analysis of their sample cohort of male and female factory workers in Mwanza Town, Borgdorff et al (1994) determined the probability for a marriage to end by divorce or death at 4% for the first 5 years, 2% for the next 5 years, and 1% per year for the following 10 years.

Occupation has also been significantly associated with HIV prevalence, particularly for women. In their population-based survey of Mwanza Region, Barongo et al (1992) found that women who either had an office job, were employed in manual work, or were self-employed in business, had a higher prevalence of HIV infection than those who were farmers, housewives, or unemployed. In both Bukoba and Dar es Salaam, women who were employed as barmaids

reported exceptionally high prevalence rates from a very early date (Killewo et al 1990). Quigley et al (1997) found that for women living in rural areas of Mwanza, *not* being currently employed in farming was associated with higher HIV prevalence. They also found that rural women whose husbands were employed in manual work, office work, or business, had significantly higher HIV prevalence rates.

HIV infection has also been reportedly high among specific groups within Mwanza Region. Prevalence was estimated at 20% among hospital patients in the region (Gumodoka et al 1997), 5-7% among blood donors (Dolmans et al 1989; Borgdorff et al 1993), and 11.5% among pregnant women attending antenatal care clinics (Kigadye et al 1993). The latter study also failed to find any significant decline in prevalence rates among the youngest women in Mwanza over a 3 year period, despite the implementation of intensive national and local AIDS control programs within the region. HIV prevalence in a cohort of factory workers and their spouses in Mwanza Town was also high, with an estimated overall prevalence of 11% (Barongo et al 1994). When standardized for sex, many more female than male factory workers were estimated to be infected with prevalence rates of 17% and 10% respectively. HIV incidence in the same group was estimated between 1% and 2% per year. Sixty-two percent of deaths in this cohort of factory workers were attributable to HIV infection (Borgdorff et al 1995).

Other factors that have been associated with higher HIV prevalence in these samples include the presence or history of another STD for both sexes (Barongo et al 1992) as well as just women (Mnyika et al 1997); men with younger spouses (Quigley et al 1997); and women who lived in Mwanza Town or other large towns (Quigley et al 1997). An interesting result reported by Kapiga et al (1998) in their study of women using family planning methods in Dar es Salaam involved a significant association between HIV prevalence and self-reported alcohol consumption over a specified time period. An important factor associated with higher prevalence rates for both HIV and syphilis in the population-based sample of Mwanza Region was a higher number of reported sex partners (Barongo et al 1992; Newell et al 1993). An association between

prevalence for HIV and syphilis and reported number of sex partners was highly significant for both sexes.

Multiple sex partners

Many researchers have focused on the potential for higher HIV prevalence rates by highlighting factors that are significantly associated with multiple sex partners. In a national sample for Tanzania of randomly selected women aged 15-49 years and men aged 15-60 years, 6% of women and 31% of men reported more than one sex partner during the study period between October 1991 and March 1992 (Kapiga 1996). Having multiple sex partners was positively associated with HIV prevalence for both sexes at younger ages, those who were never married, formerly married women, and men who were in a monogamous marriage but reported more than one marriage. Almost 60% of both men and women in the sample reported having sex for the first time when they were less than 17 years of age. Age at first sex may be important as evidenced in a sample of men and women from rural Mara Region in northwestern Tanzania. In this sample, those who reported sexual activity at a younger age were more likely to report multiple sex partners (Konings et al 1994). The mean age at first sex for men in this sample was 15.8 years while among women it was 14.9 years. A similar association between younger age groups and HIV prevalence was also found among a sample of male factory workers in Mwanza Town (Ng'weshemi et al 1996) and women of reproductive age who attended family planning clinics in Dar es Salaam (Kapiga et al 1995). Ng'weshemi et al (1996) found an association between multiple sex partners and those who lived in urban areas of Mwanza Region. They also found an association between the former and alcohol use. In Borgdorff et al's (1994) study of male and female factory workers in Mwanza Town, factors associated with having had multiple sex partners included being born in Mwanza or neighboring Mara or Shinyanga Regions, having had less education or having a low income, and being married. They further reported that 6% of both men and women in their sample had met a casual sexual partner in a bar, 66% of men and 26% of women met them on the street, 9% of men and 28% of women met them at a friend's

house, and 5% of men and 11% of women met them at a party. Men reported ten times as many sexual partners as women for Konings et al's (1994) sample of rural men and women in Mara Region. They also reported that women had fewer partners as they grew older and had more partners before the age of 30, after which there was a plateau. Men were most sexually active in their 20's and 30's and were more sexually active in older age groups than was the case with women. In a sample of secondary school students in Arusha, Lugoe et al (1996) also found that males were more likely than females to report being sexually active and that sexually active males were generally older than females. The authors cautioned that underreporting among females was a possibility. A further association between extended "sexual networking" (defined as having had 10 or more sexual partners since the 1979 war with Uganda) and spatial proximity to a major urban center was found in Kagera Region by Killewo et al (1994). They found that extended sexual networking decreases quickly with increasing distance from Bukoba town. Extended sexual networking was also associated with travel, itself associated with those wards closest to Bukoba town and within the town itself. Among primary school children in Kilimanjaro and Arusha Regions, Klepp et al (1996) found a tendency to report more restrictive attitudes and subjective norms towards having sex as the authors moved from rural to urban schools.

AIDS awareness and behavior change

Results from various tests conducted in Tanzania show that AIDS knowledge and awareness are relatively high (Kapiga et al 1995; Kapiga 1996; Ng'weshemi et al 1996). A national survey in 1994 showed that 99% of urban men in Tanzania had heard of AIDS, 90% knew of ways to avoid AIDS, 89% knew that a healthy-looking person can have AIDS, and 63% knew a person with AIDS (Weinstein et al 1994). Despite high levels of awareness concerning the virus, there is also evidence that few people are aware of their own HIV status, as Quigley et al (1997) found to be the case in their sample of 12 rural communities in Mwanza Region. For their sample of factory workers in Mwanza Town, Pool et al (1996) reported over 90% of their

subjects did not want to know the results of their HIV tests. This tendency may be partly responsible for why so few men in the sample admitted to being at high risk for AIDS; a belief which has been reported for other sample populations as well (Ndeki et al 1994). Almost 90% of people in a sample of adults aged 15-54 years living in Arusha Town also did not want to know their HIV status (Ole-king'ori et al 1994). The researchers in this study reported that more women than men consented to having an HIV test and that among men those who were younger were more likely to consent. It was also reported that the majority of people who were aware of their HIV positive status did not choose to inform their sex partner; opting instead to tell someone among their own generation and gender (Lie and Biswalo 1996).

The main behavioral change in response to the AIDS epidemic in Tanzania seems to be a reduction of sexual partners (Pool et al 1996). The use of condoms has been very low throughout the country generally (Kapiga 1996) as well as within the population of Mwanza Region specifically, where their use was reported by only 2.5% of people (Barongo et al 1992). Condom use was comparatively higher among "hard-core" prostitutes living in Kilimanjaro and Arusha, but "frequent use" dropped significantly to only 4% (Nkya et al 1991). It has also been reported that the use of condoms is more common in urban areas of Tanzania than in rural areas (Kapiga 1996).

Condoms continue to have highly negative beliefs associated with them. Studies in Lushoto and Mwanza indicate that school youth believed condoms to be HIV implanted (Elbadawi cited in Lugoe et al. 1996). A similar belief that condoms were deliberately impregnated with HIV during manufacture was found among a sample of people throughout Tanzania and East Africa as a whole, which included a significant portion of health care workers (Nicoll et al 1993). Less than half (42.8%) of Kapiga et al's (1995) sample of women at family planning clinics in Dar es Salaam even mentioned condoms as an AIDS prevention method.

Summary comments

In general, the AIDS epidemic in Tanzania has proven highly diverse. Outside of selected urban centers such as Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Moshi, the virus has had its most significant impact in the northwestern parts of the country surrounding Lake Victoria. The regions of Kagera and Mwanza have been particularly hard hit, though even here intra-regional differences predominate. Estimated HIV prevalence rates among the general populations of the administrative centers (and largest cities) for both regions – Bukoba in Kagera Region and Mwanza Town in Mwanza Region – are among the highest in Africa. Though prevalence rates are significantly lower in the rural areas of both regions they are comparatively very high, demonstrating that HIV was firmly entrenched in these areas at a very early date. It is the context within which urban-rural connections are made and unmade that has proven important toward understanding the diffusion of the AIDS virus, as is evident in the strong association between HIV, extended sexual networking, and various socio-geographical indicators. There is also increasing evidence that many more women than men are becoming infected. Though many sub-groups of people have been specifically mentioned, a constellation of factors tied to the urban migration experience – gender differences in HIV prevalence rates, urban work and living conditions, low socio-economic status, and being widowed, divorced, or separated – point directly to the situation of husbandless females as being critically important toward understanding and preventing HIV/AIDS in Tanzania. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that despite high levels of awareness among Tanzanians regarding the spread and prevention of HIV/AIDS, an overwhelming majority do not know and do not want to know their own HIV status. When this decision is combined with the negative attitudes associated with condoms as a prevention method, the possibility for the continued increase in HIV prevalence rates remains high.

The anthropological critique

Throughout the 1990's, a strong critique has developed within anthropology and related disciplines regarding the predominance of a biomedical and epidemiological focus on AIDS in

Africa and the implications of that perspective on anthropological approaches to the epidemic. While the critique has developed and transformed together with the emerging trends of a growing body of anthropological work on HIV/AIDS, it currently incorporates several fundamental themes. These include:

1.) defining the characteristics of a biomedical/epidemiological "discourse" with respect to the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly the ways in which it impedes a more comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural context of the disease;

2.) recognizing an internal division among social scientists studying the African AIDS epidemic defined by those who emphasize an idealist/cultural approach and those who emphasize a more historical/economic one – as well as a related split between the appropriate level of analysis;

3.) recognizing a general neglect of African women's experiences and perspectives regarding AIDS and sexual behavior – particularly in East and Central Africa – and the need to situate gender in a wider socio-economic framework emphasizing development issues and male dependency.

Together, these themes highlight the need for a new focus among anthropologists conducting AIDS research in sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, the anthropological critique must be recognized as simply a specific manifestation of more fundamental issues and problematics in social theory. In effect, the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa forces anthropologists to re-examine their theoretical roots. Before turning to that reexamination (the subject of Chapter 3) the anthropological critique should be examined in more detail. Each of the three themes is discussed separately.

1.) The predominance of a biomedical discourse and the construction of risk

Perhaps the most widely discussed theme of the anthropological critique of HIV/AIDS research in Africa is the overwhelming influence of a biomedical "discourse." There is an obvious connection with the wider critique in philosophy and the social sciences (and particularly

in medical anthropology) concerning biomedicine in general and the "biomedical gaze" (Foucault 1973; Lock and Gordon 1988; Lindenbaum and Lock 1993). The details of this wider critique will not be discussed here, though many of its fundamental features have manifested themselves in the more circumscribed critique discussed here. The anthropological critique of AIDS research in Africa is much more focused on a specific branch of biomedicine – epidemiology - and its ability to construct a specific perspective on the African AIDS epidemic, one which has insinuated itself into anthropological research.

Anthropologists have focused much of their critique on epidemiology's practice of constructing a wide array of "risk groups" and associated "risk behaviors." Both Kane (1993) and Siedel (1993) link this practice in part to a lack of resources and funding limitations (for anthropologists in particular) which results in a lack of alternative approaches from which to choose, though neither author seems to view this as the primary cause. Most associate the construction of risk groups with the 'narrowing' perspective of a biomedical discourse in general; a perspective which epidemiology continuously reproduces and legitimates in its practice of defining, targeting, and surveying various groups of people based upon a single "risky" behavior or trait. Both Shoepf (1991) and Standing (1992) suggest that those who arrive at this type of data are at least partially predetermined to do so by their choice of methods; often consisting of rapid questionnaires predicated upon the frequency of sexual partners and the related quantification and "prevalence" measurements of other social-sexual traits. They point out that the "how many partners" type of approach so common among epidemiologists is particularly offensive in the African context and that it can easily lead to highly inaccurate reporting. Many respondents are simply unwilling to convey this type of personal information. The authors suggest that the approach reifies and reinforces a definitively Western preoccupation with an "African promiscuity."

Perhaps the most significant consequence of the risk group construction of the AIDS epidemic is that behaviors - and the meanings attached to those behaviors - become isolated from

the social and cultural context within which they are produced and reproduced. As Shoepf (1991) and others (see Lannegran and Hyden 1993) have noted, this practice fosters the illusion that HIV/AIDS spreads simply as a result of the behavior of a few, definitively "irrational" individuals. At the same time, attention is diverted away from the general public; a trend that only fosters a moral undertone of blame and stigma. Given the orderliness of such a perspective, Kane (1993) views the course of the AIDS epidemic as being misconstrued and overly simplified:

> After a decade of the epidemic, epidemiological classification has produced an array of risk groups, each defined on the basis of a single behavior. This array, which changes somewhat with the course of the epidemic, represents the epidemic universe. The very orderliness of this universe begs the question of multiple risk, and masks the question of risk to those who do not identify with risk groups, including the fictive "general public." [1993:225]

It is not only the highly illusory and hegemonic qualities embedded in the notion of "discourse" that many of these authors question. They also reject the idea that the African AIDS epidemic is confined to specific risk groups any longer. This is particularly true of East and Central Africa, where the rates of infection are so high, particularly in the cities, that it becomes virtually impossible to define anyone other than the general population as at risk for HIV/AIDS.

It has also been suggested that an epidemiological perspective based on high risk groups has permeated anthropological research in East and Central Africa, often to the point where the latter approach has been completely subsumed by the former (Seidel 1993). One irony is that it may even have been anthropologists more than any other group who, working from within an epidemiological paradigm, impeded a fuller understanding of the specific social and cultural context of AIDS in Africa. This is particularly true of their early efforts to contribute to HIV/AIDS research; a point clearly made by Packard and Epstein (1991):

> Instead of engaging in an open-ended dialogue with social scientists, assessing available data and discussing how research methods and agendas might be modified to fit more

closely with the contours of African experience, the medical research community defined the parameters of the social science input in line with the dominant behavioral model. Specifically, they asked anthropologists and other social scientists to provide information about the 'risk behaviors' which might facilitate the transmission of AIDS. In other words, what were the practices, customs or patterns of social intercourse which provided opportunities for HIV transmission. Constructed in this way, the question immediately narrowed the range of sociological data which was relevant for the discussion. The question became not what is the social context within which HIV transmission occurs in Africa, but rather, what are the patterns of behavior which are placing Africans at risk of infection. While the first construction would have allowed for open ended discussion of a wide range of social, political and economic conditions which may be affecting health levels in Africa, the latter formulation quickly narrowed discussion to an inquiry into the 'customs of the native.' At the same time, it placed responsibility for transmission on the actors themselves in a not too subtle form of victim blaming. [pp774-75].

Shoepf (1991) suggests that when working within a biomedical/epidemiological paradigm, anthropologists who do not frame sexuality as somehow biologically driven in their research tend to be ignored or dismissed as "unscientific." While these authors seem to put much of the blame on epidemiologists as "limiting" the role of anthropologists, many in the anthropological community itself accepted unquestioningly these limits. As a result, anthropological data are easily extracted from the social and cultural contexts from which they were collected, producing a type of laundry list of "cultural artifacts." In Africa, these traits have been used to construct and legitimate a barrage of ethnographic anecdotes and "exotic" high risk criteria surrounding sexual practices. The end result, as Kane (1993) has suggested, is that few anthropologists are actually doing the "anthropology of AIDS." She views anthropologists as having accepted by an epidemiological paradigm to such an extent that little is achieved beyond "rapid ethnographic

assessments;" a practice which more easily reinforces the artificial construction of specific "risky"groups based on a few, select behaviors.

There may also have been factors outside of epidemiology that undermined the potential contributions of anthropology as well. The post-colonial critique had a tremendous backlash on the nature of anthropological inquiry, which resulted in a noted absence of work surrounding such sensitive topics as sex and sexuality in Africa. This absence led to the resurrection of outdated ethnographic descriptions of sexual behavior as "facts"in the AIDS literature; easily contributing to generalizations about specific groups of people and even entire nations (Standing 1992; Kane 1993). This became a particularly easy practice in East Africa, where the British structural-functionalist paradigm emphasizing the "tribe" as an autonomous, self-sustaining entity was easily adapted to the high risk groupings and classifications underlying public health models of disease. In effect, the notion of tribe reemerged solely on the basis of sexual behaviors. It is precisely due to this ethnographic "borrowing" why so many believe that the major way in which anthropology has contributed to the study of sex and sexuality during the AIDS era has been to either directly or indirectly define the parameters of "risk groups" (Kane and Mason 1992; Patton 1990, 1992; Treichler 1992). Packard and Epstein (1991) have linked the theoretical and substantive direction of AIDS research in Africa as the continuation of a long-standing historical pattern of Western approaches to disease causation and prevention on the continent. They point out that previous approaches to the spread and prevention of both tuberculosis and syphilis were based largely upon behavioral theories concerning the "maladjustment of Africans," patient "default," and moral weakness associated with the breakdown of traditional social structures. Epidemiology and public health have long been used to legitimate what has often been a blatant social critique of African morality and cultural integrity. In this way, AIDS research has simply followed a general pattern of studying infectious disease in Africa whereby Africans are continuously reconstructed as the quintessential "other" (e.g., see Comaroff 1993).

2.) Idealist/cultural vs. historical/economic explanations

A second major theme characterizing the anthropological critique of AIDS research in Africa surrounds an internal division among social scientists themselves. The division can be traced back to social theory in general and the "sides" are easily recognizable. But as social scientists become increasingly involved with the AIDS epidemic in Africa, older, entrenched differences become reestablished in a new context. One of the two sides making up this division is defined by an emphasis on cultural meanings and ideology, particularly with respect to sexuality and sexual behavior, as the key means of understanding the spread and prevention of AIDS in Africa. They argue that this area is where the greatest contributions of anthropologists lie and that it is here where they should focus their attention. The second of the two sides is made up by an opposing group who argue that the African AIDS epidemic is best understood by focusing on the history of economic development on the continent. The creation of a labor system and an export-oriented economy by colonial administrations (particularly the British in East and Central Africa) created conditions for the uncontrolled spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

Another division often crosscuts the more fundamental split between idealist/cultural and historical/economic explanations. It is defined best by those who emphasize a generic, macro-level framework for situating the African AIDS epidemic and those favoring a more local, micro-level explanation of social context. While the former provides an easier means for cross-cultural comparisons, hypothesis testing, and perhaps a more workable bridge between epidemiological and social perspectives on the epidemic, it may lack the true ethnographic perspective associated with the local social context, which better highlights the cultural nuances and regional social and cultural differentiation typical of many African countrys. As with the biases embedded in a biomedical/epidemiological discourse, the divisions that define social models regarding the African AIDS epidemic point to powerful preconceptions, though internally-based and embedded almost exclusively within social science theory and method.

John Caldwell and Pat Caldwell have co-authored a series of influential and widely cited articles that best represent a framework for understanding the African AIDS epidemic that is based on the wide-scale application of cultural meanings and belief systems (Caldwell et al 1989; Caldwell et al 1991; Caldwell et al 1992). Their main thesis was originally laid out in detail in a 1989 article in which they proposed "a distinct and internally coherent African system embracing sexuality, marriage, and much else..." (p.187). The "African system" they described was situated exclusively in the realm of ideology and included, among other things, a pan-African emphasis on the importance of ancestry, descent, and fertility, a strong relationship between virtue and reproduction, a weak marriage bond, and the value placed on polygamy. Unlike Western cultural systems, the African system did not raise religious or moral issues around sex and sexuality. It accounted for sexual transactions in just the opposite fashion by viewing them in "as equally normal [a way] as those relating to work" (p.203). The Caldwells' have further argued that the "system" has remained largely intact despite external influences such as colonial rule and market penetration. As a result, Africans generally have a different ideological perspective on sexual relations; a perspective which easily lends itself to multiple sexual partners and sexual networking. For the Caldwells, a pan-African ideological view of sex ultimately explains the current high prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS.

Despite the obvious pitfalls related to sweeping generalizations of belief systems, the Caldwells' work did highlight the misleading uses of "prostitute" and "promiscuity" in the African context, as well as the need to focus on women's economic dependency on men. Though the two subsequent articles in 1991 and 1992 attempted to correct somewhat the pan-African framework of the earlier piece, the Caldwells' focus retained its fundamentally idealist, macro-level framework. Perhaps because of its simplicity and explanatory power, their work has become one of the most widely cited within the African AIDS literature by social scientists and epidemiologists alike.

The Caldwells' approach to the AIDS epidemic in Africa has been extensively critiqued by Charles Hunt (1996). Hunt questions the Caldwells use of a coherent and historically stable idealist/cultural model to explain an "African sexuality." He suggests that an economic and historical model is more applicable precisely because it integrates various levels of analysis. This theme is expanded upon by Packard and Epstein (1991) who also view much of the social science literature on the African AIDS epidemic as overemphasizing macro-level cultural meanings:

> ...much of the work on sexual behavior and AIDS in Africa has focused almost exclusively on CULTURE and ignored wider patterns of social and economic development that may be affecting these patterns. Moreover, it posits culture as a conservative force which determines behavior patterns, rather than as the means by which people mediate experience. It thus implicitly denies that cultural values are protean and are themselves shaped by changing patterns of social and economic development. [pp.793-94; emphasis in the original]

In this light, the critique of the cultural meaning approach has less to do with examining those meanings then with situating them in their broader social and economic contexts. In doing so, the social fragmentation and regional disparity caused by vast differences in economic development and which characterize so many African nations are taken into account. But what is the main feature or unifying issue regarding this "context" that these authors suggest is most appropriate for examining the AIDS epidemic, particularly in East and Central Africa? Moreover, how can it be defined so as to effectively integrate different levels of analysis, particularly with respect to wide disparities found in prevalence rates across such a vast and diverse region? The answer to these questions is strikingly similar for most researchers: the migrant labor system.

Though many authors, including the Caldwells, have discussed the relationship between migrant labor and the spread of AIDS in East and Central Africa (deZalduondo et al 1989; Standing 1992; Siedel 1993; Decosas et al 1995) it is Hunt, in a number of thesis and publications who has most fully developed the "migrant labor theory" (1988; 1989; 1996). He focuses on the

extensive migrant labor system in East Africa as an outgrowth of the post World War II efforts on the part of the British Colonial Government to establish East and Central Africa as a vast cash crop producing, export-oriented region linked to the demands and fluctuations of an international market system. AIDS researchers like Hunt who favor the migrant labor theory have suggested that this pattern of economic development (or underdevelopment as many have suggested) has caused the traditionally strong African family to break down over time. This was particularly the case in East Africa where massive areas were designated as either migrant labor "reserves" or migrant labor "concentrations." Family members were split apart as some stayed in the reserves (predominantly rural areas) in order to maintain the family farm while others migrated to labor concentrations (usually cities but also large-scale agricultural plantations) to enter the wage labor force. The cities, or migrant labor concentrations, became places where prostitution exploded and multiple sexual relationships increased dramatically due to the gradual abandonment of traditional customs and social sanctions regarding sex. Under colonial rule, it was predominantly the males who migrated to town while their wives were left behind, which resulted in large urban concentrations of men who were "serviced" by a smaller pool of sexually active women. Over the last several decades, however, the male to female ratios in urban East Africa have changed as more and more single and divorced women have migrated to these areas (Lugalla 1995; Tripp 1997). But the causal factors for the spread of HIV/AIDS have remained the same and are radically different than those postulated by the Caldwells':

> A materialist analysis would assert that the weakening of the family, the increase in importance of the lineage bond over the marriage bond, the relatively high number of sexual partners and other consequences result from the economic and labor markets, not from ideas of culture in people's heads. [Hunt 1996:1294]

According to the migrant labor theory, the high prevalence of AIDS in East Africa's urban centers is a reflection of its developing labor markets, as are the comparatively low prevalence found in rural areas. The same principles apply on a wider scale since the migrant labor system

was most fully developed in East and Central Africa – exactly those areas where AIDS prevalence rates are highest. In this way, Hunt and others view the migrant labor thesis as an effective bridge between different levels of analysis. At a macro level, it is easier to correlate migrant labor concentrations and reserves with AIDS prevalence rates throughout the African continent. Though alternative explanations can be postulated for those regions where the migrant labor theory seems to break down, Hunt conveys the impression that these areas are few and far between. The migrant labor thesis also has predictive value since it is theoretically possible to model the AIDS epidemic in Africa based on trends in the labor market and the economy. At the same time, it is also possible to examine the micro-level details of migrant labor concentrations and reserves in individual countries, as Hunt himself did with Uganda (1989).

Despite its advantages, the economic/historical model of the African AIDS epidemic based on the migrant labor theory also has its share of faults. Hunt's definition of the "micro-level" as migrant labor reserves and concentrations falls vastly short. But there is a more fundamental problem than that associated with level of analysis. In its extreme form, and Hunt himself may provide the best example of this, the migrant labor thesis undermines rather than incorporates cultural meanings surrounding sex/sexuality. As a result, Africans are portrayed as mere pawns of an international market system incapable of making and enacting informed decisions about sex, which once again leads to issues of blame and stigma. In so far as the migrant labor theory does incorporate cultural meaning and belief systems, it often does so by means of a misleading rural-urban dichotomy. This dichotomy may be the most explicitly expressed criticism of the migrant labor thesis (deZalduondo et al 1989; Vail 1989; Packard and Epstein 1991; Shoepf 1991). Questions surround the means by which the migrant labor thesis depicts or implies urban areas as the only places where Africans undergo change and "modernization" while the rural village is viewed as an ahistorical bastion of tradition, morality, and sexual restraint.

Standing (1992) provides an interesting historical insight into the notion of the "modern" urban and the "traditional" rural African by suggesting that they are ideas having as much to do with a paradigm change in anthropology as with historical reality. She suggests that as anthropologists concentrated on urban Africa and African townsmen during the 1950's and 1960's, they often assumed or implied that a "breakdown" of traditional sanctions was occurring in the city (while Standing specifically mentions the works of Southall 1961, Little 1973, and Muga 1980, there are earlier examples such as Gluckman 1942; Turner 1957; and Watson 1958). In this light, anthropologists followed administrators by viewing urbanization as a particularly divisive threat to the social fabric of African society and by implicating sexual behavior as a powerful manifestation of this degenerative process. The urban African was viewed as unfettered, capricious, and above all else, a "problem" requiring administrative discipline. Within the bounds of anthropology at the time, it was a perspective at least partly written as a critique of structural-functionalism and its tendency to depict everything, including sexual behavior, as rule-governed, adaptive, and as operating somewhere beyond individual control. While structural-functionalism approached sexual behavior as functionally embedded in initiation rites, marriage patterns, and ideologies of fertility, the new focus implicated sexual behavior as a symbol of the changing African scene and the emerging market economy. The break with structural-functionalism was not fully complete, however, since there was a continued preoccupation with African sexual behavior as a universal adaptive response, albeit to the new and challenging environment of the city. Sex continued to be framed as an outcome of larger patterns of behavior, themselves based on shifting theoretical perspectives.

The anthropological perspective on Africans as transitioning between their respective cultural traditions and an "urban lifestyle" was also not without its political implications, since it was deeply embedded in the detribalization debates[2] between colonial officials of the time. The "tribe-less" urban African and the sexually promiscuous African became one and the same, together representing the bane of colonial authorities who sought to limit urban growth at all costs

and continue a long-standing support of the agricultural, cash-crop sector. It was also no secret that the cities were the seats of political unrest and represented a direct threat to colonial rule. In this light, and as Standing (1992) suggests, it was no coincidence that the administrative "problem" of urban growth in colonial East Africa coincided with a developing anthropological perspective highlighting the breakdown of African societal structures. The emphasis on the declining sexual morality among urban Africans became a rallying point for the evils of African urbanization that held possible sway over rural Africans. In the process, the quality of "ruralness" became historically linked with a "traditional" African sexuality predicated on moral restraint and social sanctioning. By the same token, social pressures were depicted as either absent or as in such a state of flux in the city that the urban African became virtually uncontrollable, suddenly free to pursue a path of unleashed desire and sexual exploration.

Much of the work conducted by urban anthropologists in East Africa during the 1950's and 1960's – together with its presumptions of an African sexuality based on an underlying rural-urban dichotomy - has been resurrected in the AIDS era in the form of the migrant labor thesis. Hunt (1996) himself acknowledges that much of the work on migrant labor in East Africa is simply outdated. It has become a damaging criticism to the migrant labor theory since the theory itself inherently relies on historical trends in the labor market. If these trends are not taken into account, current prevalence rates of HIV tend to be used as an empirical mirror to reflect the "reality" of a spatial dichotomy portrayed in work dating as far back as the 1950's and 1960's. In the end, the reification of past theoretical paradigms and preconceptions are as general and as misleading as a macro-level model predicated on a pan-African ideological system. Thus, an historical understanding of the shifting theoretical paradigms surrounding African sexuality as well as their "uses," political and otherwise, has become a strong warning against the uncritical citation of past work. As Standing (1992) suggests: "All studies must therefore be read interpretively rather than simply descriptively" (p.476).

While some social scientists have relied too heavily on African culture writ large as a means of framing the context of the AIDS epidemic, others have erred by pointing to economic factors and historical trends to the exclusion of meanings and belief systems. Perhaps the greatest error has been the absence of a sustained effort to bridge the gap between these approaches. There is little attention from either side to the everyday (re)production of cultural meanings surrounding sex and sexuality against a background of economic development and social differentiation. It is doubtful whether any of the authors mentioned thus far would believe that any one social model could effectively frame the African AIDS epidemic. Most would in fact favor a bridge between what is an entrenched division within the social sciences in general and what is rapidly becoming so in anthropological approaches to AIDS in Africa. Before addressing this problem here, however, there is a third and final theme of the anthropological critique that should be discussed.

3.) Womens' experiences of sex and sexuality as an issue of development

Due to the predominance of a heterosexual transmission route of HIV/AIDS in Africa, the role of women in its spread and prevention has obviously not been ignored (Shoepf 1988; Caldwell et al 1989; Van de Walle 1990). As Siedel (1993) points out, however, it is the simplistic focus by AIDS researchers on women, including the ways in which they are targeted in prevention efforts, that has become increasingly problematic. AIDS research in Africa has developed an extremely narrow focus by targeting *subsets* of women based on specified high risk behavioral traits. These practices have led to the wide and liberal use of the term "prostitute," the problematic definition of which in the African context has been widely discussed (Shoepff 1988; Caldwell et al 1989; deZalduondo et al 1989; Shoepf 1991; Standing 1992; Ulin 1992). The "prostitute problem" may in fact be the clearest example of the pitfalls associated with the epidemiological practice of labeling high risk groups in Africa, since it largely neglects both the social context and cultural meanings surrounding sex and sexuality – in this case from the woman's perspective - and tends to reinforce Western notions of African promiscuity as well as

strong gender disparities in African society. As a result, AIDS research has done very little justice to the precarious position of African women – particularly in the urban environment - who have less access to resources than do men and are often targeted by males as scapegoats for the spread of HIV/AIDS (Shoepf 1991).

Some anthropologists have suggested that rather than attempt to delineate clear boundaries between prostitutes and other women in Africa, a perspective should be developed that would treat women in general as a class at risk (Schoepf 1988; Standing 1992; Ulin 1992; Ntozi 1997). They highlight a specific need for an analysis that situates sex and sexuality against a background of economic development and the control of material resources. Social scientists would thus be free from the identification and control of prostitutes and the implications of an associated African promiscuity. The focus would shift to situating sexual relations and the ways in which these relations are interpreted in a material/economic context and highlight where and how women face particularly difficult economic conditions and do not have the same access to resources as men. Women's material dependency on men is a common theme in *some* areas of Africa and it is against the experiential backdrop of poverty that a wide variety of casual and informal (but very strategic) sexual relationships seem to occur.

At the same time, however, and as anthropologists have long pointed out (see for example, Ogbu 1970), it must be kept in mind that women's sexual-economic dependency on men is not an "African attribute" by any means and, in some cases women have a very high economic status (such as in West African societies like the Dahomey, Igbo, and the Yoruba). Therefore, to treat all women in Africa as a class at risk has obvious problems and, in some ways, seriously obscures other issues. Sexual-economic dependency may be more common in specific areas and under certain conditions, such as in East Africa where widow inheritance and the levirate are common among many patrilineal societies and undermine a woman's economic position.

Keeping these qualifiers in mind, then, it seems fruitful to follow researchers' suggestions regarding a continuum of sexual services ranging from casual sex with one man (who may or may not be married to another woman) in exchange for a variety of short and long term material demands, to professional prostitutes who survive solely as the result of sex with any man who is willing to pay a set price (McGrath 1992; Ulin 1992). Since the former may be the reality for most women in Africa who face particularly difficult economic conditions, casual and informal sexual relationships would then be viewed along a continuum of economic survival strategies:

> Everywhere women engage in a variety of self-employed income-generating occupations such as food processing, petty trade, sewing, and market gardening. While some (generally those with family capital and connections) succeed, most remain impoverished. Successful women traders may exchange sex for permits and other resources to increase their profits. Even elite women may be required to provide sex as a condition of employment and promotion. Some poor women supplement inadequate incomes by providing occasional sexual services. Although the actual monetary value of such exchanges may be extremely low, they are needed to support poor households. [Shoepf 1988:628]

Whatever the woman's status and the degree to which she participates in multiple sexual relationships and exchange transactions, an awareness of womens' positions in Africa immediately places gender issues at the center of inquiry, particularly as it relates to economic development issues and urban poverty. While it also retains a focus on rural-urban migration, it is more contemporary one that recognizes how women play an equal if not greater role than men.

It is also necessary to focus on the sexual decision making process and how it relates to the (re)production of new identities and shared meanings. It thus becomes important to recognize how women themselves interpret and classify sexual relationships, and how these meanings conform or conflict with the ways in which men interpret them, as well as how they relate to different government agencies, "gatekeeper" organizations, and other manifestations of power

and potential influence (including AIDS researchers). The wider material and economic context is being proposed as the relevant background in which to situate the changing *meanings* attached to sex and sexuality by women in many parts of Africa (Ulin 1992). This entails a focus on how sexual meanings are constructed, defined, and changed by women against a background of developmental exploitation *and* potential and existing empowerment. The latter is important to keep in mind since women in Africa have historically had and continue to have resources at their disposal, the most notable of which in urban areas have been the various informal social networks that revolve around economic co-operatives and material exchange groups (this process is important, particularly it's relationship to the concept of "poverty," and will be discussed in more detail at a later point in this work). At the present time, however, AIDS researchers have only begun to key into these networks as sites for new interpretations of sexuality centering on economic metaphors and the exchange value of sex for survival needs (Ulin 1992).

An emphasis among AIDS researchers on womens' "survival sex" in the urban environment cannot remain a strictly materialistic explanation. As DeZalduondo and Bernard (1995) make clear, economic influences remain an incomplete way to explain sexual behavior. While most agree that economic pressures remain fundamental, material resources may compete with the need to display "appropriate" and "respectable" behavior to neighbors, friends, and family. An "experience-near" approach to sexual behavior is required that would emphasize the construction of moral practices and personal/group identity in specific situations. Women's changing attitudes towards casual sex, marriage, and freedom from male control may also be strongly associated with an increasing number of husbandless women who are migrating to urban areas — particularly in East Africa — and who view the city as an "escape" from particularly difficult and possibly gender-biased conditions in the village. As urbanization occurs among husbandless women, their entire lives are disrupted in a variety of ways. Because AIDS researchers have largely ignored gender disparities in the migration experience, however, this phenomenon has been ignored by the adoption of a male-centered perspective:

> The social science literature documents sexual behavior change when men migrate from rural communities to urban industrial areas and mining settlements. On the other hand, there has been very little study of sexual norms among the women who remain behind, or among women who migrate out to urban and periurban environments, whether alone or in a couple relationship or nuclear family. [Ulin 1992:70]

Such a male bias relates to decades-old assumptions that most women living in the city are dependent migrants (Reh and Ludwar-Ene 1995). The result then, as now, has been to paint a rather simple picture: men migrate to the city to follow the money and women — depicted as either dependent migrants or prostitutes when they are mentioned — follow the men or stay behind in the rural village. It remains somewhat of a mystery as to why these assumptions have survived intact despite the fact that anthropologists like Aidan Southall (1961) recognized quite early that East African towns were attractive destinations for husbandless and independent women (see also Glazer Schuster 1979).

A final missing element regarding sex and sexuality among women in Africa is an examination of their personal risk assessment for HIV/AIDS. While this may prove radically different than the ways in which it is defined by men as well as by AIDS researchers and prevention organizations, the criteria by which risk construction takes place among women remains a neglected area of research. It's importance is becoming more apparent in part because of the deteriorating economic position of women throughout Africa and the consequences this may have for their sexual decision making. It is also obvious that externally imposed prevention messages based on an increased knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission routes have not lead to substantial changes in behavior for either men or women.

New directions: refocusing the anthropological perspective

When suggesting new directions for anthropological AIDS research in sub-Saharan Africa, Shoepf (1991) argues that the epidemic should be thought of as a unique window on the dialectic between social structure and agency. She does so with the full understanding that the

ultimate goal entails a focus on the role of anthropology with respect to prevention efforts, rather than the epidemics potential for illuminating theoretical problematics. But her point is that theory and applicability should not be separated from one another. Bridging the divide between theory in anthropology and its methodological usefulness to AIDS prevention efforts begins by recognizing that it is a divide worth bridging in the first place. This awareness becomes even more pertinent when realizing that the gap between theory and method with respect to African AIDS research has been reinforced by epidemiology and its strong influence on the course of anthropological inquiry. Shoepf's basic warning is that anthropologists should not abandon their theoretical roots in an attempt to become "more applied" when doing AIDS research. Packard and Epstein (1991) echo this sentiment when they suggest that anthropologists must act "in between" dominant discourses rather than be subsumed by any one. Standing (1992) describes the potential contributions of anthropologists best by what amounts to a return to the fundamentals:

> The particular value of anthropological accounts to the study of sexual behavior lies in two critical elements of anthropological analysis - the stress on understanding the meanings attached to behavior, and the importance of contextualising social practices as part of the wider social, economic and political environment. [p477]

By focusing on the dialogue between cultural meanings and social context, anthropologists can ultimately highlight the *conditions in which individuals and groups enact risk.* This would allow researchers and others to suggest and implement programs that address both the relevant context within which risk is enacted as well as the ways in which meanings surrounding risk and sexual decision making are (re)produced.

Part of the significance of Standing's remarks is the way in which she turns the anthropological perspective on the connection between the social construction of risk and ideas surrounding "sexual exchange:"

> What is needed is to develop, for a given context, a theory of sexual exchange which can account for the circumstances under which individuals exchange particular kinds of resources for sex and the terms upon which these are exchanged. This would allow non-material, marital, extra-marital and commercialized sexual exchanges to be understood in relation to each other as part of the wider spectrum of exchanges between the sexes. [p479]

Standing reiterates that for any study of risk and sexual exchange to have a true anthropological perspective it must highlight: 1) cultural knowledge to supply meaning and; 2) social knowledge to supply context.

A theoretical framework surrounding risk and sexual exchange would allow anthropologists to move away from a strictly epidemiological focus on artificially defined "risk groups" and "risk behaviors" and toward what might better be viewed as "situated risk perspectives" in which multiple risk constructions (and related management techniques) come into play and have a differential impact upon specific individuals/groups. With this in mind, such a framework could be more clearly focused by taking into account the specific themes of the anthropological critique of AIDS research in Africa. It may be best to review the main features of that critique now. They include the following issues:

- an overwhelming dominance of a biomedical discourse involving a narrow focus on epidemiological "risk groups" and associated "risk behaviors." This process tends to isolate sexual practices and meanings surrounding risk from their social and cultural context. An epidemiological paradigm has been so dominant within AIDS research in Africa that it has shaped the perspectives and approaches that anthropologists have adopted. The result is that few are actually doing the "anthropology of AIDS;"
- social scientists who do examine the social and cultural context of the African AIDS epidemic have tended to reify a false dichotomy between cultural meaning and economic context. As yet, there have been few attempts to bridge the two approaches;

- few social scientists attempt to integrate micro and macro level perspectives in their explanatory frameworks, leaving them either too broad to be applicable to specific communities and/or contexts or too narrowly focused to be incorporated into prevention efforts in a relevant and widespread manner;
- there has been a significant lack of attention to the experiences and perspectives of women regarding sexual decision making, particularly as these are situated in a wider context of economic development and male-dependency. Urbanization and the migration experience are processes of economic (under)development notable for an absence of womens' perspectives. This is particularly troubling given the rapid influx of husbandless women to East African cities who face economic peripheralization, social stigma, and generally live under extraordinarily harsh conditions

Based on these issues, a theory of sexual exchange could be tailored to fit the specific situation and needs in African AIDS research. It would best serve these purposes if it were to focus on the following issues:

- the reasons behind urbanization and how the rural-urban transition is meaningfully experienced by husbandless women;
- how husbandless women adopt urban survival strategies and how sexual behavior and sexual identity become implicated in this process;
- the ways in which husbandless women enact and define risk and how they specifically assess their own risk for HIV/AIDS;

While these issues begin to define a more substantive area for the application of an anthropological perspective, they do not address the theoretical roots of that perspective. To reiterate Shoepf's warning, anthropologists should not be tempted to abandon their theoretical roots in their quest to churn out "applied" AIDS research. However, a more detailed framework must be defined around a specific, catalyzing issue that goes beyond the generalized and rather

vague anthropological rhetoric entailed in "cultural meaning" and "social context." While *risk* is an issue that runs throughout the anthropological critique of the African AIDS literature, it is rarely discussed to its fullest extent and in terms of its theoretical underpinnings. Thus, the following chapter provides an extensive review of the theoretical approaches to risk and situates the specific approach adopted here. In doing so, it addresses the main elements of the anthropological critique (many of which run throughout the risk literature in one form or another) and provides a more detailed framework for exploring issues surrounding the social and cultural construction of risk and the sexual exchange practices of husbandless women.

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[1] It must be recognized that data on the AIDS epidemic in Tanzania are broad, patchy, potentially outdated and considerably less reliable when the focus is on many of the areas outside of the Northwestern section of the country (entailing the regions of Kagera and Mwanza).

[2] In anthropology, the "detribalization" debates were most evident in the work of Godfrey and Monica Wilson ([1945] 1968) and Philip and Iona Mayer (1971). The Wilson's saw African culture as "breaking down" in the city as it transitioned from a pure primitive state to a pure civilized state. They felt that a new immorality characterized urban Africa as it made this transition and that the only way to bring it under control was to control the pace of change, an idea that fit quite well with colonial ideology.

The Mayers saw things differently and defined rural, tribal life as one in which norms were prescribed and statuses ascribed and urban, modern life as one where individuals had a tremendous amount of opportunity and statuses were largely achieved. In their study of town-dwelling Xhosa in East London, Cape Province, South Africa, they viewed both "types" as existing simultaneously and attributed much of the difference to a matter of personal choice.

The work of the group of anthropologists at the Rhodes Livingston Institute provides a different perspective on the issue. Gluckman (1955; 1958) and Mitchell (1960; 1966) were leading members of this group who viewed urban Africans as workers being drawn into a larger, world economy. They also felt that tradition was redefined in the new urban context and rejected the sharp distinction between traditional and modern life. They were acutely conscious of the class divisions between African laborers and the more privileged Europeans. The problems stemming from these divisions were much more of an issue than a distinction between traditional and modern life.

CHAPTER TWO: RISK

We wanted to see everything our eyes would accommodate, to think what we could, and, out of our seeing and thinking, to build some kind of structure in modeled imitation of the observed reality. We knew that what we would see and record and construct would be warped, as all knowledge patterns are warped, first, by the collective pressure and stream of our time and race, second by the thrust of our individual personalities. But knowing this, we might not fall into too many holes – we might maintain some balance between our warp and the separate thing, the external reality. The oneness of these two might take its contribution from both. [John Steinbeck, from the introduction to *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*]

Smoking probably does not lead to suicide or being murdered – nor is it likely that owning the Judy Garland Live at the Carnegie Hall record causes AIDS. However, it is likely that epidemiological studies would reliably identify these apparent menaces. [Excerpt from an article[1] in *The Lancet*]

Introduction

It is clear that risk has become a central concept in today's world. In the context of AIDS, rapid globalization, urbanization, and dramatic social and economic changes, risk effectively captures the instability and uncertainty that increasingly characterizes everyday life. In the wake of these developments, tradition and historical continuity are no longer givens and individuals feel more at risk than ever before. At the same time, scientific and technological advances heighten the ability of experts to "discover" new risks, which seem to converge upon the individual from every imaginable source. Entire industries have developed around risk as expert systems of knowledge, public perception, and individual action are defined by various risk constructions that may not always conform to one another or to the rapidly changing conditions within which they were initially produced.

As risk becomes a significant structuring principle in society and awareness grows of its often competing and contradictory constructions and manifestations, a variety of approaches have developed to better understand risk perceptions and behavior. The study of risk in this sense is a relatively recent phenomenon and is both a part and a result of its increasing role in late modernity. Most major approaches have arisen only within the last twenty years. While many contribute unquestioningly to the hegemonic interests and structures of power associated with a growing risk industry, others focus on risk in order to critique those same structuring processes.

In the end, the various approaches to risk often seem as varied and contradictory as the many manifestations of the concept itself.

This chapter begins by reviewing the major approaches to risk. It should be noted that others have provided similar reviews of the "risk literature" (Johnson 1987; Renn 1992; Lupton 1999a; Lupton 1999b). While previous classifications of the major approaches to risk do not always correspond exactly, they are also surprisingly similar and a general pattern emerges that effectively defines several distinct approaches. The classifications presented here are similar in many respects and are meant to provide a very broad typology of risk approaches. In the end, however, some approaches are more "obvious" and cohesive than others. Moreover, the focus of any one study and/or author often overlaps with several approaches. Given these admonitions, five general approaches to risk are defined and reviewed here: 1) Rational actor approaches; 2) Mary Douglas' cultural theory; 3) the risk society approach of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck; 4) governmentality approaches; and 5) lived experience approaches. Following a discussion of the major approaches to risk, the present study is situated with respect to the main ideas of each one. While it is most closely related to the lived experience and governmentality approaches, each has some fundamental problems. In order to address these problems in this study, a brief detour is made through the ethnographic literature the it's use of the concept of "conjuncture." The final section of the chapter incorporates the concept in order to outline an approach to risk based on the idea of a "risk conjuncture."

Rational Actor Approaches to Risk

Over the past half century, a variety of approaches to risk have developed around the fundamental idea of a hyper-conscious, economically motivated, rational actor. The general aim of this body of work has been to highlight and explain the different perceptions produced by two mutually exclusive sites — experts and the general public — by focusing almost exclusively on the public half of the equation. Particular effort is spent on the explication of what are often considered "peculiar" or "odd" characteristics of a generalized "public psyche" and how these

prevent the widespread dissemination and acceptance of "appropriate" and "objective" expert knowledge regarding risks. The approach can be distinguished further by its assumption that the public-expert "gap" can and should be overcome through improvements in the communication process. The belief is that the public will behave in a rational manner (i.e., in accordance with expert knowledge) if the appropriate information is somehow made to reach them. Overcoming an assumed public ignorance via the management of the communication process itself is a cornerstone of rational actor approaches to risk. Subsequently, the "risk status" of individuals stems from a combination of irrational "blocking" behaviors/perceptions and an inherent lack of "appropriate" knowledge. The overall approach is underlined by the assumption that individuals consciously weigh the costs and benefits associated with the information given to them.

Rational actor approaches are at the very heart of a diffuse yet powerful industry surrounding risk analysis, assessment, and management (or "RAM"[2] for short). RAM refers to an established industry/discipline with specific loci of power as well as the evolution of a general movement and/or perspective across a wide variety of disciplines over the past twenty to thirty years. The focus is on everything from the evaluation of technical hazards and public risk perceptions to a general concern with product safety. While there are particularly obvious manifestations of the movement itself, such as the Society for Risk Analysis (which publishes the journal *Risk Analysis*), RAM's true power is rooted in a more diffuse risk-oriented approach that continually legitimates expert sites of knowledge while simultaneously (re)producing a rational actor paradigm. In so doing, it reaches across numerous disciplines and substantive areas in a lateral-like fashion, bridging such established "expert" realms as the health sciences, engineering, economics, law, statistics and mathematical probability theory, psychology, communications theory, and even conservation biology (Clark 1980; Covello and Mumpower 1985; Carter 1995; Adams 1995:31). At some points, the RAM movement entails a broad focus on health issues, often couching these interests in such generalized terms as mortality rates, public safety, or simply the "public good." At other points, most notably with respect to clinical medicine and

public health, specific health risks and bodily processes are a central concern. Thus, specific disciplinary approaches to risk can be viewed as part of the broader RAM movement and the (re)production of a rational actor paradigm. In order to understand the elements of rational actor approaches, however, it is necessary to examine specific manifestations that inform and are informed by it. Three models will be singled out for extended discussion: 1) from psychology: Paul Slovic's "psychometric paradigm;" 2) from communications theory: Roger Kasperson's "social amplification/attenuation of risk;" and 3) from public health: the Health Beliefs Model (and related models).

Psychological models: the "psychometric paradigm"

The most significant psychological contributions to risk were first developed in the 1970's and 1980's and represent some of the earliest efforts on the part of the social sciences to understand public risk perception/behavior. Most of these models highlight the differences between "lay" and "expert" perceptions of risk by focusing on the various factors (or "biases") that influence public assessments of particular "types" of risk (Slovic et al. 1981; Vlek and Stallen 1981; Covello 1983; Jungermann 1986; Renn 1990; Denscombe 1993).

Paul Slovic is widely recognized as the leading figure in risk psychology. Over several key articles (Slovic 1987; 1992; 1993) he has defined a model of risk perception called the "psychometric paradigm." The purpose of the psychometric paradigm is to uncover the major characteristics that shape public risk perception through an elucidation of the expressed preferences for various kinds of risk/benefit trade-offs. The model quantifies and predicts public risk perceptions by developing a taxonomy of hazards that explain various reactions to different types of dangerous situations. Toward this end, it applies "psycho-physical scaling" and multivariate analysis in order to produce "cognitive maps" of risk attitudes and perceptions with respect to different hazard types and/or attributes. According to Slovic, the psychometric paradigm demonstrates how people relate the characteristics of a specific event (an accident at a nuclear power plant, for example) to personal judgments regarding cognitive/emotional properties

(such as dread, voluntariness, knowledge, controllability, etc.). For example, an individual's reaction to a specific type of hazard is explained by the degree to which it engenders feelings of dread or by how much personal control the individual feels she/he has over the situation. Slovic describes the approach as a type of "hazard profiling" (1992:121). As might be inferred, the results are rather broad:

> Among the most influential factors are the perception of dread with respect to the possible consequences; the conviction of having personal control over the magnitude or probability of the risk; the familiarity with the risk; the perception of equitable sharing of both benefits and risks; and the potential to blame a person or institution responsible for the creation of a risky situation. In addition, equity issues play a major role in risk perception (Renn 1992a:65).

Slovic and others often conclude that one of the most important factors to consider is the degree of trust people have in the *source* of risk communication (Wildavsky and Dake 1990; Slovic 1993). Simply put, the general public does not trust most sources of risk information. Slovic believes that most organizations/institutions have not effectively addressed the trust issue and draws upon this idea to explain the general failure of risk communication practices/programs.

A major limitation of the psychometric paradigm is its lack of attention to structural level factors. Curiously, this problem idea is brought to light by Slovic's own findings, which often point to the significance of peer influence in explaining why participants engage in risky activities (1992:136). He also finds differences in public risk perception according to such potential group/peer attributes as nationality, region of residence, gender, and changes over time (Slovic 1992). Using similar techniques, Denscombe (1993) also found that group/peer pressure was important, referring to the ways in which people are willing to make risky decisions in group situations as the "risky shift" (p511). Relatedly, and as Slovic (1992) himself points out, the model assesses cognitions (based on properties that are defined by the researchers themselves and

in relatively controlled studies) rather than actual behavior where such process as group/peer pressure seem particularly important.

The results generated by Slovic's psychometric paradigm undermine the very notion of hazard profiling and seem to point instead to the importance of cultural identity and group participation to public risk perception/behavior. However, his model is based on generalized behavioral responses attributed to a pervasive public psyche (Gabe 1995). Slovic continues to rely upon these assumptions despite acknowledging that risk may be a surrogate for other social or ideological concerns such as stigma and that cognitive responses like dread are not culturally universal (Slovic 1987, 1992). Despite proving severely limited in their capacity to explain this broader context, psychological approaches to risk continue to focus on hazard profiling under the general assumption that risk types/events trigger widespread public cognitions/emotions. While psychosoical theory is a closely related area that attempts to take into account the importance of group membership and peer influence, it has not proven effective in conceptualizing the full complexity of the social context (Barker et al 1998).

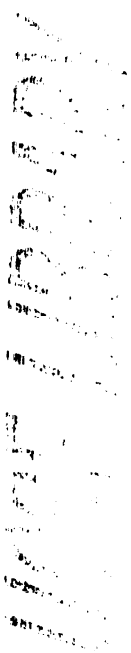
A further problem associated with Slovic's psychometric paradigm involves its reproduction of an irrational public bias when assessing risks. Efforts are directed entirely toward the construction of a widespread and pervasive public psyche in which rational behavior (presumably based on scientific assessments of risk events) is impeded and/or repressed by a set of distinctly irrational and emotional behavioral impediments. Moreover, it is assumed that a wholly intact rational actor, albeit obscured by these irrational "blockages," exists at the very core of that public psyche. The blockages must be recognized and managed through further expert involvement (which is where psychologists become an integral part) so the public will be free to weigh the costs and benefits of risks in an objective manner, thus becoming a perfect reflection of expert-defined behavioral imperatives. It is ironic that at the heart of the irrational public psyche, the biases of which must be systematically peeled away, lies a very rational and economically motivated actor.

Finally, the assumptions and skewed focus of Slovic's psychometric paradigm make it entirely unclear who benefits most from its analysis of risk. As Crawford (1997) notes, "evidence" that relates psychological states to resistance or susceptibility to disease, for example, can easily be used to shift more responsibility (and blame) to the individual. While Slovic views his approach as creating lines of communication between experts and the general public, it's extrapolation of individual cognitions and emotional responses to the level of generic public behavioral models (eventually being reapplied to individual cases) simply reinforces technical assessments of risk and the idea of a widespread public ignorance. These problems fly in the face of Slovic's suggestion that his ideas are best suited to the area of trust and toward addressing a growing crisis in public confidence regarding science, government, and industry (Slovic 1992). While the latter may be true, Slovic's model undermines the trust issue altogether by reinforcing the capacity of experts to be free of the irrational biases assumed to plague the general public. Distrust of experts becomes yet another irrational blockage to be peeled away through expert management.

Communications theory and information diffusion models: the social amplification/attenuation of risk

Another distinct area within the overall rational actor approach to risk centers on the diffusion of risk information. While diffusion models often highlight social and political features, they often do so in terms of the risk communication process only. The main objective is to illustrate the significance of information flow in shaping public risk perception. One of the key issues involves the role of the media and how it dominates public information avenues, sets agendas, and influences beliefs surrounding risk through selective coverage and the ways it relates issues, events, and images (Johnson and Tversky 1983; Nelkin 1989; Otway and Wynne 1989; Yardley et al 1997). One of the most detailed and widely discussed models involving the diffusion of risk information is Roger Kasperson's "social amplification and attenuation of risk" (see Kasperson 1992; and Kasperson and Kasperson 1996).

Kasperson first developed his model in the late 1980's. He based it on the idea that people interpret experiences of potential harm (or what he terms the "risk event") as these are filtered through various sites of risk communication. Without a doubt, the media is the most featured risk communicating site in Kasperson's work (though he does at least mention informal networks and institutions in this respect). Risk communicators act as stations for either risk amplification or attenuation, depending upon how they conceptualize the circumstances surrounding a particular risk event and how that coverage interacts with psychological, social, institutional, and cultural processes. In this way, risk communicators produce a kind of ripple effect after the original risk event which, in turn, act to either trigger or downplay demands for additional institutional responses. Thus, feedback mechanisms are an important part of Kasperson's model. As the behavioral responses to the original risk event are incorporated, feedback mechanisms also incorporate the various agendas and influencing factors of the institutions, groups, and organizations that respond to that event which, in turn, determines whether it will be amplified or attenuated.



Kasperson's model of risk amplification/attenuation is firmly rooted in a systems theory approach and his diagrams (he includes many throughout his work) are a complicated array of boxes and arrows illustrating the "flow" of information and the ways it shapes and defines public risk perception. His model effectively illustrates the unintended consequences that can follow an initial risk event at different levels (e.g., media coverage of the same risk event can trigger risk amplification at the local level but risk attenuation at the global level). It also demonstrates that media coverage does not always ensure substantial public concerns about risk or cause a significant amplification of a particular risk event. In fact, Kasperson believes that a unique arrangement of multiple elements must be in place before a risk event can "take off" in terms of public perception regarding its seriousness. Many of the elements that Kasperson highlights in this sense are remarkably similar to those discussed by Slovic and other psychologists (for example, the need for trust in institutions and the importance of specific "risk signals" that

facilitate the communication process). Subsequently, Kasperson's ideas can be viewed as working in conjunction with psychological approaches to risk; a combination which other researchers have found particularly effective (Yardley et al 1997). At the same time, however, Kasperson's model illustrates that properties like the degree of dread that a particular event evokes may not be inherent to the event itself, as Slovic seems to suggest, but to the type of coverage the event receives in the media. Despite these differences, however, information diffusion models such as Kasperson's social amplification/attenuation of risk work quite effectively with psychological models since they introduce an intermediary factor in the risk event-public response chain of causality.

Because information diffusion models like Kasperson's work so well in conjunction with psychological approaches to risk, they often suffer from the same problems. By not questioning expert constructions of risk in any way, Kasperson simply adds another factor – the media – to the long list of biases that plague the public half of an expert-public dichotomy. Furthermore, Kasperson attributes a high degree of importance to the media while ignoring and/or downplaying other potential sites of influence (though he does in fact mention some). Despite the centrality of media coverage to the model, it fails to question who has access to the media; which becomes particularly relevant when the model is applied to non-Western regions of the world. Kasperson also does not consider that the general public or specific segments of society may place less trust in the media than most other institutions, particularly groups who are deemed "at risk" and may be the most disenfranchised and peripheral segments of mainstream society. Since the model does not consider these issues, it contributes to the idea of a generic public psyche based on irrational responses to specific risk events, the details of which are now filtered through a similarly irrational media.

Kasperson's model also suffers from its strict adherence to systems theory. In this framework, risk always acts as a kind of external "insult" to the system itself and, as such, is constructed in a completely objective manner. Risk events never really derive from circumstances

or conditions that may characterize the system itself (poverty, for example), but are random, isolated events that come from somewhere outside of the system which then responds to them. The overall framework is much more attuned to well-defined environmental hazards such as tornadoes or floods. It is less effective in explaining risk "events" that are woven into the social fabric itself, particularly those that are routinized, daily occurrences like sexual decision-making and risk for AIDS. In this context, risk is difficult to define in terms of a specific and clearly delineated event. These problems are compounded by the assumption that it takes a specific and severely limited risk event to cause behavior change. This idea does not sit well with risk prevention efforts targeting routinized and taken-for-granted behaviors that may not have been experienced previously as "risky." For his part, Kasperson does not agree with the idea that the model objectifies and externalizes risk in this way and suggest the overall framework will prove effective by conveying the true complexity of feedback mechanisms (Kasperson 1992). Unfortunately, this complexity may lie with risks and societal risk constructions themselves and occur independently of media-centered feedback mechanisms.

Public health models: the Health Beliefs Model (and related models)

The assumptions behind rational actor approaches to risk are perhaps most evident in the public health arena, where it has been used in two distinct ways: 1) as a means of explaining individual health behavior; and 2) as a way to more effectively "target" public health resources. The former is most closely associated with the Health Beliefs Model while the latter informs such models as Health Risk Appraisal and the Risk Approach.

One of the most significant efforts of public health experts to understand health risk and related behaviors began in the 1960's with the development of the Health Beliefs Model (HBM). The model is so closely affiliated with a rational actor approach to risk that it adds nothing unique to its basic framework (something that could at least be attributed to Slovic's psychometric paradigm and Kasperson's risk amplification/attenuation model). Simply put, HBM examines health behavior in terms of subjective satisfaction and assumes that individuals consciously weigh

the costs and benefits of various bits of information regarding their personal risks to specific health outcomes. It is based on the idea that individuals will choose the most "appropriate" path as long as they are provided with the correct information (as defined by public health experts). HBM has evolved over the years, most notably by acknowledging external influences on individual perceptions of health risk, but it defines these as "barriers" and clearly implies that their influence results from various degrees of irrationality and/or ignorance. As a result, the various manifestations of the model have never questioned the most basic assumptions underlying the rational actor approach. It continues to base itself on a strict public-expert dichotomy and the conscious albeit notoriously irrational deliberations of individuals as they pursue subjective satisfaction. Renn (1992a) is correct when he describes the overall approach (somewhat graciously) as a "watered down" version of economic theory.

HBM is one of many public health models based firmly on rational actor approaches to risk. As pointed out, these models tend to be more similar than different and the explanatory power of each is severely limited by the simple fact that information does not necessarily lead to behavior change (Aggleton et al. 1994). The disjuncture between knowledge and behavior presents a glaring problem to the most fundamental assumption behind public health models surrounding risk, namely that individuals consciously amend their behavior in order to maximize health "profits" and minimize the potential for risk. The overall approach also places an extreme emphasis on the individual and is vulnerable to critiques highlighting a Western bias (Aggleton et al 1994). There is almost a complete lack of attention to such influential factors as the situatedness of behavior (particularly peer influences), the significance of self-efficacy in affecting behavior change (i.e., confidence that the desired behavior can and should be carried out), and the habitual, taken-for-granted character of many behaviors designated high risk by public health experts (Renn 1992a; Bloor 1995; Ogden 1995).

A second area where public health experts have adopted a rational actor approach to risk is grounded in efforts to effectively "target" health resources beyond the clinical context. The

relationship between risk and wider more comprehensive targeting strategies is perhaps most evident in two models: 1) Health Risk Appraisal; and 2) the Risk Approach.

In Health Risk Appraisal (HRA), individual characteristics are compared with data from population-based, epidemiological studies to project an individual's risk of death over some future time period (Hayes 1992). The objective is to reduce the chances of premature death through the modification of risky behaviors among individuals who do not necessarily have a health problem. The result is the diffusion of risk and risk management from the confines of the patient population to the wider realm of the general public. It also shifts the focus from intervention to prevention whereby the only requirement is the *potential* for a health risk to exist rather than the minimization of risk consequences associated with a previously experienced health episode/event. Proponents of HRA believe it can be used as a means of communication between "advisers" and "clients" (who more or less fill the same roles as doctors and patients) on the basis of "some sort of built-in hierarchy of targeted behaviors" (Spasoff and McDowell 1986:476). The belief is that modifiable and commodifiable "precursors" should be included as part of this hierarchy in order to motivate clients to work harder on factors that can and should be changed. The same authors suggest the need for cut-off values in order to know when to tell clients to go to a doctor and when to abort the client as such.

The Risk Approach (RA) involves the same principles and strategies as HRA, though it applies them on an even wider scale. RA attempts to maximize the deployment of public health resources in less developed countries on the basis of the distribution of risks in designated populations and the impact of various environmental hazards (Hayes 1992). Once again, the focus seems to be on the general public and specific, health-related events do not necessarily have to occur. As with HRA, the result is the diffusion of risk and risk management across the wider, non-clinical landscape based on the general assumption that the social body itself is in a constant state of danger.

RA suffers from the same basic problems as HRA (and HBM for that matter). Since it focuses on the developing world, however, RA can be critiqued for the degree to which it ignores cultural variables in its construction of risk, as well as a lack of attention to the significance of poverty and underdevelopment on the ways that risks are experienced and perceived. Together, public health models accomplish very little beyond the diffusion of technical assessments of risk across a generic human environment. In each case, risk-based decision making is constructed on the basis of conscious deliberations of subjective costs and benefits as individual actors pursue a narrowly defined set of interests based on health benefits only.

Summary comments

While there are differences between psychological, information diffusion, and public health models surrounding risk, they are minimal when compared to the overall similarities. Each of the models (and the disciplines with which they are most closely associated for that matter) rely heavily on various features of a rational actor approach to risk. Much of this reliance is rooted in a generic dichotomy between expert knowledge bases and the general public, together with an emphasis on a one-way, top-down communication of expert risk assessments. Table 2.1 (p.55) summarizes the general characteristics associated with rational actor approaches together with their contributions and limitations to the analysis of risk perceptions/behaviors. Clearly, negatives far outweigh any positive contributions. The models are a direct extension of expert assumptions regarding their ability to discover, define, and manage risk in an objective manner. They rely upon an exceptionally simplified communication process based on the subjugation of public irrationalities through the widespread diffusion of expert-defined knowledge. While the public psyche is decidedly irrational on the surface, the overall approach is built on the belief that a very rational, economically motivated actor exists at the heart of every individual (they have simply become obscured by cultural and environmental "baggage"). The means of liberating this rational actor is the communication process itself and the ability of experts to put enough "appropriate" information "out there." Together, these ideas reinforce and reproduce the neo-

Table 2.1: Key points of rational actor approaches to risk

1) General focus	• the "problems" of public awareness and acceptance of expert-defined risks
2) Sites for defining, managing, and ordering risks	• experts • public • popular media (occasional of interest as an intervening variable between experts and the general public)
3) Risk	
4) Degree and importance of risk objectivity	• risks are real (i.e., identifiable) and objective • directly important since the entire approach depends on the legitimacy of objective assessments of risk
b) Means by which expert sites generate risk information	• science/technology/advances in expert know-how and rationality
c) Value/role of expert risk information	• important in and of itself
d) Means by which non-expert sites generate risk information	• pervasive irrational and/or ignorant public psyche (a surface level) which masks the true self (a deeper level) characterized by a rational actor who consciously weighs the costs and benefits of risk information provided by experts
e) Value/role of non-expert risk information	• not important other than as barriers/obstacles to be overcome
f) Predictability of public risk perception	• highly predictable at surface (irrational) level because specific risks tend to cause specific responses ("risk profiling") • highly predictable at deeper (rational) level because individuals are assumed to act "correctly" when provided with expert knowledge
g) Relationship between expert and non-expert sites	• top-down, one-way imposition of objective knowledge from experts to general public
h) Where to focus	• communication process and the widespread diffusion of expert knowledge • building public trust in expert institutions
4) Positives	• trust issues (as a general idea) • significance of communication and information diffusion patterns (as a general idea)
5) Negatives	• pervasive, generic public-expert dichotomy • public behavior and risk perceptions viewed as an imperfect reflection of expert rationality • experts assumed to be immune to the biases affecting the general public • construction of a homogenous, uniform public psyche • lack of attention to actual behavior • overall Western bias • over-emphasis on experts' ability to manage communication process and information diffusion process

liberal, "hands-off" orientation associated with the RAM movement and create a self-perpetuating cycle in which risk, rationality, and blame circulate virtually unchecked.

Mary Douglas and Cultural Theory

Mary Douglas' work (1990; 1992; Douglas and Wildavsky 1982) represents one of the first significant attempts to move beyond rational actor approaches to risk. As an anthropologist, Douglas uses "cultural theory" to highlight the role of culture in determining public risk perceptions/behaviors. Specifically, she suggests that risk and blame are a central means of maintaining cultural identity as members of different groups compete with one another over various types of social and cultural resources. Douglas' ideas are often credited with taking an area dominated by generic constructions of a widespread public psyche based on individualistic, rational actor models and exposing it as a legitimate social and cultural phenomenon amenable to anthropological inquiry.

Douglas' work has become very popular and she is one of the most widely cited authors when it comes to the area of public risk perception. However, authors tend to highlight different aspects of her work while simultaneously ignoring or downplaying others. Specifically, anthropologists often focus on the underlying ideas associated with cultural theory while non-anthropologists (including many of the leading proponents of rational actor approaches) focus on its specific analytical framework or what Douglas calls "grid/group analysis." The result is a widespread citation of Douglas' ideas in support of what are often completely opposite approaches to risk. The selective use of Douglas' ideas not only explains cultural theory's popularity across a variety of disciplines and approaches to risk, but it also points to its most fundamental problems. This dual aspect of Douglas' work is an important point to keep in mind when examining its specific contributions to the field of risk.

Cultural theory is based on the fundamental premise that cultures organize themselves around dominant forms of explanations for danger and/or misfortunes (all of which Douglas more or less equates with risk). As Douglas views it, risk permeates the entire worldview of a culture

which in turn is made manifest in each culture's institutional organizations. She believes the institutionalized basis of public risk perception is so powerful that risk-based decisions inevitably reach individuals in the form of whether to reinforce or subvert institutionalized authority. This process is often necessary since multiple risks occur simultaneously and the potential for widespread uncertainty and ambiguity permeate daily life. The onus of choice is effectively shifted away from the individual and a barrage of particular issues to one involving group solidarity and adherence to all-encompassing institutionalized ideals. Risk and blame arise in this environment and are constructed in ways that either reinforce or denounce institutionalized ideals and/or specific group identities. For Douglas, then, inquiry regarding risk-based decision making should not focus on the individual but on institutions and at the level of the community. Individuals become either risk-taking or risk-averse according to a predictable pattern of dealings with various groups in the community.

The core feature of cultural theory involves a typology of community form, or what are often called "cultural prototypes" that allow researchers to accurately predict how individuals will think about risk. Put simply, cultural prototypes result from a combination of social organization and world view. In its strictest sense, researchers working within a cultural theory paradigm need only classify individuals according to one of five types of social organizations (though sometimes fewer). These include isolates/individualists, bureaucrats/hierarchies, entrepreneurs/competitive individuals, egalitarians/collectives, and hermits. In turn, each social organization corresponds with a specific worldview in which risk plays a central role. Douglas refers to her analytical approach as "grid/group analysis" because she defines the various combinations of social organization and world view according to a horizontal/vertical axis where the vertical dimension (or grid) indicates "degrees of autonomy" (i.e., the measure of constraints that bear upon members of that group) and the horizontal dimension (or group) indicates "degrees of incorporation" (i.e., group solidarity). The grid/group axis and the relationship between social organization and world view generates five cultural prototypes that allow researchers to

accurately predict the risk behavior of an individual according to his/her affiliation. The grid/group axis is often illustrated graphically (see figure 2.1 on page 59).

According to cultural theory, risk perception/behavior is not related to the rational decision-making processes of individual actors. Instead, it stems directly from an individual's cultural affiliation with a specific group. Social organizations and institutions tend to reinforce those risks that hold the moral, political, and/or religious order of a particular group together. If expert risk information does not seem to diffuse evenly (AIDS prevention efforts, for example), it is due to the differential value that is placed on that information with respect to group solidarity/identity. In other words, expert knowledge becomes caught up in a cultural struggle between the various types of social organizations as they maneuver for particular resources and strive to legitimate their particular worldview. Douglas frequently associates this process with Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) ideas surrounding "fields" of relations and their unequal endowments of both symbolic and economic capital.

Cultural theory has had its proponents over the years, though many have found it necessary to modify Douglas' original ideas. For example, Rayner (1992) suggests the five cultural prototypes should be thought of as existing simultaneously in the same institution or the same network of informal interactions between various groups and/or interested parties. Douglas herself has followed a similar line of reasoning, suggesting that any one prototype will have internal divisions that can be further classified in terms of the same prototypes (resulting in a type of nested effect). Other modifications that have been made include: incorporating the individual into cultural theory by infusing Douglas' work with the psychology of risk perception (Dake 1991); viewing the two axis of grid/group as a continuum rather than as discrete cosmologies (Johnson 1987; Bloor 1995); introducing of a temporal as well as a power element into the framework in order to account for shifting group affiliations and alliances (Bellaby 1990); and various methodological clarifications (Johnson 1987).

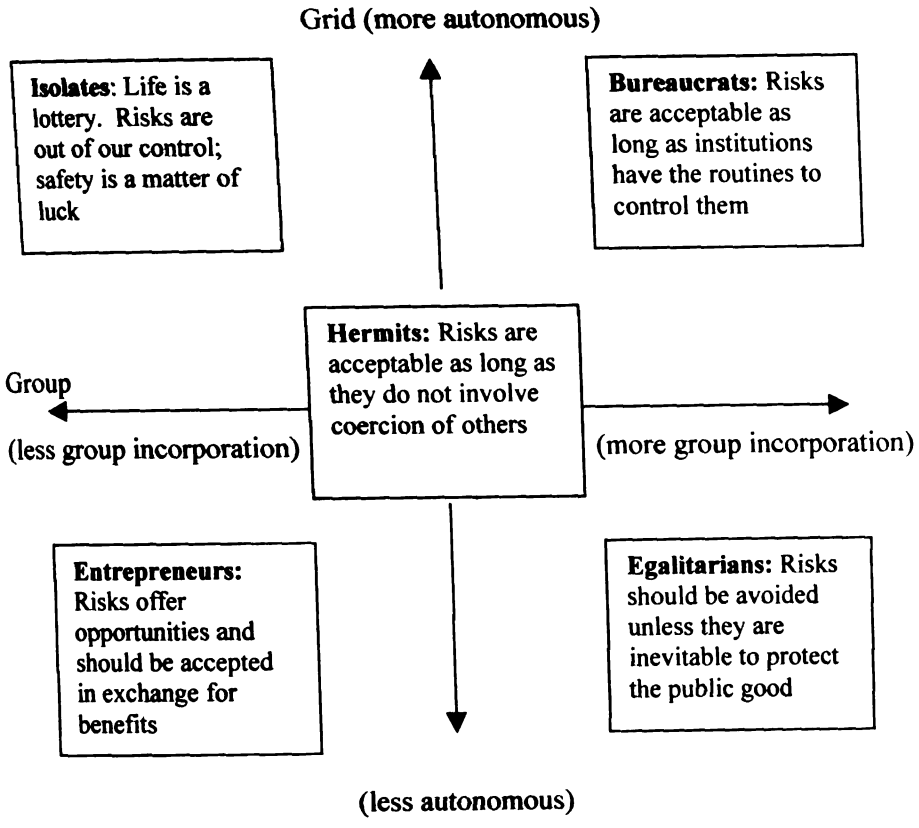


Figure 2.1: Grid/group axis of Mary Douglas' cultural theory

Despite attempts to smooth out the rough edges associated with cultural theory, the major problems remain intact. The structural and functional basis of the framework is difficult to deny. Worldviews and cultural meanings that involve risk are always assumed to serve some adaptive purpose, most notably the maintenance of the group itself. As with Bourdieu's ideas, Douglas' framework constructs a self-perpetuating cycle of normalization in which individuals are forever trapped by dominant structures of power. At some point, it seems that researchers either accept cultural theory as a particularly easy model with which to make predictions about culture and risk behavior or else denounce it as a hopelessly static and unrealistic theoretical construction that has very little to do with situated behavior. It seems that non-anthropologists (most notably rational actor theorists) fall into the former category while the latter is comprised by Douglas' fellow anthropologists, most of whom praise her general contributions yet seem disinterested with grid/group analysis.

The most significant criticisms of cultural theory are directed at its rigid typological classifications (Johnson 1992; Renn 1992a; Boholm 1996; Yardley et al 1997). Douglas' ideas fail to give full credit to the fact that individuals participate in different types of social organizations at different times and in particular contexts. Her cultural prototypes leave very little room for either behavior change and/or situated knowledge and thus undermine historical considerations as well as such factors as gender, ethnicity, education, income level, etc. In Douglas' case, the result is an overwhelming cultural determinism not unlike that attributed to the culture and personality studies that dominated anthropology during the 1940's and 1950's. As Boholm (1996) notes, Douglas characterizes a social group as obvious (despite long-standing theoretical debates surrounding these issues) and reduces culture to five distinct ways of life. Furthermore, she often collapses social organization into world view and it becomes difficult if not impossible to separate the two. The result is a pervasive and confusing tautology throughout her writings between social organizations and cultural meanings (Boholm 1996). Do individuals who avow individualist tenets, for example, actually live in social structures compatible with

those classifications? Furthermore, there is a vast difference between disclosing cultural categories as defined by the culture in which an individual exists and imposing, as Douglas' cultural theory does, preconceived and arbitrary constructs. Douglas also assumes that risk is *the* most central aspect in the formation and maintenance of group identity (or worldviews) and may be guilty of according too much value to risk in this respect. Moreover, her interest in predicting public risk perceptions and behaviors contributes to a tendency to apply cultural prototypes to the general public rather than to expert sites of risk knowledge/management, thus reinforcing the idea that the "cultural variable" affects the public half of the equation only. As with the public-expert dichotomy underlying rational actor approaches, Douglas' framework often assumes that expert and lay sites of risk knowledge operate in separate spheres.

Critics have pointed out a wide variety of other problems with cultural theory, including: an inconsistency with respect to the exact number of prototypes that are claimed to exist (Renn 1992a); the limited number of empirical attempts to apply Douglas' approach and the contradictory results of the few studies conducted (Johnson 1992; Gabe 1995); problematic and narrow definitions of world views in terms of risk and lack of focus on its coexistence with opportunities (Johnson 1992); and confusion as to whether or not the analytical target of cultural theory involves individuals, subgroups, nations, or something entirely different (Boholm 1996).

Summary comments

It is probably best to return to the dual aspect of Douglas' work when assessing cultural theory's contributions to the area of risk perceptions and behavior (see Table 2.2 on page 62 for a general summary of the key points associated with Cultural Theory). Clearly, her general ideas relating risk to cultural identity and group formation have taken the entire field into new and dynamic directions. Its basic premise has focused much needed attention on risk in terms of group processes, social institutions, and community interests (which ties risk into blame and other boundary-maintaining mechanisms). Douglas' ideas not only mark a fundamental shift in risk-related research from individualistic perceptions to what can truly be considered social

Table 2.2: key points of cultural theory

1) General focus	• the role of risk with respect to cultural identity and group formation
2) Sites for defining, managing, and ordering risks	• the five cultural prototypes (Isolates, Bureaucrats, Hermits, Entrepreneurs, Egalitarians) • (experts are often implied in Douglas' work as an objective sixth site who become caught up in the politics associated with the other five as soon as information is put "out there")
3) Risk	
a) Degree and importance of risk objectivity	• risks are real and objective • not directly important since non-expert responses to this information (which are central) do not depend on risk objectivity
b) Means by which expert sites generate risk information	• does not directly address this issue (though by not doing so it often implies expert rationality/objectivity)
c) Value/role of expert risk information	• not important in and of itself
d) Means by which non-expert sites generate risk information	• via a combination of social organization and cultural meanings that sustain group identity and maintain boundaries between groups (i.e., one of the five cultural prototypes)
e) Value/role of non-expert risk information	• extremely important toward understanding public risk perception
f) Predictability of public risk perception	• highly predictable since they occur with some regularity across the five cultural prototypes
g) Relationship between expert and non-expert sites	• expert information meets with unintended consequences as it is reappropriated within the institutional frameworks and community level social and cultural processes that maintain each cultural prototype • influence of non-expert responses/behaviors on expert sites is not examined
h) Where to focus	• typological classifications (via grid/group analysis) will help to predict risk behavior • relationship between risk and blame
4) Positives	• risk and cultural identity/group formation (as a general idea) • risk in terms of blame, stigma, taboo, etc.
5) Negatives	• the cultural determinism of grid/group analysis and the simplistic, limited number of cultural groups identified by Douglas • lack of attention to situated behavior/knowledge • centrality of risk to cultural world view is assumed • methodological inconsistencies • overemphasizes the role of risk as a structuring principle

constructions of risk, but they also expose the hegemonic character and unquestioning biases associated with rational actor models. In this broader sense, anthropologists and researchers from a wide variety of disciplines have drawn upon and benefited from cultural theory.

The major limitations of cultural theory stem from the specific analytical and methodological assumptions associated with grid/group analysis. Douglas consistently reduces cultural variation to a limited number of cultural prototypes and assumes that simplistic combinations of social organization and worldview directly determine risk perceptions/behaviors. Non-anthropologists often ignore the fact that the method has not been tested adequately and continue to apply it as if it were a universally accepted framework for assessing cultural influences on risk (or at the very least they assume it to be the only anthropological contribution to risk studies). The popularity of grid/group analysis in the field of risk studies may be rooted in its relatively straightforward methodological framework and its assumption of a limited number of typological classifications to predict behavior. The framework is easily modified to work in conjunction with the objective character and scientific detachment of the more numerous and dominant rational actor approaches. Since the field of risk studies includes comparatively few anthropologists, there are few researchers who can offset Douglas' enormous and often paradoxical influence. In the end, cultural theory may be based on solid and innovative ideas but the overall message is lost in their implementation.

Risk Society Approaches

While Mary Douglas' cultural theory introduced a social science perspective to the study of risk, her overall framework remains closely tied to some of the key interests of the RAM movement and rational actor approaches as a result of its simplistic typological classifications and assumed ability to predict public risk perceptions. In contrast to Douglas' ideas, which have been widely embraced outside of anthropology, the "risk society" approach is more closely affiliated with social science theory (particularly sociology). Two authors define the risk society approach: Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck. While each problematizes risk in very similar

ways, there are fundamental differences that distinguish their approaches to risk and risk dilemmas in late modernity.

Anthony Giddens: Risk and Modernity

Giddens (1990; 1991) approaches risk as a means of contrasting pre-modernity and modernity. He is more concerned with risk in terms of these large-scale historical epochs and suggests that a growing concern and awareness of risk as a macro-structural force has shaped modernity (or what he sometimes refers to as "late modernity"). In accordance with these broader interests, Giddens contrasts at length the different roles and values associated with risk in pre-modern and modern times.

In pre-modern times, Giddens suggests that risk and danger were anchored in localized contexts defined by traditional principles such as kinship systems, local community interactions, and religious cosmology. In this context, risk was not conceived as such at all, but in terms of "fortuna" (which Giddens ties to religious cosmology) or natural causes and chance (a more secular construction). Fortuna/chance and a sense of security and trust (all closely related concepts in Giddens' work) were thus oriented toward the past and a general concern with reproducing reliable modes of social organization at the local, everyday level. Pre-modern constructions of risk were essentially defined via an external referential system — tradition itself — that was rarely questioned. Giddens spends very little time discussing pre-modern constructions of risk, however, doing so only as a means of contrasting these ideas with more modern constructions.

In contrast to pre-modernity, Giddens describes modernity (or late modernity) as a "risk culture" due in large part to "disembedding mechanisms," or processes that undermine the importance of tradition and the local context. A particularly important disembedding mechanism involves the development of symbolic tokens (i.e., insurance, the monetary system, the development of expert systems of knowledge, and the process of globalization itself). The overall effect of these processes involves a disengagement from external referential systems oriented

toward tradition and the past and to an increasing dependence on the self and responsibility for one's own life trajectory and narratives of self-identity. Giddens refers to the latter as the "reflexive project of the self." While self-reflexivity clearly emphasizes the individual, the process does not occur in a vacuum because it encourages the individual to engage more and more with abstract systems of expert knowledge, which continually construct risk through individual-collective relationships and lifestyle choices oriented toward the future. Giddens suggests that an increasing and routinized engagement between the self and abstract systems of expert knowledge produces a sense of ontological security and trust that are imperative for maintaining a coherent narrative of self-identity. The reflexive project of the self, then, relies heavily upon the trust of experts who continually define and impose a series of lifestyle options in order to minimize risk. As a result, the production and awareness of risk is critical for maintaining this fundamental dialogue of late modernity.



Giddens' ideas lead him to suggest that the most fundamental issue to be resolved in modern times is the maintenance of a coherent narrative of self-identity. As a means of demonstrating the significance of a dialogue between the self and expert systems of knowledge to this process, he stresses the importance of "fateful moments" and "access points." Fateful moments are times when individuals are most likely to question the ontological security established by routinized habits. These moments tend to occur at access points, which Giddens defines as face-to-face interactions between lay individuals/collectives and representatives of expert systems. At these times and points, the ontological security that maintains a coherent narrative of self-identity is either undermined or reinforced. Giddens suggests that lay individuals/collectives must bring a more informed awareness of expert systems of knowledge (including an appreciation of its limitations) to these situations in order to positively establish/reinforce ontological security. Developing a more informed trust during critical situations is the cornerstone of Gidden's approach to risk.

The risk society approach of Anthony Giddens is a good way of looking at risk in a broad historical setting and at a macro-structural level, particularly with respect to such things as the changing role of technology and expert systems of knowledge in society, globalization, and general processes associated with the problematization of the self. Giddens places a strong emphasis on the reflexive project of the self throughout his work (and not simply where he focuses on risk). In doing so, he seems more willing than others to subordinate risk as a structuring principle of late modernity in order to focus on what he views as more fundamental processes. The reflexive project of the self is a process within which risk constructions are implicated, rather than the other way around. In other words, risk is only one concept among many with the potential to structure a coherent narrative of self-identity. While risk is a significant part of the overall picture, as Giddens maintains, it is not necessarily the most central. This idea represents a refreshing and much needed perspective in the field of risk studies where risk is often imbued with too much power. Finally, Giddens' risk society approach incorporates narrative constructions of self-identity in a much more sophisticated, open-ended, and complex manner than Douglas' static, predetermined "worldviews." At the very least, his emphasis on self-reflexivity creates the *potential* for behavior change and creative agency. Risk is not necessarily a central structuring principle, nor a static one.



The problems associated with Giddens' risk society approach arise from his exclusive focus on macro-structural factors. The categories of "pre-modernity" and "modernity" are a massive and unwieldy means of focusing on a concept such as risk; which seems particularly tied to lived experience and situated knowledge. In fact, by retaining such a macro-oriented perspective, Giddens undermines the notion of change and agency implied by the reflexive project of the self; it is difficult to imagine how the individual can influence wider structural processes. In many ways, Giddens' theory-laden approach is relatively useless to the goals and interests associated with the bulk of risk-related research and its concern with specific risk perceptions/behaviors and applied focus. Giddens also pays very little attention to risk in terms

of internal differences produced by political and economic factors and shared symbolic meanings. The reflexive project of the self cannot be assumed to be similar in character in terms of age, class, gender, and various other social and cultural differences. His lack of attention to cultural differences is especially strong, thus exposing his approach as an exceptionally biased Western construction. Finally, it is not always clear exactly where Giddens would like one to focus in order to resolve the problems posed by risk in late modernity. He places quite a bit of emphasis on trust and a greater, more informed awareness of expert systems of knowledge. In doing so, however, his work lacks a clear critique of these systems. In fact, he seems to place most of the burden on the individual and the goal of maintaining ontological security and a coherent narrative of self-identity. Giddens does not address the idea that, regardless of the degree of coherence, some narratives and/or lifestyle options constructed by experts may be less empowering than others. His macro-structural focus accentuates this problem by emphasizing a single, grand narrative of modernity at the expense of multiple, localized narratives that allow individuals to access different types of resources and various degrees and forms of power in order to survive.

Ulrich Beck: Risk Society

Like Giddens, Ulrich Beck (1992a; 1992b; 1995; 1997) is also concerned with risk in its broad historical context and in terms of macro-structural processes. Beck suggests the current period can be defined by a transition from an industrial society to a risk society. Like Giddens, Beck views an increasing awareness of and concern with risk as an outcome of modernization, though he ascribes a much more central role to risk in general as well as to specific types of risks produced and distributed in late modernity. In fact, Beck views risk as the most significant and defining feature of our time, something which Giddens does not necessarily do.

Beck argues that since the middle of the twentieth century, industrial society (or a society stemming from the Enlightenment and characterized by a deep-seated trust in techno-scientific rationality) has been recently confronted with very different types of risks that are being produced by the growth and development of an industrial society itself. Risks have begun to supersede

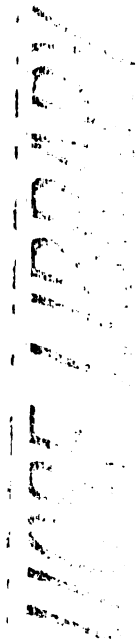
traditional, localized boundaries (or pre-industrial society) and are more difficult for industrial society to quantify, prevent, and avoid. Additionally, they are global, open-ended (rather than having a foreseeable end), have never been experienced, and are difficult to attribute to a single cause. The new types of risks subsequently undermine the very notions of causality and means of dealing with them that had been so firmly established by an industrial society. The result is a high degree of ambivalence in society due to a lack of faith in the ability of expert authority to assess and control risks. It is important to emphasize that Beck considers the new types of risks real in an objective sense and does not view the simple awareness of risk or cultural constructions surrounding risk to be of primary importance. Rather, the objective quality of new types of risks combined with a growing awareness that experts are *truly* unable to deal with them is actually "seen" by the general public. From Beck's perspective, public response is very much rooted in reality and can be viewed as quite "rational" in this sense. Meanwhile, experts often seem duped by their own faith in techno-scientific rationalism and ability to manage the risks that they alone have produced.

For Beck, an increasing societal ambivalence rooted in public awareness of these contradictions results in many of the same processes that Giddens ascribes to risk and modernity. At this point, Beck's ideas are almost exactly similar to Giddens', particularly the significance he places on reflexivity and individualization. As with Giddens, Beck believes the current stage of modernity is characterized by a high degree of self-reflection due to a breakdown in traditional structures and historical continuity. Subsequently, individuals are compelled to produce their own biographies. For Beck, however, the entire process of self-reflexivity is based on the production and awareness of the new types of risks that threaten society and a fundamental *distrust* of expert systems of knowledge. By contrast, Giddens views self-reflexivity in terms of an increasing dependence on and trust in these systems.

While the new types of risks described by Beck generate massive contradictions in society, he does not make it clear how they should be addressed. One direction he points to

involves developing a "public science arena" that would act alongside and in concert with expert systems of knowledge by applying the question "How do we wish to live?" to scientific plans, results, and risk assessments. Beck seems to view such an arena as a means of critiquing modernity's technological dependence by positively building upon the distrust and ambivalence characterizing a risk society.

As with Giddens, Beck's approach is constructive if the concern is with risk in a broad historical context and at the macro-structural level. His emphasis on self-reflexivity and individualization is an important means of underscoring the relationship between risk and subjectivity in late modernity. Both Beck and Giddens effectively argue that risk looms larger as a societal-level structuring principle when traditional structures break down and globalization increases.



Unlike Giddens, however, Beck's approach suffers tremendously from his belief that self-reflexivity is generated by the objective qualities of the new types of risks. With Beck, risks themselves rather than risk constructions play the most significant structuring role in late modernity. By taking this line, Beck places much less emphasis on such features as gender, ethnicity, and class. For Giddens, such qualities can be viewed as acting *alongside* risk as self-reflexive individuals struggle to form and maintain a coherent narrative of self-identity, whereas for Beck they are entirely subsumed by risk (including the entire process of self-reflexivity). Beck not only places too much value on risk in this sense, but also overemphasizes whether or not they can be calculated. Dean (1999) believes this problem to be so prevalent in Beck's work that he suggests his risk society is more adequately characterized as a "post-risk calculation society" [p.137]. He accuses Beck of confusing risk in general with insurer's risks and quantitative forms of calculation. Beyond these problems, Beck's risk society approach suffers from many of the same problems associated with Giddens'. Most importantly, there is a decided lack of attention to risk in terms of lived experience, situated knowledge, and shared cultural and symbolic

meanings. In the end, it is difficult to apply Beck's relatively abstract ideas about risk to the many problems defined by specific risk constructions in particular social contexts.

Summary comments

Clearly, the risk society approach of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck is an interesting and much needed contribution to the field of risk studies (see Tables 2.3 and 2.4 on pages 71-74 for a summary of Giddens' and Beck's approach to risk respectfully). They stress the importance of risk as a macro-structuring principle in late modernity and point to its increasing role as such in the future. In doing so, risk is effectively contextualized against such processes as structural breakdown, globalization, techno-scientific dependence, and a growing societal ambivalence. The approach allows one to view risk in terms of its relationship with some of the central concerns and issues that inform social science theory.

Unfortunately, the risk society approach is so strongly rooted in a broad sociological perspective focused on macro-structural explanations of modernity that any discussions surrounding risk quickly erode into becoming "good to think with." Neither Giddens nor Beck are concerned with risk as it is defined, confronted, and managed in everyday life. By focusing on risk as a massive societal construct of late modernity, they approach lacks depth in an area that requires it. This is particularly evident with respect to their prescriptions to the problems posed by risk in late modernity, which tend to be so vague, disengaged, and theoretical in nature that they seriously undermine the entire approach. The framework simply does not sit well with more proximate and everyday risk prevention efforts.

It might be best to think of the risk society approach as a signpost that points out possible directions for more detailed research. Beyond its significance as a guiding force for more applied research on risk perceptions and behaviors, it is much less effective. While it suggests distant horizons in the field of risk studies, the mapping of that terrain is clearly left to others.

Table 2.3: Key points of risk society approach (Giddens)

1) General focus	• risk and modernity (and pre-modernity) • macro-structural factors
2) Sites for defining, managing, and ordering risks	• abstract (expert) systems of knowledge • the self in modernity
3) Risk	
a) Degree and importance of risk objectivity	• wavers between the idea that there has been an increase of real risks (particularly high consequence risks) and the idea that there is simply an increased awareness of risk • not important because the differences between pre-modernity and modernity are rooted in an increased awareness of risk perceptions rather than the actual production of real risks
b) Means by which expert sites generate risk information	• pre-modernity: no expert systems of knowledge surrounding risk per se since they were an inherent part of everyday experience at the local level • modernity: abstract systems of expert knowledge that constantly profile, monitor, and link individual and collective risks in a given milieu of action (an internal referential system oriented toward the future)
c) Value/role of expert risk information	(modernity) • not important in and of itself • extremely important in the sense that risk information is centrally implicated in the reflexive project of the self (which constructs modernity and identity and the creation of a risk society)
d) Means by which lay sites generate risk information	• pre-modernity: in terms of legitimacy provided by localized traditional systems of knowledge such as kinship systems, local community interactions, and religious cosmology (an external referential system oriented toward the past) • modernity: in terms of the reflexive project of the self as it considers risks through contact with experts (in the form of a fundamental *trust*)
e) Value/role of lay risk information	• extremely important because it defines the most fundamental differences between pre-modernity and modernity • also important since considering risk is a part of the reflexive project of the self (although it is not necessarily the most central and/or integral part of that process)
f) Predictability of lay risk perception	• not relevant

Table 2.3 (Continued)

g) Relationship between expert and lay sites	• the self-reflexivity that constitutes modernity involves a fundamental awareness of and interaction between lay and expert sites of knowledge (which increasingly occurs as a result of globalization and the very characteristics of modernity) • constructed via an increased emphasis on the self and responsibility for one's life trajectory (hence the significance of lifestyle)
h) Where to focus	• must solve the problems/contradictions of modernity that impede upon the preservation of a coherent narrative of self-identity • must establish ontological security and trust in abstract systems of knowledge (depends upon awareness of the limitations associated with that knowledge)
4) Positives	• situates risk in a broad historical context • good for understanding risk at a fundamental, macro-structural level • does not over-emphasize the role of risk with respect to modernity and self-identity because it is only one aspect of the reflexive project of the self • emphasis on narrative constructions of reality
5) Negatives	• does not focus on lived experience and situated knowledge • often focuses on individualization (reflexive project of self) at the expense of shared symbolic aspects of risk (i.e., cultural meanings surrounding group formation/maintenance) • particular lack of attention to political and economic factors (e.g., risk in the context of poverty) • particularly strong Western bias • difficult to apply to specific problems/situations in a realistic manner • too much emphasis on the need for a fundamental trust of experts (thus lacking a clear critique of experts sites of knowledge)

Table 2.4: Key points of risk society approach (Beck)

1) General focus	• production of a risk society in late modernity (often juxtaposed with "industrial society" or an earlier stage of modernity) • macro-structural factors
2) Sites for defining, managing, and ordering risks	• technico-scientific rationality (experts) • the self in a risk society
3) Risk	
a) Degree and importance of risk objectivity	• increase in new forms of risks is real, particularly high consequence risks that are global in nature (e.g., nuclear war) and difficult to quantify, prevent, and avoid because they have never been experienced previously • extremely important because anxieties about these new risks serve to pose questions about current practices and the very structure of society – such critical reflection marks the difference between industrial and risk society
b) Means by which expert sites generate risk information	• industrial society: technico-scientific rationality • risk society: continued reliance on technico-scientific rationality despite the fact that it can no longer quantify and/or prevent most risks that define late modernity
c) Value/role of expert risk information	• *limitations* associated with expert risk information in late modernity are extremely important because they create a high degree of ambivalence and loss of expert authority in relation to risk assessments • ability of experts to identify new risks in everyday life is also important because it continually highlights limitations associated with that knowledge
d) Means by which lay sites generate risk information	• industrial society: faith in expert systems of knowledge • risk society: in terms of self-reflexivity as it considers risks through contact with experts (in the form of a fundamental *distrust*)
e) Value/role of lay risk information	• extremely important because it defines the most fundamental differences between industrial society and risk society • also important since considering risk is the most central and integral part associated with a grand narrative of modernization/globalization that constitutes a risk society
f) Predictability of lay risk perception	• not relevant

Table 2.4 (Continued)

g) Relationship between expert and lay sites	• the reflexivity that constitutes a risk society involves a fundamental awareness of the limitations of expert knowledge systems with respect to the risks of late modernity • constructed via an increased emphasis on the self and responsibility for one's life trajectory (Beck refers to this process as "individualization") • there is not necessarily an increased interaction between expert and lay sites due to the growing ambivalence associated with experts
h) Where to focus	• must develop a "public science" arena that would act as a second center of discursive checking of expert results by applying the standard question "How do we wish to live?" to scientific plans, results, and hazard identification
4) Positives	• situates risk in a broad historical context • good for understanding risk at a fundamental, macro-structural level
5) Negatives	• does not focus on lived experience and situated knowledge • often focuses on individualization (self-reflexivity) at the expense of shared symbolic aspects of risk (i.e., cultural meanings surrounding group formation/maintenance) • particular lack of attention to political and economic factors • particularly strong Western bias • difficult to apply to specific problems in a realistic manner • accords too much value to risk as a structuring principle of late modernity • assumes that real risks have increased so much that risk itself has outrun the mechanisms of its calculation and control (hence a risk society is based almost exclusively on the inability of experts to effectively quantify and calculate real risks)

Governmentality Approaches to Risk

Despite the fact that Michel Foucault did not specifically dwell on risk himself, others have used has ideas surrounding governmentality to do so. The governmentality approach focuses on risk as a form of knowledge rooted in the growth of neo-liberal forms of government and strategies for the definition, control, and management of populations. It clearly highlights risk in terms of power and discursive constructions of reality more than any other major approach. Governmentality approaches to risk are made up of two broad perspectives. The first is broader and more historically contingent, examining risk in the context of the growth and development of neo-liberal principles and ideals and the formation of state-centered governments during the eighteenth century. The second perspective focuses on risk constructions in terms of specific, normalizing (or disciplinary) regimes of power. The latter are a central component of neo-liberalism and include such institutions as the insurance industry, biomedicine and public health, and the social welfare industry. The two perspectives are closely related and are often used interchangeably.

The first perspective focuses on risk as it relates to neo-liberal principles and ideals and a concern with governing populations and is more closely related to Foucault's original writings and key concepts (in fact, Foucault himself can be included here). In general, Foucault believed that government as a "problem" (i.e., how to govern oneself and others) exploded onto the scene with the development of the European State during the sixteenth century. As part of this problemitization of government, the initial move was to focus on the "art of government," or the importance of governing family and self (Foucault 1991). While strategies of self-government became an initial basis upon which neo-liberalism could grow, it failed to fully connect the micro-politics of self and family with the macro-politics of territory and State. According to Foucault (1991), this connection was finally made in the middle of the eighteenth century when the art of government gave way to political science or the "science of government." The transition marked the true beginnings of neo-liberalism and its major goal of incorporating

individual citizens into a market economy. The emergence of political science proved effective to this end by recentering the focus of government and economy from the problemitization of the self to the problemitization of the population. As self and family became components of a larger concern with the population as a unit of organization they were eventually eliminated (or, to be more precise, subordinated) as a model for good government.

Statistics became a central part of the new technologies of government by demonstrating how populations could have their own patterns and intrinsic qualities. It is certainly true that by the end of the eighteenth century empirical numbers began assuming a more important role as they revealed regularities associated with crime, suicide, epidemics, and biological facts (Hacking 1990; 1991). The result was a transformation of chance from something considered not real or supernatural in nature to something very real and subject to sets of well-defined laws and principles centered around the population as a unit of analysis. Expert knowledge bases quickly grew around this perspective, which dismissed the concept of dangerousness as mere superstition as they replaced it with the empirical orientation encompassed by risk. On this basis, experts identified an infinite number of possibilities for intervention and management. By imposing risk upon individuals via objective, population-based calculations and constructions of abstract risk profiles, the concept was increasingly separated from lived experience (Hacking 1991; Lupton 1999).

Calculable definitions of risk based upon populations did not necessarily lead to the abandonment of individual ideals. A fundamental aspect of neo-liberalism involves a stated emphasis on individual freedom against the excessive intervention of the State. Thus, techniques of the self and individualization remain important to governmentality approaches to risk, but they are not constructed as a path towards self-realization and independence (as they are in the risk society approach). Instead, processes of self-reflexivity contribute to the dominance of neo-liberal forms of government, which champion the individual as a means of managing and controlling populations. Individuals are managed through voluntary compliance and by adopting

various strategies they have been encouraged/required to practice upon themselves (techniques of the self) in order to avoid risk. Individuals are unconsciously subordinated within a neo-liberal framework through the establishment of a vast and diffuse bureaucracy based upon an infinite number of ways to empirically define populations and establish risk parameters. The overall effect is to make individuals feel like active subjects of governance when in fact they are passive victims.

The establishment and diffusion of a vast institutionalized bureaucracy dedicated to the management of populations is central to the second perspective associated with the governmentality approach. Here, the focus is on specific institutionalized sites, often termed "regimes," within which risk and risk-reducing techniques are defined and imposed upon individuals and populations. Various regimes have been discussed in this light, including: statistics (Hacking 1990; 1991), insurance (Ewald 1991; Gordon 1991; Defert 1991; Lupton 1999b), epidemiology (Renn 1992a; Armstrong 1993; Frankenberg 1994), the justice system (Tulloch 1999), case-management risk as defined by such disciplines as psychology, social work, and clinical medicine (Lupton 1999c; Jackson and Scott 1999; Castel 1999; Dean 1999) and the state itself, particularly in terms of risk and nationalism/citizenship (Mackey 1999). While the governmentality approach accepts that risk regimes operate within the overall neo-liberal form of government, it also calls for a closer examination of specific regimes since each is assumed to fabricate particular forms of identity, agency, expertise, and ultimately risk (Dean 1999).

Crook (1999) suggests classifying risk regimes into three broad categories (though he emphasizes that these do not exhaust all possibilities):

1) organized risk management centered on the State itself;
2) neo-liberal risk regimes constructed around expert systems of knowledge and advice (such as insurance, epidemiology, social work, etc.);
3) ritualized risk management centered on groups, reflexive community activism, and social activism (this addresses the tendency for more informal relationships to

develop around demands for reassurance in the face of risk where many resources are involved, including expert knowledge, mainstream and alternative technologies, processes of group formation, symbols and narrative forms, etc.).

Crook emphasizes that all three types of regimes exist simultaneously within a neo-liberal form of government. He also suggests that all are "congenitally failing" (p.182) due to a tendency to spread awareness of risks without being fully able to control them (i.e., the overproduction and undercontrol of risks). Thus, any stability they engender will be temporary and regional and the entire process constantly threatens to de-legitimize itself (which is another reason to examine specific regimes rather than macro-structural factors only). Crook concludes that one of the definitive forces of the future will be the ways in which social networks and cultural groups deal with these fundamental contradictions.

One of the more obvious features of governmentality approaches to risk is its emphasis on power and domination "from above." It does not just view risk as becoming less calculable (as Beck would have it) or as entailing a shift from local to global contexts (as suggested by both Beck and Giddens) but links it to the ways that individuals are required to deport themselves according to a specific, historically situated form of the State (neo-liberalism). Its macro-structural perspective is more realistic and amenable to political and economic factors than such massive categories as pre-modernity and modernity. At the same time, the governmentality approach emphasizes the same processes as other approaches, including self-reflexivity, individualization, the growth of expert sites of knowledge, and the importance of lifestyle choices. Its emphasis on risk in the context of discursive constructions of power, however, leads to a much stronger critique of specific sites of expert knowledge.

Another contribution is its emphasis on risk regimes that situate risk constructions in terms of specific forms of social relationships. Regimes constitute a much needed "middle ground" between macro-structural factors and actual experience, a level that is oversimplified by Douglas' cultural theory and completely lacking in the risk society approach. For the most part,

risk regimes are interchangeable with Foucault's concept of the institution since both are essentially vessels for specific clusters of relationships between and among experts and the general public (as well as the relationship one has with oneself). As such, they are less important than the actual relationships they encapsulate. Crook's three part classification of risk regimes becomes a particularly significant contribution at this point because it distinguishes between more formal, institutionalized regimes centering on the State and expert sites of knowledge and more informal lay relationships and social networks centering on specific groups and narrative forms. His typology highlights a limitation of governmentality approaches to risk, namely a lack of attention to more informal types of regimes. The existence of informal regimes immediately points the way to a more subjective, lived experience perspective on risk (the final approach to risk discussed in this chapter) without losing a focus on issues of power.

The skewed focus of the governmentality approach in favor of more formal, institutionalized regimes reinforces the idea that subjects are always controlled from above since their actions are assumed to be in compliance with the roles/lifestyle options constructed for them in the name of risk reduction. As with the risk society approach, it lacks attention to lived experience and situated knowledge, thus leaving little room for potential agency and/or behavior change. A lack of attention to what people actually do is also the root cause of critiques directed at Foucault's work, though it may not always be centered on the concept of risk itself (Aladjem 1996; Deveaux 1996; Fraser 1996; Sawicki 1996). The irony is that Foucault's concept of the institution as simply a vessel for specific clusters of relationships would seem to highlight the importance of informal clusters of relationships as much as more formal and obvious ones. The same argument can be applied to risk regimes, a concept that is meant to highlight the relationships by which it is constituted rather than their degree of formality. It is entirely possible that Foucault's extreme emphasis on power has influenced governmentality approaches to risk as well, which causes them to be biased in favor of more institutionalized risk regimes which by definition are more hegemonic in nature than informal group membership practices (though not

necessarily). Risk is already so closely associated with expert sites of knowledge that its relationship to dominant structures of power seems like a natural fit. As a result, risk in the context of group membership, the very basis of Mary Douglas' ideas, is a noticeably absent feature of governmentality approaches despite the fact that there is room for these ideas.

Summary comments

Like the risk society approach, governmentality approaches to risk entail a substantial focus on macro-structural factors (see Table 2.5 on pages 81-82 for a summary of key points associated with governmentality approaches). At this level, however, the governmentality perspective relates risk to a specific form of the state — neo-liberalism — that allows for a more detailed emphasis on political and economic factors. The framework also facilitates comparisons between risk constructions produced by neo-liberal forms of government and a market economy. Such comparisons are difficult to do with the risk society approach, which often assumes that everyone is living under the rubric of modernity (and even if this problem were addressed, it is unlikely that comparing risk across societies in terms of the penetration of modernity would be of any value since it is defined by comparatively vague and abstract processes). Even at the macro-structural level, then, the governmentality approach proves more useful and informative than the risk society approach.

The real power of the governmentality approach to risk, however, lies with its emphasis on an intermediate level, as represented by risk regimes. Since regimes are nested within the overall neo-liberal framework and act as particularly dense power points of its ideological objectives, the macro-structural focus remains intact while simultaneously being brought that much closer to specific types of relationships and the actual experiences of individuals. It also does not accord too much value to risk itself, since not all regimes are assumed to be necessarily built around the concept.

While the broader and more intermediate levels are addressed by governmentality approaches, it fails to fully capture the individual, lived experience aspect of risk. Here, the

Table 2.5: Key points of governmentality approaches to risk

1) General focus	• risk and power (risk in the context of surveillance, discipline, and regulation of populations)
2) Sites for defining, managing, and ordering risks	• specific, historically situated networks or clusters of relations within which risk is implicated (such as those associated with developments in epidemiology, insurance, psychology, social work, biomedicine, etc.) – often termed "regimes"
3) Risk	
a) Degree and importance of risk objectivity	• risks are not necessarily real and/or objective – they are hegemonic constructions (discourses) embedded in specific regimes • extremely important because it places risk in the context of power relations and discursive interests that are not dependent upon the ability to objectively measure real risks
b) Means by which expert sites generate risk information	• depends on the specific regime but each one is related in a general sense to a specific form of political rule developed in the eighteenth century --- neo-liberalism --- in which states began to think of citizens in terms of *populations* requiring intervention, management, and protection • technologies of normalization – strategies of control based on neo-liberal ideal of voluntary compliance (i.e., techniques of the self) within which risk plays a central role
c) Value/role of expert risk information	• not important in and of itself • extremely important in the sense that risk information is central to the formation and maintenance of regimes and (through these) how individuals deport themselves in relation to the state
d) Means by which non-expert sites generate risk information	• via an implicit acceptance of the idea of voluntary compliance and the adoption of techniques of the self
e) Value/role of non-expert risk information	• extremely important because it contributes to their own domination and lack of control (assumes that expert and lay information concerning risks is similar or, at the very least, produces similar results)
f) Predictability of public risk perception	• not directly relevant
g) Relationship between expert and non-expert sites	• produced and maintained through specific regimes that continually enact "appropriate" relationships between experts and the lay public based on forms of discursive knowledge • via an increased emphasis on the self and responsibility for one's life trajectory (Foucault refers to this process as "techniques of the self")

Table 2.5 (continued)

h) Where to focus	• frequently depends on specific regimes rather than the macro-structural processes associated with neo-liberalism • most often related to increasing awareness of the hegemonic constructions of particular risk rationalities (thus it directly critiques the divide between calculable and incalculable forms of risk)
4) Positives	• situates risk in a broad historical context • also situates risk in terms of a "middle-ground" level and specific forms of social relationships (i.e., specific regimes) • highlights risk in terms of discursive constructions of power • provides a clear, strong critique of experts
5) Negatives	• often leads to a complete denial of the objective basis of real risks • little room regarding opportunities for behavior change and/or individual agency • most often applied to formal, institutionalized regimes (e.g., case-management risk relationships associated with social work or clinical risk relationships associated with biomedicine) at the expense of more informal, lay-defined relationship) • lacks a focus on lived experience and situated knowledge • often lacks clear suggestions on how to "answer" the fundamental problems/contradictions posed by risk

legacy of Foucault is apparent, and his preoccupation with power as domination has led risk researchers working within a governmentality approach to focus on risk in terms of more formal state-run and/or institutionalized relationships. At this point, the significance of Crook's three-part classification of risk regimes is clear because it differentiates between formal and informal regimes. His focus on ritualized risk management centered on informal groups and reflexive community activism is appropriate and leads directly to the final risk approach reviewed here.

Lived experience approaches to risk

The lived experience approach to risk encompasses many recent writings on the subject by anthropologists (Mays 1988; Connors 1992; Holland et al 1992a; 1992b; Sobo 1993; Singer et al 1992; Singer 1994a; Becker and Nachtigall 1994; Ramos et al 1995; Bourgois et al 1997; Lupton 1999c; Mackey 1999). It differentiates itself from the macro-structural and generalized perspective underlying other approaches by focusing almost exclusively on risk as a form of situated knowledge. Risk perceptions and behaviors are viewed in terms of specific communities, neighborhoods, and social networks. As with Douglas' cultural theory, the lived experience approach highlights group values and interests. The difference lies largely with the size and scale of the group itself and the relative significance of risk with respect to other structuring principles. While Douglas' theory highlights a limited number of homogenous cultural prototypes, the lived experience approach constructs the group in smaller and more relativist terms. At this level, the group is more often defined in terms of community norms, ideals, and values. Risk constructions are due less to an all-encompassing world view or cultural affiliation than to more proximate and multiple meanings involving self-identity and situated decision making processes.

Researchers writing from within a lived experience approach are also careful not to overemphasize the significance of risk with respect to self-identity and group membership. They are more likely to recognize risk as one structuring principle among many. Subsequently, it can be backgrounded or foregrounded with respect to other factors such as age, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, income level, etc. (Mays and Cochran 1988; Worth 1989; Holland et al. 1992a; 1992b;

Sobo 1993; Singer 1994a; Ramos et al 1995; Aggleton et al 1994; Lupton 1999c). The local context as constructed by one's involvement in specific networks of relationships continually determines the degree to which a specific risk behavior will be enacted as well as the form that it takes. More specifically, the individual's relative location within a localized network of social relations determines the means by which risks are defined and acted upon. At the same time, the quest for coherent narratives of self-identity remain important. Narrative constructions allow individuals/collectives to define resources as either legitimate or not from their respective positions and aid in the production of shared belief systems and group identities. In this environment, expert assessments of risk may be redefined as they are dealt with and evaluated by most individuals at the level of the local, private, everyday, and intimate.

When extremely localized cultural meanings and narratives of self-identity subsume risk, it follows that specific communities, neighborhoods, and social networks become the most relevant modes of social organization. This idea forms the basis of Merrill Singer's work, who can be considered one of the leading examples of a lived experience approach to risk. Singer's ideas stem from his ethnographic work on AIDS among minority populations in the United States (Singer et al 1992; Singer 1994a; Singer and Weeks 1996). He suggests the epidemic is not a single phenomenon but composed of thousands of epidemics because the virus' actual transmission routes are heavily influenced by local conditions (Singer and Weeks 1996). This argument has been made by other AIDS researchers as well (Page et al 1990; Siegal 1990; Aggleton et al 1994). In many ways, the very nature of the AIDS epidemic and the pattern of its spread has prompted a shift away from universal solutions and the role of grand explanations and/or narratives regarding risk. This shift is made very clear by Singer and Weeks (1996), who suggest that risk reduction efforts for AIDS must focus on the "three N's" (p.490): networks, neighborhoods, and natural social groups. They suggest that values and beliefs pertinent to such efforts are generally transmitted within self-identified peer groups, or what they refer to as networks. The highest risk for AIDS, however, can be found among those who belong to natural

social groups, defined as peer groups/networks that share or are beginning to share a common identity based on similar values/beliefs, in which the transmission of values and beliefs directly promotes risk behavior. Risk reduction efforts should be customized to fit the needs of particular groups since their common identity the basis for promoting changes in shared risk behavior. Singer and Weeks are also careful to point out that networks and natural social groups constitute the local neighborhood and, as such, efforts to promote changes in risk behavior must focus on AIDS within the overall context of the local environment and neighborhood-based problems.

The idea that social networks (or more specifically natural social groups) are crucial toward influencing risk behavior and enacting risk knowledge has been repeated by others in one form or another (Trotter 1995; Auerbach et al 1994; Bloor 1995). These studies represent a growing recognition of peer influence on individual behavior, the communication of information, and the setting of group norms. For its part, risk and behavior can either be promoted from within the social network or, if properly targeted, be reduced by positively building upon the same set of shared norms. Externally based risk reduction programs work to encourage change from within while simultaneously addressing the issue of trust.

The lived experience approach to risk addresses many of the central problems that plague other approaches. Behavior is not assumed via generalized categories and/or macro-structural processes. Instead, behavior and knowledge are directly related as they operate from within the local context and in terms of problems that individuals confront on a daily basis. When cultural meanings and social organizations continually operate together to constitute the specific environments within which individuals act, risk is more realistically viewed as just one structuring principle among many. As a result, the perceived significance of specific risks to individuals is contingent upon their ability to form and maintain meaningful social relationships. Self-identity and group membership thus remain crucial to risk perceptions and behavior but they are not consumed by grand narratives/worldviews within which risk becomes implicated in

homogenous, monolithic ways. These ideas are more conducive to the application of specific risk-reducing strategies than any approach discussed thus far.

Lived experience approaches also refrain from constructing risk as either a single bit of information, a particular group, or an isolated behavior. Instead, risk constructions are viewed in terms of the wider (yet localized) environment itself. The significance of any one risk behavior, then, results from its interaction with other processes within a particular type of environment or, more specifically, situated cluster of relationships. A behavior that is perceived as relatively "non-risky" under one set of circumstances may very well be seen as highly risky under another. Therefore, it is more appropriate to examine risk in terms of specific environments (as defined by a unique relationship between cultural meanings and specific social groups) rather than in terms of a particular group based upon assumed criteria. It also proves more effective in addressing risk with respect to issues of blame and stigma, which are equally subject to local conditions.

The major problem with the lived experience approach involves the criteria by which groups are defined at the local level. Rather than define a more complex and realistic milieu of structuring principles that are backgrounded or foregrounded in given situations and in terms of actual social networks and group formations, researchers tend to identify one overriding criteria -- - such as gender — and construct a generalized model of relationships around it. In so doing, they gloss over other internal differences and contradictions that may exist within communities. Risk is detached from everyday experience (though perhaps not to the degree of other approaches) as it is defined, for example, in terms of gender differences only or as a generalized construct of the Black or Hispanic community. Such characteristics may be important, but they often undermine the focus on the experiential realm as represented by specific neighborhoods and social networks. For example, when researchers isolate gender differences, the "local context" within which risk for AIDS is negotiated is reduced to the unequal power distribution and access to resources between males and females. While this is a common feature of AIDS research, it lacks attention to the interaction of either partner with their true peers (who can be both male or

female) where cultural meanings involving sex and risk for AIDS may be defined *beforehand* on a routine basis and then "brought to" the particular sexual relationship itself. In other words, sexual relationships do not necessarily constitute a "group" or peer-influenced social network where self-identity is defined and made culturally meaningful. With respect to gender, risk is always and only constructed as a lack of female power vis a vis the man; which implies that the woman perceives the "riskiness" of the situation and would act upon that knowledge if she were able. In actuality, she may perceive one man as more "risky" than another as a result of predetermined risk constructions produced and made meaningful in her peer network and the position of that network in the local community. Risk may be more central to self-identity (and otherness) with respect to an individual's participation in one peer group and less so with respect to another. It is also possible that risk can become implicated in redefining the meanings involved with participation in any one group as self-identity is continually negotiated at the local level. It seems that researchers writing from within the lived experience approach regularly assume the existence of actual social networks from specific structuring principles in this fashion. Different types of social networks (particularly with respect to normative influence) are obscured in the process, as are particular geographic locales and neighborhoods. In the process, risk is almost always generalized in some manner.

Another common problem associated with the lived experience approach involves its lack of attention to expert sites of knowledge. The focus is so biased toward the lay public that expert constructions of risk suffer from the same generalizations that other approaches ascribe to public risk perceptions. One result is a rather simplistic dichotomy between expert constructions of risk as always representing sites of domination and lay constructions as always being sites of resistance. Identifying every social practice/risk perception as an act of resistance is as misleading as Douglas' practice of identifying the same behaviors in a functional/adaptive manner. It is much more realistic to view expert relationships and constructions of risk as subject to the same influences as public constructions and as also foregrounded or backgrounded in terms

of the situation/local context. Specific bits of risk knowledge may be "picked up" and enacted in accordance with expert expectations or else they may be redefined in unintended ways. Like everything else, expert constructions of risk are subject to cultural meanings surrounding self-identity as individuals participate in specific social networks/groups and as these are positioned within particular neighborhoods.

The final problem associated with the lived experience approach involves its generalizability. Since the approach is targeted to fit the needs of very specific locales, the question then becomes: to what extent can strategies of risk prevention/intervention be applied on a wider basis? The problem is reinforced by the fact that the lived experience approach is not conducted in any uniform manner. Researchers may focus on either a specific community or a specific type of relationship (by highlighting any number of structuring principles and/or constructing artificial aggregates of people based on different socio-economic characteristics with varying degrees of importance to risk). The end result is that different studies adopting the same general approach often seem to hold very little in common. The fact that it is by far the most time consuming and difficult approach to implement adds to the "patchiness" of its application and its relativist (almost isolationist) character. In the future, it will have to address issues of generalizability in a more realistic manner and one that is based on naturally defined social groups rather than assumed ones.

Summary comments

While the lived experience approach to risk addresses the major obstacles that previous approaches have difficulty overcoming, it retains many of the benefits associated with them (see Table 2.6 on pages 89-90 for a summary of key points associated with lived experience approaches). As with Mary Douglas' cultural theory, it focuses on risk in terms of a combination of group membership and shared symbolic meanings. However, it emphasizes these meanings in terms of self-reflexivity, individualization, and narrative constructions of self-identity rather than as static, predetermined, risk-centered worldviews. While these ideas are closely related risk

Table 2.6: Key points of lived experience approaches to risk

1) General focus	• risk as situated knowledge • micro-structural factors that influence self-identity and group membership
2) Sites for defining, managing, and ordering risks	• local communities, neighborhoods, natural social groups, social networks
3) Risk	
a) Degree and importance of risk objectivity	• some risks may be real and objective • not important since all information and behaviors are subject to conditions that shape the local context and influence everyday experience
b) Means by which expert sites generate risk information	• not a focus (but often implies a generalized techno-scientific rationality that does not take into account local conditions)
c) Value/role of expert risk information	• not important in and of itself • important in the sense that it is subjected to and reappropriated/redefined in the local context
d) Means by which non-expert sites generate risk information	• in conjunction with any number of micro-structural factors that construct self-identity (such as age, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, class differences, place and space, etc.)
e) Value/role of non-expert risk information	• extremely important since it is inseparable from actual behavior
f) Predictability of public risk perception	• not directly relevant (however, it highlights more than other approaches the difficulty, if not impossibility, of predicting risk)
g) Relationship between expert and non-expert sites	• highlights the weaknesses of the relationships between the two sites more than other approaches • based on the reappropriation of expert information as it is subjected to local conditions and micro-structural processes
h) Where to focus	• social and cultural empowerment of particularly disenfranchised groups • greater interaction between expert knowledge bases and the local context (a localization of knowledge and action)
4) Positives	• situates risk at the local-level and in terms of the micro-politics of social organization (i.e., highlights specific communities, neighborhoods, networks, etc.) • does not over-emphasize the role of risk as a structuring principle with respect to group membership (as Douglas' cultural theory does) • emphasizes situated knowledge (does not separate risk knowledge from actual behavior) • does not preclude cultural/symbolic/narrative constructions of reality (and they are not the grand narratives associated with Giddens and Beck) • more amenable to the idea of risk environments/situations of risk rather than risk behaviors/groups • more amenable to an applied focus

Table 2.6 (continued)

5) Negatives	• some structuring principles (i.e., gender, ethnicity, etc.) are often emphasized at the expense of others (thus causing boundary problems and the reification of specific "communities" or "sub-cultures") • difficult to make generalizations in terms of both focus (e.g., how and in what capacity does a specific community relate to such things as globalization, the State, and/or expert institutions/risk regimes?) and application (e.g., to what degree can a prevention/intervention strategy be applied outside of the specific community for which it was taylored?) • time consuming and difficult to implement

society approaches, they are "grounded" in local-level interactions between and among social networks and specific neighborhood settings. Its localized focus effectively addresses risk as just one among many potential micro-structuring principles as individuals/collectives vie for legitimacy in terms of routinized daily interactions and activities.

The major problem with the lived experience approach involves its tendency to reify particular groups from a single attribute. The practice causes groups to be constructed as well-oiled machines that operate in terms of an inherent logic. Singer (1994b) highlights this problem by suggesting that social networks are often treated as isolated (and potentially risky) "sub-cultures" (e.g., the "sub-culture" of drug users). The sub-culture problem presents a major obstacle to the lived experience approach but it can be overcome, as Singer suggests, by differentiating between social networks, natural social groups (or social networks that produce a common identity) where risk is important, those where it is not, and the surrounding neighborhood itself. Once such clarifications are made, there is less of a tendency to attach a single construction of risk to one, narrowly defined group and to view it in terms of group formation and maintenance in the local environment; which is influenced by such processes as stigma, work, access to information and material resources, and institutional structures.

The sub-culture problem also causes expert sites of knowledge to be ignored or constructed in a generic manner. Additionally, the multiple ways that different groups engage with expert risk information are glossed over in the name of "resistance." The overall picture is one in which expert risk constructions are monolithic vessels of domination that are only and always resisted by a myriad of structural-functional sub-cultures. It often seems like the lived experience approach to risk overcompensates as it attempts to provide a counterpoint to the inescapable structures of domination (i.e., risk regimes) as constructed by the governmentality perspective. While one demonstrates the complexity of expert sites of knowledge and risk regimes (the governmentality approach) and the other demonstrates the complexity of lay

constructions of risk (the lived experience approach) neither effectively captures the complex relationship between the two.

Situating this study

This study is most closely associated with the lived experience and governmentality approaches to risk. It assumes that risk for AIDS can only be understood as it is (re)produced in local contexts. More specifically, risk is constructed in terms of situated meanings surrounding self-identity and group membership. The overall focus is closely allied with the lived experience approach and its emphasis on risk in terms of micro-structural processes in specific settings. At the same time, however, the focus is also on specific risk regimes and the types of relationships they reproduce as external/expert sites of *potential* domination. The significance of risk regimes and the relationship between risk and power is rooted in a governmentality perspective.

The framework within which risk is examined here, then, considers external/expert sources of risk information as well as the internal dynamics and structuring principles that constitute group formation and maintenance at the local level. Put simply, it describes a process where these two forces "bump into" one another. The effects of this encounter cannot be explained entirely in terms of either specific risk regimes or processes of group formation and maintenance. Rather, it is the contact between these two forces, each of which engenders its own set of meaningful relationships that takes on properties of its own and ultimately explains how risk is (re)produced. "Bumping into one another," however, is a rather crude and potentially misleading way of describing an extremely complex social process. The anthropological literature provides a precedent for framing the process, which is more effectively referred to as a "conjuncture." A brief review of the idea of conjuncture in anthropology is necessary before turning to its relationship with risk and the way in which it is applied in this study.

Ethnography and the idea of conjuncture

The term conjuncture is used here as a direct reference to Marshall Sahlin's (1981) well known description of the "structure of the conjuncture." Sahlins drew upon the idea as a way to

frame the internal-external linkages resulting from colonial contact with Hawaiian society. He described a situation where the interplay between a dominant European power (as represented by the landing of Captain Cook) and the internal power struggles of Hawaiian chiefs gives rise to new forms of cultural legitimacy and prescriptions for action. In Sahlin's account, very little of the Hawaiian response to external domination and discursive constructions can be described as simply compliance and/or resistance to an assumed European dominance. Rather, the Hawaiian people creatively and differentially acted upon external forces in terms of a complex network of social relationships, cultural meanings, and internal power struggles. Sahlins suggested that social structure was created out of a conjuncture between the two forces, in which some aspects of Hawaiian society were reproduced while others were drastically altered. The conjuncture formed by their meeting became the driving force behind this process.

Sherry Ortner (1989) draws upon Sahlin's model of the structure of the conjuncture in her own work in Nepal. She also emphasized how external forces (in this case the Tibetan state) could only be understood when located within the internal dynamics characterizing the local context. Ortner suggests that resistance, indifference, and compliance with external interests are parallel processes when enacted to different degrees across various segments of society and in accordance with a particular group's interests. Elsewhere (Ortner 1996), she defines this conjuncture as an area where cultural/symbolic meanings link up to "sustain or repel one another" (p.190) as external interests interact with the daily routines and pragmatic political workings of specific groups. The process is particularly apparent in her discussions regarding the foundation of a female nunnery in Tibet, which she frames around the close relationship between female stigma (or gender meanings) and virilocal residence and inheritance rights (which she suggests represent specific, pragmatic manifestations of power). Ortner effectively merges knowledge/discourse with everyday material/economic considerations and also demonstrates how "woman" as an analytic category is less useful than "relative structural position" within the conjuncture of external-internal forces. The framework allows for various types of group

formations and internal contradictions than what is possible with homogenous and dichotomizing gender differences.

Jean Comoraff (1985) also demonstrates the effectiveness of a structure of the conjuncture when she draws upon the idea to frame the process in which precolonial South Africa (specifically, Tshidi society) engaged various forms and forces of European industrial capitalism. While the conjuncture between Tshidi society and capitalist penetration/missionary activity reproduced some features of Tshidi society, it simultaneously undermined others. Comoraff argues that acts of domination and/or resistance must be understood in terms of this interplay rather than as one "dominant" force confronting an entirely "resistant" one. As with Ortner, Comoraff suggests that symbolic meanings and cultural forms are only acquired through their relation to one another in texts/narratives (Ortner uses the term "schemas") produced as a result of everyday social relationships and the pragmatics of lived experience.

Aihwa Ong's (1987) account of female factory workers in Malaysia is the final ethnographic example of a structure of the conjuncture discussed here (though it should be noted that, unlike the other authors mentioned thus far, she does not specifically use the term conjuncture). In her account, Ong argues that women resorted to spirit attacks on factory floors not as a conscious resistance to commodity relations and "capitalist discipline," but as a means of protesting violations against a fundamental humanity and moral justice as these were made manifest in the local environment. The women did not resist capitalism writ large as much as they resisted the contradictions experienced as a result of its disparate penetration in their everyday lives. At the same time, however, the women's labor power enabled them to challenge male authority at home and thus create an emergent and potentially more powerful identity. The issue was not one of class consciousness, as Ong argues, but of a moral resistance enacted as a result of their emergent female identity produced as a part of the changing conditions (or conjuncture) wrought by capitalist penetration in the local context. As with the previously mentioned authors, Ong effectively illustrates how individuals pick and choose from external

sources of information and structures of domination. In so doing, they are capable of at least partially redefining the intentions built into those structures and reworking them to their own advantage in the local context.

The preceding ethnographies represent some of the leading ethnographic examples of a structure of the conjuncture. In each case, the conjuncture is used to frame several significant social processes. The first involves the way it defines the local context as a field of relationships between various groups with situated perspectives. To borrow terms from Pierre Bourdieu (1990), as each of these authors in fact do, the overall conjuncture can be viewed as a series of *positions* and associated *dispositions*. A significant difference between these authors and Bourdieu involves the possibility of both subordination (or compliance) with external forces and agency (or resistance/redefinition).

Secondly, while each work underscores the importance of symbols, cultural meanings, narratives, and metaphors as resources that individuals strategize to acquire (and define) from their respective positions within the conjuncture, each author is also careful to situate these meanings in terms of the everyday experiences of their subjects. In doing so, they offset the tendency of anthropologists to detach narrative constructions or cultural schemas from actual behavior; a practice which causes them to float uneasily above the pragmatic and material concerns that individuals confront on a daily basis. In fact, it is the definitively pragmatic character of their subjects concerns and the everyday conditions surrounding their social relationships that each author is careful to highlight when discussing symbolic resources and cultural meanings. Group ideals, norms, and values are directly tied to the acquisition of material resources and practical concerns such as the demand for better working and living conditions, land-use rights, and the refusal to pay taxes (in short, daily survival). Meanwhile, behavior is rooted in what people see and experience as a direct threat (or risk) to their immediate physical world. Thus external meanings and actions are reworked and redefined in various ways to either

legitimate or contest the ways in which different groups accumulate resources as they maneuver from within the local political and economic playing field.

Finally, each author stresses the fact that something new and dynamic is created by the conjuncture itself. The networks of relationships resulting from the linkages created by external-internal forces produce a social structure that is much more than the sum of its parts. In each case, the conjuncture must be understood on its own terms, particularly since behavior change most likely (but not always) begins within the conjuncture itself before producing a "spin-off" effect on other segments of society. In all instances, the conjuncture is the primary and initial concern.

External-internal forces and the "risk conjuncture"

While the approach to risk adopted here most closely parallels the governmentality and lived experience approaches, it differs from each due in part to an incorporation of the main ideas surrounding Sahlins' structure of the conjuncture. In doing so, it constructs and ascribes a central role to what may be called a "risk conjuncture." The basic idea of a risk conjuncture is relatively simple and involves the identification of external-internal linkages where risk (as both a general concept and in terms of AIDS specifically) is particularly relevant.

The first "half" of the risk conjuncture borrows from the lived experience approach and focuses on the internal dynamics and micro-politics of self-identity and group membership in the local context. Since this area is quite literally where most of the action occurs, a great deal of effort is spent defining the daily activities and struggles that define a particular group as such before turning directly to risk itself. While this focus is similar to that of the ethnographic literature involving the idea of a conjuncture, it differs in its level of detail. The ethnographic literature often examines group formation and maintenance processes in terms of relatively large-scale units of social organization (for instance, a specific "society"). The concern here is not so grand since risk behavior is assumed to be inherently localized and situated. If *society* were adopted as the unit of analysis, it would lead to a generalized worldview of risk not unlike Mary

Douglas' cultural theory. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt a risk conjuncture in order to align it with the objectives and premise of the lived experience approach to risk and more specifically to Singer's emphasis on social networks, natural social groups, and neighborhoods. The focus then centers on the internal dynamics and micro-politics of network-neighborhood interactions. As both the lived experience approach to risk and the conjuncture literature stress, the focus should be on processes of group formation and maintenance in terms of the material concerns as well as the production of meaningful and coherent narratives, shared symbolic resources, and cultural themes or schemas. A final question is to assess whether or not risk is a central structuring principle in this process for the group in question.

External/expert sources of risk information constitute the second "half" of the risk conjuncture. In this case, however (and keeping with the governmentality approach), external forces are assumed to be specific risk regimes with strong ties to neo-liberal forms of government rather than massive and relatively abstract forces such as capitalism, globalization, and the state (while such forces play a part, their influence is filtered through various risk regimes). The information put forth by specific risk regimes and the relationships they engender are also subject to the structuring principles of the local context and are either reinforced, redefined, resisted, or simply ignored altogether. Risk regimes can be both formal (i.e., institutions) and informal (i.e., peer groups). While they are assumed to contribute significant meanings surrounding risk from "outside" of the immediate context, it is not assumed (as the governmentality approach often does) that expert risk constructions are adopted in a totalizing fashion. As with knowledge in general, expert/external risk regimes and sources of risk information are *enacted from within the local context*, which in this case returns the focus to processes of group formation and maintenance and network-neighborhood interactions.

After describing the internal dynamics of the local context and identifying the most significant external/expert risk regimes, the focus can then shift to the ways in which these two forces "bump into one another." The idea of a risk conjuncture becomes central at this point as it

frames the ways in which external sources of risk information link up "to sustain or repel" the internal dynamics associated with self-identity and group membership. In short, the risk conjuncture is the primary means of explaining and approaching risk. It is important to reemphasize risk as a form of situated knowledge within the risk conjuncture. It is reflected in what people *do* to maintain group norms, ideals, and values.

The risk conjuncture approach adopted here can be outlined in terms of a series of central questions or areas of inquiry:

1.) How are relationships and social networks constructed in terms of pragmatic decision-making processes and material necessities of daily life (this is the subject of Chapter Four)?
   - Identify significant social relationships/clusters of relationships that result from these concerns;
   - Situate these relationships within the context of the surrounding neighborhood (and in terms of the same pragmatic/material concerns).

2.) Do these social networks contribute to a shared sense of self-identity, thus becoming "natural social groups" (this is the subject of Chapter Five)?
   - Identify the cultural meanings, themes, metaphors, narrative structures, etc. shared by network members;
   - Situate meaning in terms of everyday experience (i.e., determine how meanings are practiced by relating them to the pragmatic concerns and acquisition of material resources that underlie the network);
   - Identify the most significant criteria around which these meanings cluster (i.e., age, sexuality, gender, income level, etc.);
   - Situate these meanings in terms of the group's relative position/disposition in the surrounding neighborhood.

3.) How is risk enacted within a risk conjuncture (this is the subject of Chapters Six and Seven)?

- Identify whether or not risk is a structuring principle with respect to group identity along with such things as age, sex, gender, income level, etc.);
- Identify significant external/expert risk regimes and the means by which they reproduce risk (these may be a series of suggested and/or actual relationships);
- Define how external/expert constructions of risk link up (or not) with the internal dynamics of everyday life (i.e., pragmatic decision-making, self-identity, and group membership) to form a risk conjuncture;
- Identify the consequences of a risk conjuncture with respect to actual behavior (i.e., unintended consequences, compliance, resistance, ignorance, indifference, etc.).

Risk (and particular manifestations of risk such as that for AIDS) may not always be a central or even contributing structuring principle to the micro-politics of lived experience and group membership. However, this research highlights one group of women in one neighborhood of one city where risk is in fact central to this process. The result is the (re)production of a specific form of risk with very real ramifications for the spread of AIDS. While the women's risk for AIDS is very real, it is not so because risk is measurable in an epidemiological or predictive sense. Risk for AIDS is real because the women have made it socially and culturally meaningful from within a risk conjuncture. The consequences might be measurable but their root causes are not.

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[1] "Smoking as 'Independent' risk factor for suicide: illustration of an artifact from observational epidemiology?" (George Davey Smith, Andrew N. Phillips, James D. Neaton)
[2] RAM is not a universally used acronym.

CHAPTER THREE: A PLACE AND ITS PEOPLE

It is certainly pretty here. Before us spreads the wide lake with numerous green islands and the bright green water on which the sun rays are glittering, and all along the bank a foaming line of breaking waves. The gently ascending banks are all strewn with groups of rocks, often rising up menacingly like the walls of a fortress, but mostly forming broad flat hillocks, from which one commands a splendid view. In between, scattered among banana woods, are the huts and fields of the natives. [Dr. Emin Pasha in a letter to his sister dated October 23, 1890 describing the area surrounding his campsite in what is now the present-day location of Mwanza town]

The place is not a pleasant one to live in; a vast, perfectly bare plain without a shrub or tree, over which the winds sweep, whirling up clouds of dust; a regular piece of African desert steppe...It is a nasty piece of road...[Dr. Emin Pasha in a letter to his sister dated September 28, 1890 describing the area approximately 50 miles south of the present-day location of Mwanza town]

Do you see that [pointing to the vast plains beyond the city limits]? *Do you? I can never return there again. Never again. That is hell out there. The city is my home now.* [42 year old Sukuma widow who came to Mwanza after being run off of her land upon the death of her husband]

Introduction

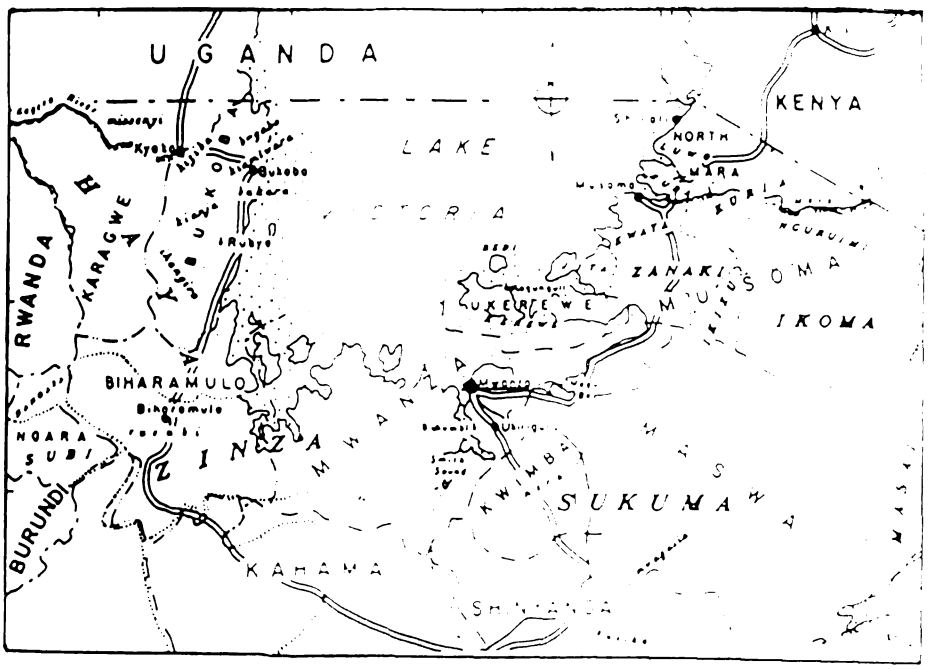
Mwanza Region and the city that shares its name have a rich and varied history. Despite its location in the very Northwestern corner of Tanzania — as distant from the capital city of Dar es Salaam, the coastal trade routes surrounding Zanzibar, or even the pivotal agricultural zones surrounding Mount Kilamanjaro as one could possibly get — Mwanza and its people have always managed to be at or near the center of events throughout Tanzania's history. This is just one of the many contradictions that seem to define the place, its people, and the relationship between the two. Such inconsistencies have simultaneously benefited and undermined the city of Mwanza in particular, which has become a place where the peripheralized, the stigmatized, and those left by the wayside come to find hope and potential, and experience unimagined futures out of an oppressive, unstable past.

This chapter introduces Mwanza and its people by providing a brief description of the environment, the Sukuma (the major tribal group in the region) in pre-colonial times, and the circumstances surrounding the growth and development of the area. It also takes the reader on a

"walk" through the city of Mwanza as experienced by myself at the time of this research. The purpose is to provide a more textured feel for the place and the content of the research itself, which is discussed in more detail at the conclusion of the chapter. The images and impressions that I formed of the place, the people, and my own role as an anthropologist interested in AIDS are worth mentioning simply because they are such a pervasive feature of the ethnographic process. Unfortunately, history, theory, and the presentation of ethnographic information as a relatively polished product each have their own way of excluding these important features. Life and work in Mwanza is a far richer and more colorful process than the sum of these perspectives would have one believe.

The landscape

The city of Mwanza in Tanzania is located on the southeastern shore of Lake Victoria (see Map 3.1 on page 102). It is situated at the opening of Smith Sound, a long, thin arm of the lake that extends directly south for more than 40 kilometers. The city itself stretches in a north-south direction, hemmed in by a long, unbroken hill on the east and by Lake Victoria on the west. The Mirongo River, now channeled, flows through the city from east to west and its tributary, the Nyakabungo River, flows from north to south. The city is situated directly behind Capri Point, a small bulge of land that juts directly out into the lake. Designated industrial areas are located along the lakeshore to the immediate north and south of the city center with a third at Nyakato on the opposite side of the hills due east. Long stretches of unplanned squatter settlements fan out from each of these industrial centers as well as from the city center. Their steady encroachment is checked to the north and south by large tracts of land belonging to the Tanzanian government that effectively act to close off any kind of development at either end. The reason for government ownership on the northern side is the Mwanza Municipal Airport, located approximately six kilometers from the city center. Settlement patterns change dramatically

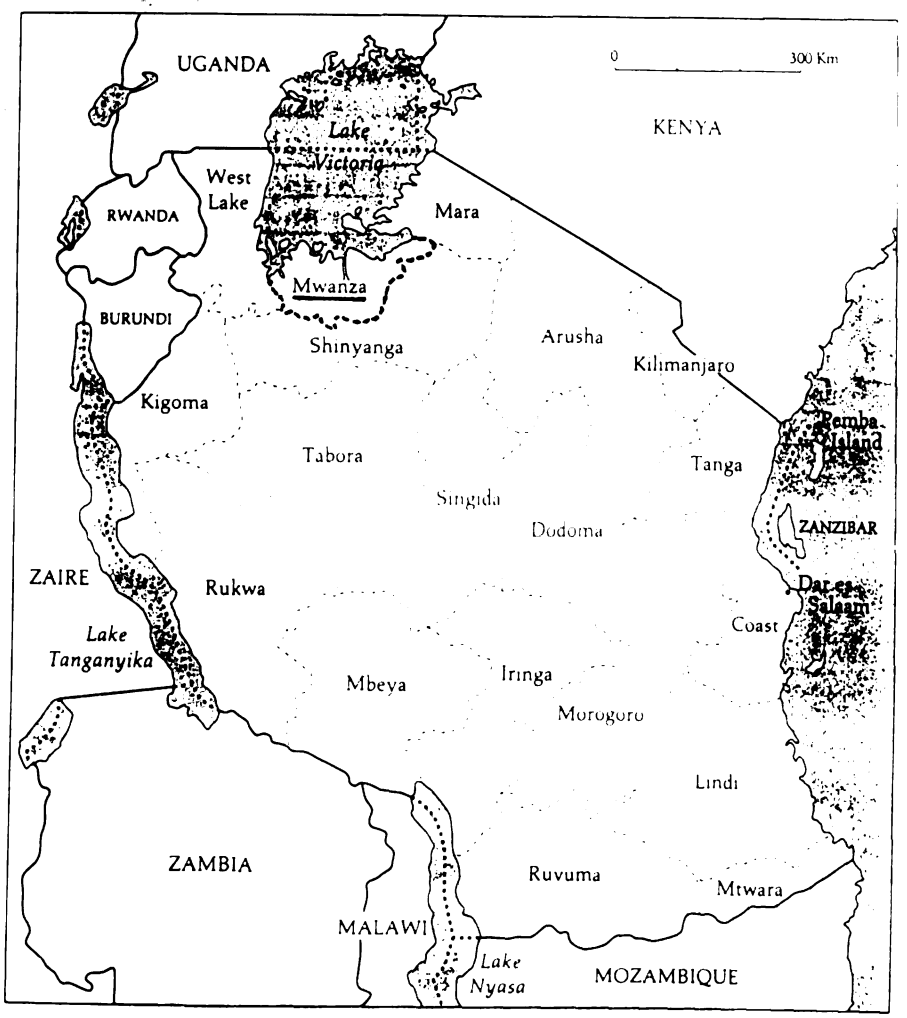


Map 3.1: Location of the city of Mwanza

directly beyond the airport, becoming mostly isolated homesteads with a few, scattered townships. A similar situation occurs at almost the same distance from the city center to the south, where an unusually large portion of land comprises the grounds of Butimba Prison, one of the largest correctional facilities in the country. With Lake Victoria and the steep, rocky hills to the west and east of the city respectively, and vast government-owned tracts of land to the north and south, most of present-day Mwanza is confined to a long, thin strip of coastal land approximately ten to twelve kilometers in length. Urban planners are promoting future growth in an easterly direction through a network of meticulously planned residential neighborhoods and series of community centers. The result would be an extension of the city over and above the rocky hills constituting its eastern border, quite literally the only direction in which the city can grow.

The city of Mwanza is the administrative center of Mwanza Region, one of eighteen regions in the country (see Map 3.2 on page 104). Together with the small but busy airport, Mwanza is also a major port city with regular ferries connecting it to various other ports throughout Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. The main roads leading to and from Mwanza run east and then north to Musoma near the Kenyan boarder, south to Shinyanga and on to Tabora, and south (around Smith Sound) and then west to Rwanda and Burundi. A section of the Tanzanian railroad system also runs from Mwanza to Tabora where it links up with the main Dar es Salaam-Ujiji line. The roads are dirt and gravel and so notoriously bad that they regularly become impassable during the rainy seasons. Even the train can be delayed due to poor weather, and it is not uncommon to find it sitting idle at the Mwanza depot for weeks at a time.

Beyond the city, the landscape is an almost unchanging one, consisting of a treeless undulating plain of scrub brush with scattered granite outcroppings or forests of small trees to break the uniformity. There are few permanent watercourses and those that do exist are usually slow moving, ankle-deep quagmires of mud and silt. The best soils for farming are found close



Map 3.2: Administrative regions of Tanzania

to hilltops, which become a more frequent physical feature as one approaches Lake Victoria and the areas surrounding the city (Malcolm 1953; Schanne-Raab 1974). These areas constitute some of the most productive agricultural lands in Tanzania, having both fertile soils and sufficient rainfall.

Mwanza Region is one of the most populous areas in Tanzania and it has the nation's single largest unit of rural inhabitants (Finucane 1974; United Republic of Tanzania1 1988). Rural settlement patterns have largely been a product of geologic and climatic variation and population densities have always been greater around the lakeshore and the city, gradually but noticeably tapering off as one moves inland (Malcolm 1953; Greble 1971; Schanne-Raab 1974). Expansion is ultimately limited to the east by the Serengeti National Park and by the presence of the Masai, to the north by Lake Victoria, and to the west by the less satisfactory, clay-like *miomba* soils. As a result, population expansion into the rural areas of the region has historically occurred to the south of the lake and city. Even in these areas, however, movement has been limited throughout history by the presence of the tsetse fly, the vector of *trypanosomiasis* (sleeping sickness) in humans and a similar disease known as *nagana* in cattle (Malcolm 1953).

There are two rainy seasons that vary in their timing from year to year. The first is a heavy wet period with the peak rainfall usually occurring in April. This is followed by a short wet period beginning in September and sometimes October, with heavier rains in November and December. Between these two rainy periods is the dry season lasting anywhere from three, four, or five months. The average air temperature is approximately 74 degrees Fahrenheit with very little variation throughout the year, though humidity can be extremely high and variable (Greble 1971). Annual rainfall amounts are also greater and much more reliable along the lakeshores (averaging approximately 40 inches), a climatic pattern which, together with improved soil quality, encourages extensive agricultural activity in these areas and explains the high rural

population densities (Heijnen 1968). In general, the weather is much less dependable as one moves inland. As a result, the landscape becomes harsher, drier, and flatter.

With the absence of a solid infrastructure, together with the flat, sparsely populated landscape as one moves inland, and the sheer geographic isolation from the bulk of the country's population (located along the coast of the Indian Ocean and the areas surrounding Mt. Kilimanjaro), it is easy to imagine Mwanza Region as an island unto itself. The relatively self-contained nature of the early history and society of the region's long-time inhabitants, the Sukuma, reinforces this perspective. Pre-colonial history and society in Mwanza Region conjoin to present a uniquely egalitarian people with a diffuse political and economic system who have quietly yet steadily expanded across a seemingly unending landscape.

The people in pre-colonial times

The Sukuma are the largest and most dominant tribe in Mwanza Region, comprising anywhere from seventy to eighty percent of the total population[1] (Fincuane 1974). They are part of the Western Bantu and comprise, together with the Nyamwezi to the south and a host of smaller, neighboring tribes, a group of African peoples very closely related in language and customs. A commonly cited bit of information is that the word "sukuma" simply means "north" or "northern country" in the Sukuma-Nyamwezi language, a reference attributed to travelers passing through Nyamwezi country being informed about the country of Sukuma — the country to the north — and the subsequent adoption of the word as a name for its inhabitants (Cory 1951). The Sukuma and Nyamwezi are thought to have taken part in migrations from the south of Lake Tanganyika along its eastern side, eventually dispersing over most of northwestern and central Tanzania sometime between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries (Austin and Holmes 1978).

Political leadership

According to local oral histories, the establishment of formal authority in Sukumaland is thought to have occurred during the second half of the seventeenth century. At this time, a southward migration of Nilotic peoples from present-day Uganda is believed to have penetrated Sukumaland via the west and south coast of Lake Victoria, eventually establishing a loose rule of family dynasties as they were peacefully absorbed into Bantu society over time (Cory 1954; Seligman 1957). The leaders of these ruling lineages became known as *ntemi*, a word that would only later become associated with the title for "chief."

The Sukuma traditionally lived in loosely clustered communities only partly based on close kinship ties (Cory 1954). These settlements gradually expanded and coalesced into what might be thought of as small, diffuse chiefdoms under the rule of a single *ntemi*. Each chiefdom consisted of a loose amalgam of lineage-based villages and varied in size from several thousand to tens of thousands of people. The number of chiefdoms in Sukumaland also varied considerably throughout history, ranging anywhere from thirty-nine to fifty at the time of colonial occupation (Cory 1954; Liebenow 1960; Finucane 1974). Since each chiefdom was relatively autonomous at this time, pre-colonial Sukuma society has been characterized less as a centralized and self-perceived "tribe" then as a collection of loosely-knit and independent "*ntemi*ships" (Liebenow 1956).

Traditionally, the *ntemi*'s powers were of a magico-religious rather than a secular character, the most important aspect of which centered around the control over natural forces and the agricultural cycle as well as the termination of epidemics and infestations (Cory 1951; Liebenow 1960). While succession was determined by the general tribal practice of patrilineage, heirs to the most important *ntemiships* were selected on the principle of matrilineage (Austin 1968). When European colonists changed the few instances of matrilineal succession to patrilineal succession for administrative purposes, there was reportedly little opposition (Cory

1954). Such unconcern may be due in part to the fact that the *ntemi*'s authority was continuously checked at the local level by headmen, village elders, curers, and a wide variety of village-based societies, organizations, clubs, and work cooperatives (Juma 1960; Pederson 1977; Knudsen 1977; Jassy 1978). The most important of these groups were the various dance societies, age-groups and the *elika*, or young men's society which, along with the village headman, had the important task of allocating land. The *elika* could also demonstrate against an *ntemi* who was in disfavor and were often at odds with the village elders (Liebenow 1960; Jassy 1978).

Because their authority was constantly moderated at the village level and predominantly of a ritual nature, the *ntemi*'s powers were limited. Their powers were further restricted by the dispersed nature of Sukuma settlement patterns over a large geographic area, evidenced by the fact that there was no subordination of one chiefdom to another and no tradition in Sukumaland of penetration from the chiefdom's center into its periphery for the extraction of any significant amounts of tribute or labor or for the regulation of behavior (Liebenow 1956; Fincuane 1974). Wars of aggression were simply unprofitable in the area, and true political centralization would have to await contact with non-African commercial centers (Austen 1968). In fact, the *ntemi* was in constant danger of being deprived of his position and driven out of the chiefdom, particularly if there was a prolonged famine or epidemic of some kind (Cory 1954). These depositions were reportedly quite frequent (Austin 1968). Yet another response to an unpopular *ntemi* was simply to emigrate to another chiefdom, a frequent occurrence since land was relatively abundant at the time and there was a definitively positive and culturally legitimated outlook surrounding inter and intra-chiefdom migration (Finucane 1974; Jassy 1978; Shipton 1984). In fact, it was considered prestigious for a man to migrate to a new area and become the first clearer of virgin land (Brandstrom 1990).

Economic sphere

The Sukuma economic sphere involved a mixture of subsistence agriculture and pastoralism. Traditionally, they grew millet, squash, and beans (the Europeans would later introduce maize and cassava). The Sukuma were, and still are, one of the largest cattle-owning tribes in East Africa (Cory 1954). At one time, the raising of livestock was the foundation of an extensive prestige economy and until the last several decades only a marginal part of the cash economy. As such, cattle were the major means of capital formation and savings investments and they were often lent out in order to form and maintain large social networks based on a trusteeship system.

A typical Sukuma family consisted of a man, two or three wives, and their children living together on cultivated patches of land near their homestead. Generally speaking, individual households were widely spaced apart, and the closest neighbor could be as far as a mile away. After several years, when the soil was exhausted, the family would shift to other patches of land nearby or simply migrate to another area. Land rights were not commonly inherited because there was little competition for it, particularly as one moved south and away from Lake Victoria (Cory 1954). An abundance of land was reflected in Sukuma inheritance laws, which were loosely defined and subject to individual cases (Cory 1954). In practice, however, wives and daughters had very little chance of inheriting and/or owning land and property and it was usually one of the man's sons who remained behind to do so. It was more common for families and married sons to join other villages and acquire land rights immediately by permission of the local headman (Shipton 1984). It is important to note that the availability of land had less to do with a shortage of people than with its relative abundance since Sukumaland has always been one of the most populous regions in Tanganyika, a fact dating as far back as the nineteenth century (Kjekshus 1977).

Ritual life, kinship, and gender relations

The focus of ritual life in traditional Sukuma culture was the relationship between the living and the dead, which assumed its visible manifestation in the cult and the worship of the ancestors (Tanner 1969; Pederson 1977). The worship of the ancestors formed the very core of ritual life and they were believed to be the mediators between the past and the present, between what was near and far, and between what was visible and invisible. The ancestors represented the most immediate link between everyday activities and the spirit world (Tanner 1969). An important distinction revealed in ancestor worship was that between familiar kin as a direct link to the ancestors and those who did not belong to familial lineages as outsiders and strangers. One of the most significant manifestations of this duality was embodied in marriage, where the wife was not considered to be a legitimate part of the ancestral lineage of her husband, but remained a ritual stranger to both husband and his kin. A similar situation befell children born without a socially recognized father (i.e., when the man and woman were considered close kin), who were considered to be so removed from the social mores of the village that they were literally called "children of the bush" (Brandstrom 1990:179). In general, then, children were traced through both their mother's and father's lineage, though "agnatic leanings" have been discussed (Brandstrom 1990). One result was that neither a woman nor her children necessarily had a ritually or culturally legitimate claim to land or property if her husband died or if they divorced, the latter reportedly being a common practice even in pre-colonial Sukuma society (Nicholson 1973).

The subordinate role of women is an important aspect of pre-colonial Sukuma society and it was legitimated by a wide variety of significant agricultural and natural metaphors surrounding male and female reproductive power, the conjugal union, and the lineal relationship through marriage (Brandstrom 1990). While the woman, as passive wife, was likened to the wild bush transformed into cultivated land, the unmarried woman was associated with the untamed

wilderness. For the active male, who generally took precedence over the female, to look for a wife was to go in search of arable land, to clear the bush, prepare fields, and plant seeds. The polarities of village/bush, culture/nature, domesticating/domesticated, and active/passive were continuously present in the everyday relationships of males and females. At a more general level, they were spatially manifested and legitimated in the practical and positively perceived experience of continuous territorial expansion and the domestication and "taming" of the bush for farming activities. In this sense, the inequality imbued in the male-female duality, together with its consequences, was legitimated at all levels in the very circumstances that formed pre-colonial Sukuma history and society. However, it is important to recognize that women were not totally muted in Sukuma society, and they assumed the lead role in several important rituals and ceremonies surrounding the ancestors (Brandstrom 1990). Gender relationships for the Sukuma have been described as the product of continuous and irresolvable negotiations (Brandstrom 1990).

Summary comments

In general, the Sukuma outlook seems to have been the independent, egalitarian one of dispersed homesteaders balanced by a theme of association and disparity in the performance and interpretation of certain political, agricultural, and ritual activities. Their non-partisan and relatively decentralized political system, their diffuse settlement patterns over a broad, wide-ranging landscape, and their relatively non-violent history, present a seemingly conservative and complacent picture of a society. This perspective would eventually manifest itself and play a part in the colonial and post-colonial history of Mwanza Region. It would also prove to be thoroughly at odds with the political and economic fervor that would sweep Sukumaland and the dynamic role the region and its people would eventually play in the growth and development of a major African city.

A brief history of a city and its region

German occupation

Like many present day cities of East Africa, Mwanza had its beginnings as a colonial administrative center. It was established by the Germans in the late 1880's (around the same time that Sir Henry Morton Stanley passed through the area on one of his many explorations of sub-Saharan Africa) as a small, ad hoc military station by an eccentric Austrian doctor and explorer, Emin Pasha[2] (Iliffe 1979). Pasha was charged by the German protectorate government with beginning an administrative center on Lake Victoria as a base from which to undermine Arab trade routes ranging from the coast to Rwanda and Uganda. The Germans also wanted to establish a closer presence to the wealthy Kingdom of Buganda on the northern shore of the lake. For the first decade of its existence, Mwanza remained a military base under the command of a single German officer from which a small garrison of troops were deployed to tour the surrounding countryside, establish military security, and form "local compromises" with indigenous leaders in a fashion not unlike British indirect rule (Austin 1968; Iliffe 1979). It was not until several years after Tanzania (then Ost-Afrika) became an official German colony in 1890 that Mwanza would itself become a more effective administrative center (Austin 1968). By 1895, the military and administrative presence was strong enough to begin strengthening the power of the Sukuma *ntemis*, collect taxes, and reach out to the bigger, stronger, and more stable chiefdoms located further south along the border with the Nyamwezi people (Austin 1968). The Sukuma recognized the power and influence of the Germans and by 1900 retained at least forty permanent representatives of Sukuma *ntemi* at Mwanza (Austin 1968).

Ironically, it was British initiative that transformed Mwanza from an isolated military and administrative outpost to an important economic and trade center. In 1901, the British completed the "Uganda Railway" from Mombasa on the Kenya coast to Kisumu on the northeastern shore of the lake (Austin 1968). The railway became an immediate commercial and

strategic link for vast areas surrounding Lake Victoria and allowed Mwanza, connected to the railway at Kisumu by British steamers, to rise to an entirely new significance. Mwanza began to serve as an economic entrepot for the entire area between Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. As regional trade moved in a northerly direction toward Lake Victoria, long-established Arab (soon to be German) trade routes that relied extensively on Sukuma and Nyamwezi porters began a long process of disintegration and eventual collapse. While the old route passed through Tabora to the south on its way from Dar es Salaam to Rwanda and beyond, the new direction for the flow of goods and produce was funneled directly through Mwanza (Iliffe 1979). Trade developed so fast that the steamers could not keep up with the flow of goods, piles of which lay for months at the Mwanza port facilities (Greble 1971). At the same time, Mwanza Region was also becoming known for its mineral wealth including it's vast deposits of gold, the mining of which would pave the way for private investments in the city's growth and development throughout the twentieth century (Chachage 1995). These events led to rapid changes in Mwanza Town, including the completion of the road to Tabora in 1901 (Austin 1968), the transference from a military to a German civilian administration in 1903, the introduction of telegraph wires in 1905 (Iliffe 1979), and a general increase in missionary activity and the collection of taxes. In 1908, the town consisted of 1200 African and 64 European inhabitants and boasted half a dozen European firms, fifty Indian[3] traders, a hospital, hotel, and an array of African huts (Greble 1971). By 1915, the population had grown to approximately 3000 people (Naval Intelligence Division 1969). While the Germans had begun to establish Mwanza as the hub of a regional cash economy built on the production of cotton, the full development of these efforts were put on hold by the outbreak of World War I and the subsequent British occupation of the small town in 1916.

World War I and early British occupation

Military operations during World War I were not extensive in Mwanza Region and the structure within which Germans had established rule in the area passed into British hands with little change and to the relative indifference of the Sukuma. Perhaps the most immediate and notable changes in Mwanza Town involved the outbreak of diseases that were brought by the combined British and Belgian forces (Austin 1968). In particular, cerebro-spinal meningitis and pneumonic influenza accounted for a great number of African deaths at this time. Congolese troops under the command of the Belgians also became notorious for their incidents of plunder and rape in and around the town. In addition to these problems, one of the worst droughts ever recorded in Tanganyika occurred at this time and prompting more people to come to the town in order to find or steal food (Greble 1971). These early migrations foreshadowed the centrality and importance of Mwanza to the region's rural inhabitants in times of crisis and need.

From 1916 to 1926, Mwanza became the center of a British administrative system closely resembling the classic description of *direct* rule (Liebenow 1960; Austin 1968; Finucane 1974; Austin and Holmes 1978). Chiefdom boundaries were altered for administrative purposes and colonial civil servants selected *akidas*, usually brought in from alien tribes in Uganda, to rule on behalf of local *ntemi*. Cotton continued to be pursued as the main cash crop and compulsory growing measures were intensified. However, minimal capital investment, the instability and high turnover rate of administrative staff, and difficulties associated with administering a new territory virtually from scratch hampered these efforts. At this time, the rural hinterlands became notorious for "nativism" and other social and political movements oriented toward the "traditional" and in direct contrast — even opposition — to the modern world represented by Mwanza itself.

The British focused a considerable amount of attention on Mwanza Region from the middle of the 1920's until World War II. Indirect rule became the official policy throughout

Tanganyika and Mwanza Region was in the forefront of its implementation, becoming the first area of Tanganyika where the new system was first tried (Greble 1971). A vast social-administrative structure specifically based on the anthropological concept of the "tribe" took precedence as administrators, now acting as amateur ethnographers, scrambled to "find the chief." It was an undertaking that proved so difficult among the decentralized Sukuma that it resulted in the British having to strengthen the power of the *ntemi* to such an exaggerated degree as to quite literally create chiefs in the process (Austin 1968). The British simultaneously acted to stimulate and reinforce cotton production and mining operations by improving the road networks throughout the region and, in 1928, completed a branch of the Central Railroad from Tabora to Mwanza so that goods from the area could pass through Dar es Salaam rather than Kenyan ports (Iliffe 1979; Sabot 1979). C.F.M. Swynnerton[4] also began his famous "tribal turnouts" to attack the region's tsetse "fly belts," as well as to open up new land, stimulate migration, and strengthen the commercial economy (Austin 1968; Austin and Holmes 1978). These efforts helped cotton production jump to five times its previous output (Iliffe 1979). By this time, the trade and marketing of cotton in Mwanza was already firmly established in Asian hands (Austin 1968). Asian middlemen and shopkeepers caused a substantial amount of discontent among Africans and Mwanza became the site of several riots over the years that specifically targeted suspected Asian profiteering. It was also during the 1930's and 1940's that an increase of women prostitutes began in Tanganyikan towns in general. Some historians have suggested a possible link between this occurrence and the relative decline of women's status in cash-crop areas (Iliffe 1979).

Although Mwanza Town was important to the colonial economy at this time, rural-urban migration remained relatively insignificant and urban growth was very slow (Lugalla 1995). The lack of growth can be traced to a combination of factors, including the colonial government's efforts to sustain the rural lifestyle of the indigenous population, the administrative (rather than

industrial) base of the town itself, and the general feeling that Africans were "temporary" residents in towns like Mwanza, while Europeans and Asians were considered permanent (Lugalla 1995). Such perceptions applied particularly to African women, as is evident in the following comment from the Secretary of State for the Colonies regarding restrictions on women's employment:

> The native woman at her present stage of mental development is totally unsuitable for partaking in any industrial undertaking involving mechanical knowledge and will be so for a considerable time in the future. [extracted from Bryceson, 1980:16]

Migration to the town was also checked by the Worldwide economic depression and lack of employment during the 1930's (Illife 1979). While an increase in cotton production began to cause serious land scarcity and soil erosion problems in the region, the population outflow was increasingly moving west to Geita District due to a combination of Swynnerton's bush clearing efforts and the growth of mining activity in the area (Iliffe 1979; Chachage 1995)

Cotton production and the cooperative movement

From World War II until national independence in 1961, Mwanza Region was specifically singled out by the British colonial government as the prime area for the implementation of massive agricultural extension policies. Cotton production was significantly increased and, in the process, the British effectively established a peasant society unique to the region (Liebenow 1960). Although indirect rule in Sukumaland was replaced with an experimental program called "local government," it was somewhat of a misnomer since it was designed to augment the bureaucratic apparatus of the administration in order to support the commercial economy (Dudbridge and Griffiths 1951; Maguire 1969; Maguire 1970; Finucane 1974). One byproduct of the new system of government was the Sukumaland Federal Council, a tribe-based organization established in 1947 in order to unify the chiefs to serve a variety of functions. A supporting hierarchy of "Native Authorities" and executive "councils" from the

parish to the federal levels were also established (Cory 1954). The critical programs needing implementation at the time fell under the heading of the Sukumaland Development Scheme, a meticulously planned package of policies involving the massive resettlement of 30,000 people, the control of livestock, and the general intensification of cotton production and marketing activities (Liebenow 1960; Hyden 1980). Despite a substantial number of administrative problems, the scheme helped Sukuma cotton output to multiply fivefold from 1945 to 1960 and the region was highlighted by the British as a shining example of "local government" (Iliffe 1979). The underlying attitude among British administrators was to coerce and compel the Sukuma - by force if necessary - to improve their lives through agricultural development (Hyden 1980). One result was that the colonial bureaucracy grew in leaps and bounds, which caused an increased concentration of government personnel in Mwanza Town, particularly of African civil servants at the lowest levels. The towns growth – which still remained relatively slow – directly paralleled the development of an increasingly sophisticated administrative structure built almost exclusively around the production and export of cotton. In 1948, the population of Mwanza was approximately 11,300 and by 1957 it had grown to 19,900 (Malcolm 1953; Lugalla 1995; Mayunga 1997).

As both Hyden (1980) and Macguire (1970) point out, by the 1950's Sukumaland was the most over-legislated and over-regulated region in Tanganyika. The resulting colonial bureaucracy caused a mounting resentment throughout the region. One of the principle points of contention stemmed from the acute sense of economic exploitation that Africans felt concerning an Asian monopoly over the marketing of cotton. African farmers responded in 1952 by founding the Lake Province Growers Association (known later as the Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions), an organization that would purchase 13% of the cotton crop just one year later. By 1959, the cooperative obtained a monopoly for the purchase of cotton from all

Sukumaland growers and became the biggest cooperative organization on the African continent (Iliffe 1979; Hyden 1980).

Political awareness and the path toward independence

The cooperative movement was the impetus for political activity and Mwanza Town became the logical focus of political participation in a region that had now gained a reputation as a political hotbed. Suddenly, there were widespread protests over a range of issues including: the creation of a multi-racial District Council that gave unequal representation to Africans, mandatory cattle-destocking legislation, soil erosion control measures, and the rising taxes on cattle and cotton production. Although colonial rule primarily threatened rural farmers, the majority of Sukuma no longer turned to traditional lines of authority since the chiefs, now acting in a stronger capacity but as Native Authorities, were widely viewed as puppets of an authoritarian and bureaucratic administration (Liebenow 1956; Maguire 1970). It was the Tanganyika African Association (TAA), a small, ineffective, town-oriented political organization that had maintained a branch in Mwanza since the late 1940's, that was revitalized by the growing discontentment of the region's rural inhabitants. By 1954, the TAA had changed its name to the Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU) and successfully transformed itself into a thoroughly activist, even militant, organization with the branch in Mwanza leading the way.

While Mwanza was already a well-established administrative and economic focal point for the region, it now served as the center for an emerging African elite who developed a local political awareness that would ultimately have implications for the entire country. For some time, the town had attracted the younger, educated members of Tanganyika's "non-traditionalists" from different tribes who worked as civil servants in the lower echelons of the colonial administration. They ultimately produced what would become Tanganyika's first full-time political organizers. Their jobs entailed embarking on political tours (often riding bicycles)

throughout the surrounding countryside in order to recruit mass support for nothing short of national independence. The enthusiastic activists drew upon the heightened sense of economic exploitation that, by and large, was unique to Sukumaland in its scope and intensity. They effectively embraced regional, rural-based issues as their own by defining them as problems confronting all Tanganyikans rather than any one chiefdom or tribe. TANU's radicalism and liberal ideology contributed to the transformation of Mwanza into the regional center for a developing African lifestyle characterized by its freedom from the shackles of British authority. The town became a place of political fervor and took on the dynamic atmosphere of a revolutionary center characterized by the "modern" African living in a modern world. As a result, it was an escape for some groups from the hard work and drudgery of the traditional farming way of life. This was particularly the case for women, who made up the largest proportion of card-carrying members of TANU by the 1950's and began coming to Mwanza in growing numbers (Tanga and Peter 1996). Though women were still outnumbered by men in the town's African population by a ratio of 1.5 to 1 (Greble 1971), they still managed to own one-quarter of the houses in Mwanza as early as 1956 (Iliffe 1979).

The British responded to African dissent in Sukumaland by banning all political organizations in Mwanza Region for four years during the late 1950's. They simultaneously attempted to discredit the political activists with a propaganda campaign that drew upon the growing rural-urban disparity between Africans. They targeted the town-based activists as a small group of irresponsible and conniving urban swindlers, while simultaneously appealing to the legitimacy of the "traditional" and distinctly rural lifestyle of the Sukuma (Maguire 1970). Efforts to stem the tide of African political activism characterized the final years of British rule and revealed the definitively rural bias of colonial society that was particularly featured in Mwanza Region. Administrative ideology was in direct opposition to the growing population, power, and influence of Africans living in Mwanza. By the mid 1950's, national independence

in Tanganyika was an impending reality and the British were forced to change their policies in order to integrate Africans into urban life (Stren 1975). By the time of national independence in 1961, Mwanza had become the regional seat of a new African leadership characterized by their avant-garde lifestyle and optimistic outlook. It remained a small town, however, and its growth ultimately depended upon successfully tapping the economic power of the vast majority of Africans who continued to live and farm in the countryside, an enormous task in a region with the largest population of rural dwellers in Tanzania.

"Villagization" versus urban growth

As with most regions in the newly independent country of Tanzania[5], events in Mwanza Region from 1961 until the mid 1980's were dominated by the government's efforts to consolidate power and harness the economic potential of the rural farming sector. In practice, the government and TANU became one and the same and thus joined acted initially in Mwanza Region by taking over all cooperatives in Sukumaland, banning the institution of chieftanship and other tribe-based organizations such as the Sukuma Union, and generally standardizing their own judiciary and executive lines of authority (Nicholson 1973; Finucane 1974). Though the government had experimented with rural villagization schemes in the first few years following independence, the real drive for control of the agricultural sector via the massive resettlement of people began in 1967 when President Julius Nyerere introduced the Arusha Declaration. The Arusha Declaration was a plan detailing the party's aim to prioritize rural development through the socialist-inspired concept of *ujamaa* (literally: familyhood) entailing the creation of communal village production units. Although the plan imbued what has been described as a "mild and pragmatic anti-urbanism" (Lugalla 1995:28), the overwhelming rural bias involving *ujamaa* policy was offset in Mwanza Region somewhat in 1969 by the designation of Mwanza as one of nine "New Growth Pole Centers" in the country, thus ensuring that any further industrial development in the region would be located in the town (Lugalla 1995). Mwanza was the logical

choice for development since, by 1967, its population had grown to approximately 34,800, the vast majority of whom were rural-urban migrants seeking full-time wage employment and a permanent escape from the traditional farming way of life. With the construction of small-scale factories that signaled the beginnings of industrial production, Mwanza became one of the few places in the western half of the country where urban wage employment was possible. By the end of the 1960's, the city absorbed 79% of the immediate region's rural-urban migration, almost equaling Dar es Salaam as the most popular destination for rural-urban migrants from western Tanzania (Sabot 1979). The effect was that the city almost doubled its population between 1967 and 1971, reaching approximately 60,800 by 1971 and surpassing Tanga as the second largest city in the country after Dar es Salaam (Sabot 1979). Between 1967 and 1970, the urban population grew at a rate of 12% whereas the average annual growth rate of the total population in Tanzania was only 2.7% (Bryceson 1980).

The rapid influx of rural-urban migrants would prove too much for the small city of Mwanza and it began to show signs of strain throughout the 1970's. A substantial growth of large squatter settlements occurred in the Nyakato and Mbuyuni sections of town, where the proliferation of abject poverty and squalor remained virtually unchecked (Stren 1982; Lugalla 1995). The situation was exacerbated by the slow emergence of a skilled African labor force in the city, a problem that directly contributed to the city's rising unemployment and crime rates. The region as a whole was also in serious trouble at this time, ranking eighth amongst seventeen regions in doctor-to-patient ratios (one doctor per 31,091 people), eleventh in per capita annual national expenditures on health, sixteenth in primary school education, and eleventh in the provision of improved water supplies (Finucane 1974). Despite its strong contribution to the total national output, Mwanza Region was relatively poor and becoming increasingly isolated from the coastal parts of Tanzania where most social and economic development was occurring. Moreover, it appeared as if the economic problems facing the region and its capital city were

bound to continue, not only due to the ensuing failure of national policy to effectively manage Tanzania's rural farmers, but also because of the international oil shock and World-wide economic depression that dominated the 1970's.

The Tanzanian government responded to the crisis at the national level by implementing compulsory villigization and initiating the largest resettlement effort in the history of Africa (Hyden 1980). Throughout the early to middle 1970's, Mwanza Region became one of several areas where the outright use of force was utilized to move people into *Ujamaa* villages (Havnevik 1993). An assortment of problems followed, including the false reporting of villages by over-zealous administrators, the multiple movement of people, blunders surrounding the location of villages, and the general apathy of the rural population regarding *ujamaa* policy. The latter quickly developed into a sharp criticism and distrust of urban-based administrators who were thought to know very little about specific agricultural practices and environmental adaptations unique to the region (Hyden 1980). As far as urban growth was concerned, the effect of *ujamaa* policy was to blame the urban unemployed for a host of problems, and they were continuously rounded up and repatriated to communal villages and rural-based work programs. These practices coincided with the launching of a massive propaganda campaign by President Nyerere who used quotes from the Bible and the Koran to morally discredit the urban unemployed as "loiterers," "lazy," "drunkards," and "exploiters" (Lugalla 1995). The underlying implication was not too unlike that which defined the last several decades of British colonial rule: urban problems could be solved through the positive economic and moral qualities manifested in rural-based agriculture. As a result, cities were depicted as places in total opposition to the raising of African families and were viewed as having only a small and supporting role in *ujamaa* policy. The government encouraged African males working in the cities to retain a rural plot of land and to keep their families in the countryside, effectively sustaining the colonial policy that resulted in the city as a place where itinerant, male, African

workers outnumbered all other segments of society (Lugalla 1995). At the same time, however, the continuing economic crisis strengthened rural-urban linkages and insured the migration of other household members, namely women and children, who increasingly joined men in Tanzania's towns (Sabot 1979). Excessive state intervention and general economic decline intensified these trends throughout the 1970's, patterns which culminated with the war against Idi Amin's Uganda from 1978 to 1979. By the early 1980's, it was apparent that *ujamaa* policy had failed and the economy was approaching near collapse. External sources of funding for the Tanzanian government had disappeared and the socialist administration was under heavy pressure to reduce the role of the state and liberalize the economy (Havenik 1993).

Female migration

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, female migration to Tanzania's urban centers became an increasingly common phenomenon. One possible reason for these migrations lay, at least in part, to the heightened oppression of women in Tanzania's rural areas after independence. As Bujra (1990) suggests, *ujamaa*/villigization policies intensified women's workload on the farm without rewarding them or giving them greater control over the means to produce. U*jamaa* policy also did little to openly confront oppressive sexual relations in peasant families and communities. Meanwhile, women's traditional access to land remained limited as the ownership and control of property continued to be in the hands of men. Despite the passage of legislation designed to allow women to inherit, hold, and dispose of property (such as the Law of Marriage Act of 1971), their situation changed very little as customary laws surrounding inheritance remained strong. In addition, few women were actually aware of the existence of laws designed to protect their property rights (Tenga and Peter 1996). As a result, urban life became a more attractive option. This was particularly true for unmarried women, who increased from 13% of the female total in Tanzania's urban centers in 1950-52 to 33% by 1970-71 (Bryceson 1980). In Dar es Salaam, the proportion of unmarried women who came to town increased from 13 percent

of all women before 1953 to 33 percent by 1970 and 1971 (Sabot 1979). By 1967, the proportion of divorced women in urban areas also increased to two times greater than that found in rural areas, whereas for men there was no rural-urban difference (United Republic of Tanzania 1967). "Husbandless" women contributed a great deal to the proportion of females who constituted Tanzania's total labor force, almost doubling from 5% in 1951 to 9% in 1974 (Bryceson 1980). However, the economic exploitation of females was widespread in Tanzania's urban centers and their situation was particularly difficult (Sabot 1979).

There is also evidence that female attitudes in Tanzania's urban centers were undergoing dramatic changes at this time as economic independence became an increasingly important and meaningful goal. They decried village cultivation with its hard, sweaty workload and long hours (Bryceson 1980) and developed a sharp cynicism around marriage and an associated rejection of male dependency (Bryceson 1980; Kunwijila and Due 1991). As Smith and Sender (1990) suggest, women in Tanzania continued to equate urban life with economic independence and with an "escape" from rural life and the most oppressive and even physically violent relationships with men. The entire urbanization process for women in Tanzania became increasingly coupled with both social and economic freedom. It was becoming apparent that Tanzania's cities were experienced in a variety of ways by different groups and that one of the most significant characteristics differentiating that experience was gender.

Structural adjustment, urbanization, and urban poverty

Since the middle of the 1980's, Tanzania has followed many sub-Saharan African countries by accepting development loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In so doing, the government has had to adopt a complex set of stringent conditions that have ultimately had an impact on all levels of society. These criteria fall under the general rubric of "structural adjustment" and include a series of elements. The main ones include: producer price reforms, removal of subsidies, liberalization of internal and external trade, new

foreign exchange regimes usually including severe devaluations, the introduction of cost-sharing for state-supplied services, privatization, placing curbs on consumption patterns, and political reform and accountability. The intention of structural adjustment policies (SAP's) has been to stimulate growth in the private sector and structure the external relations of the economy to fit the needs of the world market. The policies were specifically aimed at short-term gains that would allow countries like Tanzania to get back on their feet as quickly as possible.

Tanzania initiated structural adjustment programs in 1986 and the results attained thus far have been widely acknowledged as disappointing (Hartmann 1990; O'Neill 1990; Baregu 1994; Lugalla 1995; Ake 1996; Tripp 1997). Since industrial growth has failed to materialize to the extent expected, the state has become increasingly dependent on external donors. Real incomes for the average person have been frozen or have fallen, health services and educational systems have lost government support and become increasingly expensive and inaccessible, unemployment has risen sharply, and there is a general decline in infrastructure and social institutions (Baregu 1994; Lugalla 1995; Ake 1996).

Since the adoption of structural adjustment policies and the political and economic liberalization that they entail, an urban informal economy has thrived in Tanzania's urban centers (Tripp 1997). It has become especially appealing to those groups - namely women, youth, and elderly - who have limited opportunities in the formal sector. Women particularly have found work as petty traders and local food distributors, though they often make so little that they are compelled to combine activities and diversify their survival strategies (Mullings 1976; Wurster and Ludwar-Ene 1994; Tripp 1997). Even before the adoption of SAP's, women who had a considerable amount of formal education found that this qualification *on its own* did not lead to better employment opportunities in the professional sector (Thandani 1978). The formal cash economy of Tanzania's cities has remained a place almost entirely dominated by men by the adoption of SAP's in the post-colonial era, while women have been increasingly excluded from

the development process. Instead, they have become bound more closely into capitalist and petty commodity relations of production, possibly leading into an even greater economic and sexual dependency on men (Bujra 1990). These conditions have resulted in a situation that has perhaps best been termed as a widespread "feminization of poverty" (Robertson and Berger 1986). It is within this context, however, that the continued strengthening of all-female urban social networks has occurred (Robertson and Berger 1986; Muller 1989; Tripp 1997).

As restrictions on rural-urban migration were reduced, women (married and unmarried) and children have increasingly contributed to the exploding population of Mwanza, which in 1988 approximated 223,013. By 1996, the population had almost doubled once again to an estimated 411,900 (Mayunga 1997). The city's squatter settlements have reached unprecedented levels, particularly on Bugando Hill just south of the city center. Astounding patterns of urbanization and urban growth have dominated events in Mwanza over the last ten to fifteen years. There is a growing shortage of goods and services, including an absence of suitable refuse dumping sites, engineering and survey equipment, market facilities, educational facilities and personnel, meat vans, fire and emergency equipment, hospital facilities and equipment, and office accommodations.

Summary comments

From its beginnings as a small, ad-hoc, administrative center, Mwanza has developed into a full-fledged city and the nerve center for political, economic, and social changes in a region that played an increasingly central role throughout Tanzanian history. The region's development into a major market for the export of cotton allowed for the centralization of a bureaucratic power base in Mwanza that strengthened its ties with the surrounding countryside. The growth of the city remained slow, however, possibly due to the strong rural bias and anti-urban sentiment incorporated into the policies of the German and British colonial administration as well as the African socialist policies of Nyerere. During the economic crisis of the 1970's and

early 1980's, a massive influx of rural migrants – many of whom were now women - contributed to the unconstrained growth of the previously sluggish city. As Tanzania attempted to recover from its economic woes by turning to international donor agencies, cities like Mwanza grew far beyond the ability of infrastructure and social services to keep up. Women, children, and the elderly who were coming to the cities have increasingly taken the brunt of these problems. This gradual disintegration has occurred almost simultaneously with the discovery of HIV/AIDS in the area during the early 1980's. Mwanza would once again be at the forefront of events in Tanzania, but this time in the unwanted capacity as the center of a deadly epidemic in a country that simply could not afford another crisis.

A walk through Mwanza

At the close of the twentieth century, the impression that one forms when walking through the streets of Mwanza is an odd mixture of tradition and modernity, of decay and development, and of hopelessness and potential. It is a city simultaneously on the edge of something decidedly promising and heartbreakingly devastating. And it seems to be moving in both directions at a slow, strained crawl and frenetic, almost desperate, dash. Like most cities, there is an element to Mwanza that makes it seem a place where chaos lay just beneath the surface, threatening at any moment to break through the relatively placid facade of the mundane. Through the unquestionably biased eyes of a Western observer, such characteristics are undoubtedly enhanced when walking through the streets of any large East African city. It is an experience – again, for a Western observer – which can only be defined as both unnerving and exhilarating. Mwanza is no different in this respect; it is a place of seemingly irreconcilable yet dynamic oppositions.

Perhaps the most fundamental contrast of Mwanza lay in the difference between its population numbers and the definitively small-town "feel" one gets when walking through its streets. While city officials approximate a population in excess of 410,000 people, the figure one

receives when asking downtown businessmen was almost always stated with an enormous sense of pride as anywhere between 600,000 and 700,000. Yet, even the lowest of these estimates come as a shock when passing through the city center, where the entire downtown business district barely extends beyond a six or seven block radius and only a handful of buildings reach above four stories. Beyond the downtown, the "city" is a dense sprawl of unplanned squatter settlements and small, makeshift shops that surround industrial enclaves on the northern and southern shores of Lake Victoria. For the most part, Mwanza is an unscripted jumble of small mud and brick houses spreading rapidly outward to envelop the surrounding hills and competing for space among the gigantic rock outcroppings. It is not unwarranted to claim that most people, after spending several days walking through this long, drawn-out city, would be inclined to estimate its population size as it had been in 1970: around 30,000 to 40,000 people. It may very well be an estimate that reflects the aura of economic depression rather than the reality of its consequences. When an extremely large number of people have become densely packed together over a very short period of time, the result is a city that seems to have a long way to go to catch up with itself. Mwanza may exude the buzz associated with any large gathering of people but it does so in an environment that somehow retains a sleepy colonial quality that repeatedly belies its size and importance.

Though never completely absent, the small town atmosphere of Mwanza is mitigated somewhat as people begin pouring into the city center each morning, presaged by the steady praying of the Ismaili Khoja Muslims, followers of Aga Khan. It is a constant procession of people utilizing every imaginable kind of transport as they make their way to work or to buy, sell, and trade goods and produce at the central market place or along the shores of the lake. At these hours, the wide, dirt streets become congested with young men dragging dilapidated pull-carts the size of pick-up beds, loaded down with everything from cotton bales, fish, and bananas to empty bottles, timber, and scrap metal. They compete for space on the roads with taxis, buses,

columns of school children walking together in brightly colored uniforms, and a barrage of businessmen and small-time traders on bicycles. Women, wearing the typical wrap-around *kanga* and balancing baskets of produce on their heads, make their way to designated spots throughout the city to set up a *biashara ndogo ndogo* ("small business"), often consisting of nothing more than a pile of tomatoes neatly arranged on a piece of cloth. They are joined by other small businessmen and women who have constructed makeshift wooden stands displaying items like gum, candy, pens, pencils, paper, and envelopes. Children hover close by these stands, usually pooling their savings to buy a pack of gum to be split amongst them or to be resold to others. Lorries constantly rumble past, more often than not filled with cotton bales, the life-blood of the region, to be off-loaded at "Mwanza South Port" in one of the industrial sections of town. On the lakeshore at Kirumba in the northern section of the city, fishermen beach huge fifty-foot *dhows*[6] to load and unload firewood, fish, and some fruit and cotton seed. The *dhow* trade has long been centered at Kirumba and, though it is much less important since the coming of the railroads, one can still find here the finest master craftsmen in all of East Africa constructing these large sailing vessels. The shoreline of Kirumba is also a favored market place for Africans and one of the liveliest places in the city. Large-scale trading occurs simultaneously with individual purchases among the huge piles of drying fish and firewood.

As is the situation throughout most of urban East Africa, the best and biggest shops of Mwanza are owned by Asians, a situation that continues to be a source of contention among Africans who feel that Asian traders have conspired to hinder them from participation in commerce. There are occasional anti-Asian outbursts in Mwanza, releasing feelings of envy and smoldering resentment. The Asian-owned business district makes up most of the immediate downtown area of the city and their shops offer an amazing assortment of items from custom tailored suits and frozen foods to radios, cassette players, electric razors, fans, Walkmans,

televisions, and video cassette recorders (complete with a tape of a relatively recent Arnold Schwarzennegar movie). Most of these items are affordable or even practical to a select few.

The European population of Northwest Tanzania has never been large but their presence has always been influential. Having long since relinquished their roles as administrators, the British have joined the growing ranks of Scandinavians who have come as development workers and "consultants" for an army of non-governmental organizations (NGO's). They can usually be spotted in their Land Rovers, the sides of which are plastered with the insignia of a countless number of aid agencies and mission programs from around the world, conspicuous as they gingerly maneuver their vehicles through the busy streets and a minefield of enormous potholes.

One needs a considerable amount of resolve to deal with the potholes of Mwanza on a daily basis. During the rainy season, they will fill up with water to form small lakes as much as two or three feet deep and it is an unspoken courtesy to drive slowly so as not to swamp pedestrians. It is a meaningless gesture in any case, since the general condition of the roads (due to shortages of cement) makes it virtually impossible to drive more than ten miles per hour in most places. It is not uncommon to be passed by people on foot while riding in a taxi. The potholes solidify into deep craters during the dry season and clouds of dust will hover over the streets to combine with the smoke from a throng of burning piles of garbage to create a stifling, suffocating mass of thick, humid air. Each morning, a small army of women working in groups of about twenty individuals and equipped with hand-held brooms constructed of stiff reeds, methodically sweep the streets and attempt to fill in some of the more manageable potholes. It appears to be a losing battle as they accomplish little beyond pushing the dirt around in small, concentric circles and generally contributing to the dust and exhaust fumes of the early morning traffic. They are frequently dispatched to clean up the garbage that accumulates along the banks of the Mirango River, which runs through the center of the city. The women who work on one of these "street gangs" are considered the poorest of the poor. Their jobs are negatively viewed as a

meager effort by local officials to combat the growing population of beggars and prostitutes in the downtown area. Rumors abound that these women are widows from neighboring Kagera Region and that all are infected with the AIDS virus. They are just one of many groups who are bounded off and pointed to with a mixture of fear and animosity when the subject of AIDS comes up. It is a common practice despite the vast number of large, colorfully painted murals that can be found throughout the city decrying the stigma and blame associated with the disease; a public campaign that some public officials will admit is safer and more acceptable than advocating the value of specific prevention methods like condoms.

Since the late 1980's and following the demise of Apartheid, a growing number of South Africans have also moved to Mwanza, the result of a renewed interest in the region's mineral wealth. Several South African-based mining companies have provided the impetus behind the construction of large company mansions on Capri Point, generally understood as the "white" section of town as far back as the late nineteenth century when the Germans first established a military outpost near there in 1895. Today, Capri Point has the intoxicating feel of a mining boomtown. The influx of international capital and unrestrained private interest contrasts sharply with the relatively ingrained position of the average African families who also live there. Most of the recently built mansions on the small peninsula that juts straight out into Lake Victoria are protected by elaborate, barbed wire fences and a small army of African *askaries* ("watchmen"). The fenced-in structures are small islands of splendor amidst a sea of African squatter settlement, which begins on the opposite side of the barbed wire and winds its way between the gigantic houses, competing for space among the steep, rocky slopes. In the evenings, one can often hear American and British rock music blasting from the CD players somewhere in the bowels of the company mansions, competing with the sounds of life on the other side of the wire: the occasional battery powered radio broadcasting the daily news in Swahili, barking dogs, laughing children, women shouting to one another over the rocks as they each tend the ever-present pot of

boiling water, and the occasional loud drunk. It is an odd and, at times, absurd mixture of worlds that may not exist for very long in this particular neighborhood, since the white residents of Capri Point are quietly but firmly maneuvering to expel all "unplanned settlement" from the area. Because many if not most of the African families who live in these dwellings are employed in the construction of their neighbors' *majumba ya almasi* ("diamond mansions"), they are caught up in a process that will ultimately contribute to their own displacement. It is an irony that does not escape them, but they have little choice given an economic situation in which local factories and businesses have felt compelled to permanently paint "*Hamna Kazi*" or "*Hakuna Kazi*" (both meaning "No Work") in large, white lettering on their gates.

The dismal situation that Tanzanians have faced since their economy virtually collapsed in the early 1980's is still evident in the large number of unemployed men and boys who pass the humid afternoons sitting on benches and steps outside of Mwanza's downtown shops. They are joined by the relatively recent phenomenon of beggars and street children. Only a decade ago, these groups would not have been acceptable in a country that prided itself on a uniquely African version of socialist ideology and principle. They would almost certainly have faced "resettlement" in a rural government village, put to work on a cooperative farm with digging stick and hoe, and compelled to contribute to the common good. The Tanzanian government's answer to everything has always seemed to lie in the curiously regenerative properties of enforced migration coupled with a moral predisposition toward rural life. While anything and anyone moving from the city to the countryside was deemed legitimate and even corrective, urbanization and urban life had long been at cross-purposes with official ideology and practice. On the streets of Mwanza today, beggars and street children continue to suffer from old prejudices and ideologies as they are negatively equated with the distinctly "urban problems" of violent crime, disease, immorality, and drunkenness. Beggars and street children are periodically gathered together in large-scale "round-ups" by police and Social Welfare authorities, put into

lorries, and taken to holding pens outside of town, possibly to be placed in the most recent experimental program in agricultural cooperation. These efforts are rarely successful and are more likely to be sources of embarrassment for local authorities who have relatively little long-term experience with urban growth problems. Most individuals simply end up on the same streets of Mwanza several days or weeks later, and their numbers continue to grow.

Though most people may not be living directly on the streets, it is not difficult to get residents of Mwanza to discuss their own economic plight in a bleak, somber manner. Just outside of the gates of the New Mwanza Hotel, one of the largest and most centrally located buildings in the city, taxi drivers stand in small groups smoking cigarettes and keeping a watchful eye out for *Wazungu* ("Europeans") and other prospective passengers. They are as conspicuous as any other group on the city streets of Mwanza and perhaps the easiest to prompt into a discussion concerning the shortage of work in recent years. Mwanza City is not an international tourist or business destination to the extent of cities like Arusha and Dar es Salaam. *Wazungu* and other highly prized cab fares are conspicuous only by their absence. Taxi drivers will also divulge how most Africans have less money "these days" and that "these days" people in general would rather walk to their destinations than take a taxi. When an absence of customers is combined with a shortage of parts, one result is that many of the small white Toyotas that typically serve as taxi's in East African cities sit idle in the same downtown spot for weeks.

Groups of African businessmen are also a daily presence on the streets as they hover over small stands that sell newspapers from all parts of East Africa as well as England, items that were unheard of in Mwanza only a few short years ago. Magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* are also available together with a small pile of old government publications in both Swahili and English, outdated school texts, and the occasional torn copy of one of Julias Nyerere's many publications outlining the progressive qualities of African Socialism and rural self-reliance, now displayed as if it were a small admonition from another time. The men who own these stands

employ young street boys as hawkers, whose anxious efforts to sell you a magazine betray their fear of a potential beating if they do not satisfy a prearranged quota by the end of the day. Like the taxi drivers, the boys have learned early that this is not an easy task "these days."

The situation of most people contrasts sharply with a small but growing number of African elites in Mwanza. As has been the case for East Africa throughout much of its independent history, the road to elite status has usually passed through the ranks of the civil administration or as an elected public official. Until recently, to be a government official in Tanzania was to be a fervent member of the ruling party, *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (formerly the Tanzanian African National Union or TANU). The emergence of new parties is a direct result of conditions associated with the strict structural adjustment programs and development loans of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Economic and political liberalization have combined to reinvigorate those select few who were already benefiting from big government and can now use their positions and contacts to successfully maneuver in the world of private ownership and capitalist enterprise. These people can often be found having lunch in the restaurant at the base of the New Mwanza Hotel, animatedly discussing business and politics over drinks and a small pile of cellular phones on the tables before them. The cell-phone is one of the most recent symbols of power and influence, and it is not uncommon to see these rising Africans taking photographs of one another standing in front of a particularly photogenic spot while pretending to speak on their cell phone.

As night descends unceasingly at 6:00 P.M. throughout the year, the gates are pulled across the shop fronts and the streets of Mwanza City become deserted as people return to houses that are located further and further from the city center. Because Tanzania is plagued by power shortages on a massive scale, cities like Mwanza become pitch black almost every night. Lights are scattered and few, and almost exclusively powered by the humming generators of selected downtown hotels and businesses as well as the company mansions on Capri Point. Since the rest

of the city is relegated to total darkness, it is yet another reflection of the growing disparity between the haves and the have-nots. The stillness of the night is punctuated by the sounds of a passing Land Rovers, the barking of dogs, and the lively dance music coming from one of the late-night, downtown discos.

The city streets are patrolled at night by roving militia groups of private citizens known as *sungusungu*.[7] They usually consist of four or five men brandishing clubs, spears, *pangas* (machete-like knives), and the occasional bow and arrow. The *sungusungu* phenomenon began in the early 1980's in response to an increasing crime rate and a growing disillusionment with the police force and the criminal justice system. They are occasionally parodied in the local newspapers as incompetent groups of unemployed men prone to displays of machismo and pointless acts of violence.

The *sungusungu* play a cat and mouse game on the streets of Mwanza City with another group one is likely to come across at night: street children. Most of the street children are young boys under the age of fifteen with many as young as five or six. Their numbers are on the rise in the city since many of their parents have died of AIDS. They have an intense fear of the *sungusungu* that is readily apparent in their eyes whenever they spot one of the patrolling groups coming around the corner. A typical street child will have suffered some kind of physical violence at the hands of the *sungusungu*. One of the favored practices is to dangle the children by their feet over the deep cement trenches that run along the sides of the streets and serve as the downtown's sewage system and impromptu garbage pits. For protection from such acts of violence and torture, the street children of Mwanza sleep in groups on sidewalks, in doorways, or under park benches. If a child finds himself alone for the night, he may try to find a pack of sleeping dogs to lie down in the midst of, using a scavenged piece of plastic sheeting or cardboard for both shelter and camouflage. On the dusty, dark streets of Mwanza at night, it is almost impossible to discern boy from dog.

If a summary impression of Mwanza is warranted, it would be to return to the idea of a place between decay and development, with the former having the upper hand but the promise of the latter always within arms reach. Certainly, the overriding potential and promise reflected in the power of "development," of how far the city and its people have come and of what is yet possible, is a frequent topic of discussion among Mwanza's inhabitants, African and non-African alike. The subject is sometimes used to point out something with pride, but also to highlight - with a disgusted nod of the head or an almost embarrassed shrug of the shoulders – why something is most definitively lacking. Where the power of development is so strong, the potential of decay or relatedly, a shortage or "lack of" is enhanced. The sheer weight of a discourse of development together with its political, economic, and social implications – both positive and negative – can never be underestimated in places like Mwanza, Tanzania.

Husbandless women and the anthropologist

A woman who has no husband, either because she is divorced, separated, or simply never married (and often considered past her prime) is an increasingly common – and talked about - presence in Mwanza. If a woman comes to Mwanza alone or with only her children to accompany her, it is almost a sure bet that she did so as a result of some unpleasant, even violent, set of circumstances in her rural village. Mwanza represents both a last chance and a new beginning for husbandless women, and while most come from the general area of Northwestern Tanzania, many others migrate to the streets of Mwanza from all across Western Tanzania, Rwanda, and southern Uganda. When the harsh conditions of the rural village are left behind for the promise and potential of the city, migration becomes a simultaneous act of escape and desire. Mwanza represents everything modern, new, and progressive and it is where anything is possible, if not for them then for their children. Above all else, it is often the only place left to go.

But for women in general, life in Mwanza is the continuation of long standing patterns of difference and inequality. Jobs in the formal sector are scarce and the few available are for men

only. From assumptions surrounding work and job prospects to the ways in which men greet one another on the street and talk in animated gestures in restaurants, shops, and as they gather around the newspaper stands on the corner, the public realm is a definitively male one. There is a hierarchy of respect and prestige that closely parallels the flow of money and material and, as a general rule of thumb, women are left wanting in this area as well. For the latter, the domestic role remains the unquestioned path to respect and prestige. To be both wife and mother is to carry on the positive qualities of "tradition" and to foster a new generation who will accept the challenges of modernity. It is a role that is viewed by men as necessitating little change itself despite the changing conditions around it. As many view it, a woman should consider herself lucky to have a husband who can provide her with a family and, along with this, respect and dignity. A man may also provide his wife with a house and property and a small allowance. In the end, men retain their positions in Mwanza as gatekeepers for a wide variety of resources.

As is the case throughout much of East Africa, a woman without a husband is an enigma, a symbol of some insidious breakdown in the order of things, and quite possibly a malevolent force of some kind. The word on the street is that a woman without a husband is almost certainly a widow who came to Mwanza only after her husband died of AIDS or, at the very least, under mysterious circumstances. The general belief is that women infected with the AIDS virus live longer than men, which is itself a mystery and somehow against the order of things. AIDS and husbandless women have been thus joined in the realm of everyday gossip and popular imagination, perhaps due to the mystery and stigma that surrounds both. It is not long before any discussion on the topic of AIDS inevitably turns to the subject of widows and single women who, if they are not widows, are presumed to be divorced or separated. As many people point out, there must be an explanation as to why a woman would come to the city alone and destitute, there must be an explanation for not having a husband when so much depends on the fulfillment of this one rather basic expectation. Surely, they cannot be without a husband by choice? It is

not just men who point their fingers at these women, but married women as well, who are free to blame husbandless women as shameless philanderers with generally loose morals, and as a very real threat to their own families and to the stability of their marriage. If a husband cheats on his wife it is an easier and safer process to blame the woman – particularly if she is husbandless – than to directly confront the husband who, after all, provides her with so many things. Husbandless women incite instability by their very presence and AIDS becomes an easy and effective sign to hang on a group who are viewed as the result of some societal breakdown and as embodying the very potential to inflict further damage. They are tolerated but they are closely watched. It seems that popular opinion, morality, and fear circulate in a constant procession of self-fulfillment.

To the anthropologist who comes to Mwanza to explore migration, urbanization, family breakdown, and the spread of AIDS, husbandless women present a wide variety of challenges. They do not represent migration patterns commonly found in the literature: males migrate to the city while leaving their wives behind to maintain the household and family farm in the rural village. This scenario is easily revealed as outdated and misleading after spending only a few short weeks in any East African city. The literature base always seems to drag slowly behind the reality of life but it does so in East Africa with a particularly stubborn persistence. When an economy collapses, those who are most vulnerable — and in Tanzania this means children with one or both parents missing, the elderly, and husbandless women — come to the city in greater numbers. They survive only through a diversity of activities that defy the predictions of formal economic models and clear-cut definitions of work and that can only be termed as a loose amalgam of "urban survival strategies." The hazy, uncertain, and unpredictable realm of everyday survival, cooperation, and informality within which husbandless women immerse themselves in Mwanza continually undermines, challenges, and at times parallels the dominant patriarchy that characterizes life on the surface. In many ways, the women who are the most

exploited are able to draw from their particular roles as the exploited to question dominant forms of identity, work, and social relationships. At the same time, however, the dominant and dominating public world of men must be acknowledged and at least partially accepted. For husbandless women of Mwanza, it is a constant process of negotiation and compromise between competing expectations and sources of legitimacy. In many ways, they embody the space of Mwanza itself, living an uncertain existence in the wake of collapse, and swinging between the spirit of tradition and the potential of "progress."

The conjunction of these competing worlds often produces the situations that were relevant for this research because it created an uneasy and unstable "space in-between" where sexual relationships are formed in a way that recasts accepted notions of sexuality, gender, and personal identity. It is not an easy space to explore, however, since AIDS and sex remain hidden and mysterious topics, despite widespread public acknowledgment of the former and a more open dialogue surrounding the latter. What seems to have occurred is the construction of two distinct ways of speaking about AIDS and sex: one public and almost routine and one private and behind the scenes. It is relatively easy to master the public discourse on these topics in Mwanza, but an altogether different matter to uncover the private one. The latter requires an insinuation of oneself into the nature of personal relationships themselves and the routine happenings of everyday life, never an easy task for an anthropologist, let alone (given the nature of the research) an American male anthropologist. For my own part, there was little I could do to prevent my own role as researcher and obvious outsider from becoming caught up and redefined in the very social spaces that I sought to explore. My presence among husbandless women often confirmed public suspicions about AIDS and it was not uncommon for a group of men to nod their heads in unison and eye me with a knowing look, exclaiming, "Aaaahhh, so now I see" upon being told that my research interests lie in the area of AIDS. It made sense to them that I should want to investigate the mysterious lives of husbandless women, as if the origin of AIDS

would be revealed by these efforts. There were many times when I felt that my own social integrity among the women could only be maintained by losing it in the eyes of the surrounding community, and vice versa. The more involved I became in both worlds, the more difficult it became to control the unintended consequences of my own actions or simply my continued presence; though there were ways – even for myself – to negotiate them.

Social networks and the importance of exchange

The most effective way for me to explore AIDS and the nature of sexual relationships in this context meant that I, too, had to negotiate the dual worlds of husbandless women and the surrounding community. My eventual involvement with what I distinguish in this study as four distinct social networks of husbandless women was only achieved under the constant and watchful eye of the neighborhood, in this instance various locations in the Bugando Hill section of Mwanza. The fact that I define dual social worlds in this way, one composed of identifiable social networks of husbandless women and the other by the surrounding community, carries with it a tremendous number of assumptions. Social networks permeate a community and it is difficult and potentially misleading to define distinct boundaries between the two. Social networks are typically fluid as individuals come, go, and participate in multiple networks simultaneously. Thus, a substantial part of this research contributes to establishing this duality, defining the existence and relative stability of social networks composed of husbandless women, and the ways in which they bridged their own relationships with one another and the surrounding neighborhoods of Bugando Hill.

Bugando Hill may very well be the poorest section of Mwanza, consisting almost entirely of haphazard squatter settlements of mud, brick, and pieces of scavenged metal. Since the most economically impoverished groups live here, one is likely to come across quite a number of husbandless women. Initially, I was affiliated with "*Hospitali Ya Bugando*," the second largest hospital in Tanzania, which sits at the very top of the hill and contrasts sharply

with the extensive, complicated tracts of make-shift houses that surround it. In a short while, I befriended a senior nurse who worked with HIV infected women at the hospital, herself a widow who lived on Bugando Hill. It was not long before I began accompanying her along the unpaved streets and dirt tracks of the hill as we walked daily between our homes and the hospital. In this way, I became acquainted with many of the people on Bugando Hill and was made aware of the large numbers of husbandless women in the neighborhood and, more specifically, their extensive social networks and strong interpersonal cooperation.

Becoming "involved" with a particular social network and negotiating this involvement with the interests of the surrounding neighborhood was due much more to my own fumbling than to meticulous planning. More than anything else, it was the result of learning new forms of exchange. The simple act of exchange – what one is getting for what one is giving – was something I could never take for granted since it formed the basis of the research in more ways than I could predict at the time. From direct and open allegations to a subtle action or word, people never let me forget that they were providing me with information (and time and patience) and that what I was giving in return was either too much, too little, or somehow inappropriate. One of the first things made clear to me was that the significance of my research itself was not an adequate resource in this capacity. In the context of crushing poverty, infrastructural decay, and a string of failed social programs, people saw very little exchange value in my research. In fact, it was quite obvious that there were no direct and immediate benefits to them. Therefore, I had to find other resources with which I could exchange for the information, hospitality, and time of the people I worked among on Bugando Hill. It was obvious to me that I could not enter into the complex networks of exchange on Bugando Hill by simply distributing a few shillings here and there. This was initially expected of me more than anything else and it was the most difficult expectation to negotiate. If I were to have given in to this, however, my involvement within the community would have been superficial at best and it may very well have led to bitterness,

resentment, and the inevitable alienation of a number of individuals. I had to find my own way of addressing the pragmatic needs of the people of Bugando Hill in a way that would not alienate myself or others. The only way to do this was to form and maintain my own network of exchange relationships.

The importance of exchange (and what could be exchanged) was made very clear to me as I was being driven by a friend in his car (which he owned jointly with a group of his friends) from Bugando Hill to another section of town for an appointment. Despite running late, my friend insisted on continually braking the car and exclaiming "*Dakika tu*!" ("Just a second!") as he jumped out or struck the side of the car with his hand in order to get somebody's attention and offer them a lift. I must have been noticeably agitated upon receiving the seventh passenger in this fashion and being relegated to the middle position of the front seat with my feet propped up on the front windshield to make room for the stick shift. My friend asked me what the problem was, to which I responded that I was running late for my appointment because I was chauffeuring everybody in the neighborhood to different parts of the city. In reply, I received two or three audible clucking of the tongues from several neighborhood women in the back seat. On the return trip, my friend pointed out the implications of driving through the neighborhood with only myself as a passenger. If I was going across town, he reasoned, why not provide a lift to those who were going to the market or elsewhere? Besides, people might wonder why I thought I was so special as to warrant an entire car to myself. My reputation, as well as his, would be tarnished because as he put it, "people always talk, you see, whether you think it or not, they always talk." He then jutted his thumb to the now empty back seat of the car and said very seriously, "This is a wasted opportunity right now."

In ways like these, I was gradually taught what I had to offer in exchange for what often amounted to just "being there." Put another way, I was socialized into the world of exchange as it existed on Bugando Hill. I began diversifying my activities and exchange practices and, in the

process, implicated myself into specific social networks and the surrounding neighborhood. I rarely missed an opportunity to share a ride or let people fill the car that I was driving with plastic water jugs to be filled at a less crowded water tap on the outskirts of town. I purchased several soccer balls for the neighborhood kids and organized them into teams, complete with a large chalk board displaying team standings and statistics. I became an impromptu baby-sitter for many of the kids and used my contacts at Bugando Hospital and other health facilities to provide medicine at a discounted price or to make an appointment with a physician for people who otherwise would be unable to do so. I used my portable computer to hold typing classes for a group of women (a rare and highly sought after skill in urban Tanzania), and held English classes on an almost twice daily basis: one for a group of school children and one for a number of women. I also became a history, geography, and math tutor for many of the children. As for the men, I bought my share of drinks and *nyama choka* (cooked meat) at a neighborhood bar. These activities not only allowed me to gain entrée to the community in ways that my role as a researcher would never have allowed me to do, but they helped me to cultivate a kind of personal credit that also bridged my involvement with the four social networks of husbandless women and the larger interests of the community. I felt that my status as an anthropologist and AIDS researcher was contingent upon my status as a person of moral integrity by their standards and the extent to which I was able to carve out a somewhat specialized niche for myself as a contributing, albeit somewhat unique, member of the community.

One reason for discussing my own round-about efforts to conduct research among husbandless women on Bugando Hill is because it shapes and at least partially becomes information in and of itself. Implicating myself into specific social networks as well as the surrounding neighborhood was not only the means by which I collected data, but it eventually became information as well. It would have been difficult if not impossible for me to even realize that there are networks based on a complex exchange of favors and a wide variety of resources if

I had not created a place for myself and a position from which to maneuver. I would have overlooked the ways in which personal credit is established, relationships are formed, and "appropriate" behaviors are defined. I would also have been oblivious to the ambiguous social "space" between the networks of husbandless women and the surrounding community, and the situations that define it when the dual worlds conjoin.

Since I believe these processes to be central to the social and cultural context of AIDS in urban East Africa, I would simply have missed what I sought to study. In hindsight, I believe that a barrage of questionnaires based on the most meticulously planned sampling procedures would not have brought any of these things to light. Given the sensitive nature of the information, these methods simply undermine themselves to the extent that people will answer the questions based on what they know (or think they know) about what researchers and officials seek. Public health surveys of "AIDS awareness" and "sex surveys" became relatively meaningless at some point in East Africa as they first constructed and then repeatedly reflected a distinctly public (and public health) way of speaking about AIDS and sex. Meanwhile, individuals continue to experience a very different context within which relationships are formed, sexual behavior occurs, and AIDS spreads. My own involvement in a community of people in Mwanza became the overall framework for understanding how people negotiate their own way in that community from various social positions and by putting different types of social capital in play. In the end, if I had not at least partially experienced the process myself, I would not have known how husbandless women do it or even realized that they do it differently than others.

In sum, the ethnographic process based on social immersion and participant observation is absolutely crucial for moving beyond the public health rhetoric that is so easily learned and repeated and toward an exploration of the conditions over which that rhetoric has very little impact. This is not a new idea and it has often been repeated in the AIDS literature. Yet that very same body of research continues to be dominated by epidemiological studies and an

extraordinarily narrow public health perspective. It is questionable at this point as to whether or not those who call for ethnographic research into the African AIDS epidemic are actually willing to look beyond the relative safety and comfort of their own positivist paradigms. Anthropology is an inexact and unpredictable foray into social relationships and, as such, is a messy process – becoming involved with another place and with another community of people always is. It is the experience that often defines and provides the most appropriate framework for ethnographic data rather than any one theory or the information gleaned solely from interviews, questionnaires, and an unceasing litany of "socio-behavioral" indicators. That fact will first have to be accepted before it can be addressed by those who expect to create and maintain a dialogue between public health and anthropology.

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[1] It is difficult to estimate current population numbers by tribe in Tanzania since the last census to take tribal identity into account was in 1967.

[2] In fact, the paths of Pasha and Stanley crossed several times throughout their careers and explorations in Africa. Stanley actually rescued Pasha when the latter was governor of Equatoria Province of the Egyptian Sudan and found himself isolated by rebel Sudanese forces in 1888.

[3] As Iliffe (1979) notes, Indian/Asian immigrants came to Tanzania (mostly from western India) on their own initiative. Most were penniless and lured to the region by hopes of wealth. They were important economic intermediaries throughout colonial rule (under both the Germans and the British) and have retained tight control of the economic sector to this day. They were never forcefully expelled from the country after independence as occurred elsewhere in East Africa.

[4] Swynnerton was a British administrator throughout East Africa and a widely recognized tsetse expert. He advocated attacking tsetse flies through ecological intervention, which included experimental strategies of grass burning, selective destruction of vegetation, and compulsory labor whereby millions were mobilised to cut and burn barriers in the bush.

[5] Tanganyika did not become Tanzania until 1964, when it formed a federation with the offshore island of Zanzibar.

[6] '*Dhow*' normally refers to the sailing vessels of Arab design used extensively on the East African coast. However, the word seems to have been borrowed by people in Mwanza to refer to the local sailing vessels. Other terms were also used to refer to these vessels in Mwanza, especially "*chombo*" and "*mtepe*."

[7] The term "*sungusungu*" has a long history in Sukuma tradition. It has a traditional reference to groups of men who stood guard against cattle thieves, although there were closely related connotations with respect to protection from witches (which may have been its original meaning). Literally, it refers to a large black ant.

CHAPTER FOUR: ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL NETWORK: THE EXCHANGE OF MATERIAL GOODS AND SERVICES

Nurse: *"The biggest problems we have in Mwanza are AIDS, malaria, diarrhea, syphilis, tuberculosis...diseases from water...and even things like malnutrition and hygiene...and there are many other things too."*

Doctor: *"That is simply the long way of saying poverty."*

[excerpt from a conversation with several nurses and a doctor from Bugando Hospital]

Introduction

The lives and relationships of the women in this study were conditioned in large part by the satisfaction of the most basic needs under conditions of extreme poverty. From rent and food to school fees and business expenses, life in Mwanza insured that the women's most fundamental and persistent need was to acquire money. While most had lived and grown up in rural villages where subsistence farming almost totally precluded the need for hard currency, they had come to find that there was quite literally a price to pay for living in Mwanza. In the urban environment, each woman's economic situation and struggle to satisfy the most basic needs became determining forces in their lives. The most important and fundamental strategy for survival involved turning to other women who experienced the same poverty-induced conditions and creating extensive yet locally situated networks of exchange and cooperation. These networks were characterized by distinct flows of material goods and pragmatic services that redistributed money and cut the cost of living for those who participated in them. The four networks of women discussed here were distinguished further by an overwhelming predominance of husbandless women.

This chapter introduces the four social networks that form the basis of this study and highlights the economic context and exchange of goods and services that unite husbandless women into relatively distinct and identifiable social networks. It focuses on the women's core economic problems and their strategies to resolve them. It does so by illustrating the disparity between the minimum monthly income required to survive and each woman's real income and how they were forced to meet the most basic needs through the formation and maintenance of

strong social networks. It also illustrates that the majority of women did not earn enough money to survive despite their patterns of cooperation and exchange. Finally, it begins to examine the significance of the surrounding neighborhood, where the integrity of the women's social networks and the majority of their income generating activities were deeply rooted.

Social networks and the African townswoman: material issues

As Mitchell (1969) noted in a standard work on the subject, interest among anthropologists in social networks can be traced to shifts in theory that developed along with radical changes occurring across sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, it had become increasingly apparent throughout the 1960's that structural-functional analysis was insufficient as a means of framing urban society in Africa, where individual actions and/or variations in behavior seemed to reign supreme. As the dynamic urban landscape of Africa became an area of keen interest among anthropologists (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1991), it was apparent that individual relationships and social networks were beginning to take precedence over a previous concern with structural-level units of analysis (Mayer 1961, 1962, 1964; Pauw 1963; Mitchell 1966; Jacobson 1973; Parkin 1975; Curtis 1995)[1]. At a broader level, then, concern with social networks can be traced to a shift in the anthropological perspective away from small-scale and seemingly static "tribal" societies to the more dynamic urban scene developing in Africa, together with the knowledge that previous theoretical approaches were unable to fully appreciate social life in this new environment.

By examining the contributions to Mitchell's edited volume and reading his own introductory discussion, it is apparent that there have always been two broad yet interrelated issues with respect to social networks. The first encompasses an interest in the material aspects of network formation and maintenance, including the flow of various kinds of goods and services. The second involves the symbolic aspects of networks and centers on the flow of communication in relation to the definition of a shared set of norms, values, and ideals. While both must be

considered together, the focus in this chapter is on the flow of material goods and services (the following chapter will turn to symbolic aspects of networks).

A critical feature of the material aspect of social networks involves the rotating credit association. Key discussions on the subject by Geertz (1962) and Ardener (1964) illustrate that the phenomenon was well known among anthropologists from very early on. While many terms have been used to describe the rotating credit association across a wide variety of cultures (including mother groups, contribution clubs, slates, mutual lending societies, thrift groups, and in this study, share groups) its basic form is virtually unchanged. Kurtz (1973) defines it in the following manner:

> "...an association based upon a core of participants, each of whom agrees to contribute a specific amount at regular intervals into a lump sum fund which is given at specified times and at fixed intervals, in whole or in part, to each member of the association in turn" [p.50].

In his article, Geertz suggested that rotating credit associations were an "intermediate" institution that developed as traditional economies were mobilized to fulfill non-traditional (i.e., market-driven) economic functions. During this transformational process, he argued that it gradually loses its social functions and increasingly becomes an economically-oriented mode of organization. It is apparent that Geertz viewed the "middle rung" position of the rotating credit association in a positive light. He saw it as a site where economic development and market penetration could be encouraged in a gradual, non-threatening manner in undeveloped regions of the World.

Kurtz (1973) directly challenged Geertz's take on the rotating credit association as a natural stepping stone towards progress and development. He viewed it in the exact opposite light and suggested that it develops as an adaptation to poverty and underdevelopment. Kurtz cited a number of ethnographic studies to support his case and to show that it occurs largely among those who face "relative deprivation," which he defined as "...a status of inequality based

upon unequal access to goods and resources available at large in the society" [p.53]. Strictly in terms of material considerations, it is safe to say that Kurtz's analysis of rotating credit associations has born true. The majority of researchers have associated its existence with extreme conditions of poverty and have come to view it as a necessary means of survival for groups who experience relative deprivation.

Much of the work supporting Kurtz's analysis of the rotating credit association focuses on the formation and maintenance of social networks among women in urban Africa (Little 1973; Robertson and Berger 1986; Muller 1989; Dei 1997; Glazer 1997; Nzomo 1997; Shehu 1997; Tripp 1997). This body of work suggests that the patriarchal character of most formal economies in Africa creates a state of relative deprivation for the majority of women, particularly in the urban environment (Lowe 1976-77). Against this backdrop, women's participation in rotating credit associations is a necessary means of survival. At the same time, these organizations are only one means available to women for generating income and often work in conjunction with the establishment of informal (i.e., non-regulated) "small businesses;" a phenomenon that has grown dramatically in the context of faltering national economies (Tripp [1989; 1997] specifically discusses their growth in Tanzania). A more recent approach entailed in these studies involves considering rotating credit associations and small business activities as part of much larger exchange networks based on a wide variety of material goods and services. As Tripp (1997) explains in detail for women of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, networks of exchange can be defined on the basis of such things as childcare, mutual support in dealing with government authorities, helping to prepare and sell food, and dealing with everything from medical emergencies to meeting daily household needs. While they often form along the lines of kinship and ethnicity, Tripp is also careful to point out how such networks supersede "traditional" influences structuring female cooperation and exchange.

Tripp's account of women's work and patterns of exchange in urban Tanzania is important for two reasons. First, it does not consider their rotating credit associations in isolation.

Rather, they are viewed as just one mechanism for the formation and maintenance of larger and more diverse material flows among women. In many instances, they might simply highlight an "active" sub-set of relations from within a much larger exchange network. Secondly, it focuses on the exchange of a wide diversity of material items (not simply cash) and a diversity of pragmatic services that help women get by from day to day. Additionally, cash is not necessarily the most important item in terms of the larger issue of network formation and maintenance. By simply following the flow of money, as many researchers examining rotating credit associations have done in the past, the focus is immediately narrowed to a particular sub-set of network relationships. While it may be true that many researchers were concerned with the rotating credit association itself, they may have missed its most critical functions involving the formation and maintenance of more diverse networks of exchange. Tripp's study highlights these problems by showing how strictly cash-oriented activities and relationships are nested within larger exchange networks where the most mundane and routinized activities serve a purpose. She begins to define a common ground in anthropological research on African townswomen, a wide diversity of exchange practices, and the formation and maintenance of social networks.

It is unfortunate that Tripp's primary concern is with married women (though she does mention unmarried women at various points). This is not surprising, since few studies concentrate in any detail on the networks of unmarried individuals (though they are mentioned in some works, see for example Southall 1961; Little 1973; Thandani 1978-79; Muller 1989). This oversight is significant since the handful of studies available suggest that they experience conditions of relative deprivation that are not only more severe than men but also other women (Manderville 1979). Unfortunately, such studies are few in number and limited in scope. The information presented in this chapter begins to fill in that gap by concentrating on a wide variety of material goods and services that are exchanged between husbandless women in Mwanza. In doing so, it defines the formation and maintenance of a very unique type of social network among a particularly marginalized segment of urban society. More importantly perhaps, it lays the basis

for exploring the symbolic aspects of their networks and the flow of communication in relation to an as yet unexplored set of group norms and ideals emerging among husbandless women.

The women of the four social networks

There are four distinct social networks comprising a total of forty-four "core" women that form the basis of this study. Each of the four networks are described first before turning to the conditions and patterns of exchange that constituted each one. Before turning to the individual networks, however, a few things can be said about the women in general.

The women of the four networks were between the ages of twenty-one and fifty-one (the information in this section can be found by network affiliation in Tables 4.1-4.4 on pages 159-162 and 4.6-4.9 on pages 164-167). With the exception of four individuals, all of the women were husbandless (being widowed, divorced, separated or, in two instances, never married). Tribal identity varied widely among the women but reflected the general situation of Mwanza: a large proportion of Sukuma combined with a host of individuals from the region's smaller tribes including Haya, Kuria, Zanaki, Jita, Nyamwezi, Zinza, etc. A woman who migrated to Mwanza alone or with her children from Eastern Tanzania was a rarity, which was true of people in general from Mwanza, though there were several women who came to the city from Rwanda and the central plateau of Tanzania around the city of Dodoma.

The circumstances surrounding the women's migration to Mwanza were similar and generally revolved around their late or estranged husbands. The majority of husbandless women had either followed their husbands to Mwanza (subsequently divorcing or separating while living in the city); were kicked off of their rural *shamba* (usually a small house and plot of cultivated ground) by their ex/estranged husbands proceeding a divorce/separation; or run off of the *shamba* by their husband's relatives following his death. The experiences associated with each of these situations elicited a strong and empassioned response on the part of the women. Migration was often a major turning point in most of their lives and led to dramatic changes in both lifestyle and ways of thinking.

The women lived and worked under exceptionally harsh conditions and in close proximity to one another on Bugando Hill. In fact, women of the same social network either lived together or within one to two hundred yards of one another. Most lived with and cared for at least some of their children, the majority of whom were under the age of twelve and thus totally dependent on their mothers. Since a single mother could only support so many children she commonly placed one or two children under the care of relatives, friends, or even missionaries and nuns (who usually placed them with an orphanage). Another common occurrence was for a child to strike out on his/her own at the relatively young age of fifteen or sixteen (though it was much more likely to happen among boys then girls). As a result, women may have had as many as four or five children but few could afford to live with more than one or two, usually the very youngest and most dependent (these individuals are represented in the tables and discussions throughout this work). Of course, this was always the source of a considerable amount of anguish for everyone involved.

The daily lives of the women revolved around participation in complex yet distinct social networks on Bugando Hill. "The hill" (*"Kilima"*), as it was commonly referred to, is a relatively small section of town, about 1.5 to 2 miles in diameter, and one person inevitably knows someone who knows someone, etc. Subsequently, women of one social network often knew or recognized members of the other three. However, these interactions were not characterized by the type of close relationship, daily contact and other circumstances that united the women of a single social network (the ways that the women perceived network relationships is discussed at a later point). The immediate social network produced a particular type of relationship both unique and necessary. Before turning to the processes that determine those relationships, however, a brief introduction to the four social networks is provided below.

The Kwanza Network

The social network referred to throughout this study as "*Kwanza*" (literally: "First;" so-named because it was the initial network of which I was made aware) consisted of nine

individuals (see Tables 4.1 on page 159 and 4.6 on page 164 for selected characteristics). The *Kwanza* network revolved around the eldest member, a Sukuma widow who worked as a nurse at Bugando Hospital (#1 in the tables). She had been a widow for twenty years and was well respected on Bugando Hill for both her health care skills and rather dignified manner. In many respects, she was not representative of other husbandless women because she spoke a fair amount of English, owned a small three room house, and had two grown children (only one of whom, a daughter of eighteen, lived with her). She had very strong opinions concerning the mistreatment of widows in Tanzania and never once hesitated to express them. This caused some consternation among people in the neighborhood who tended to see her as a relatively wealthy and successful individual rather than a poverty-stricken widow. One man put it succinctly one day as she passed by a local bar: "She should not complain about being a widow when she is not like one." Despite the occasional remark like this, her dignified manner and respected occupation translated into strong and influential ties among many people of the neighborhood and particularly among the other women of the *Kwanza* social network[2].

In addition to the nurse, the *Kwanza* network consisted of a diverse number of individuals, including a widow from Rwanda and two married women. The Rwandan widow was particularly well liked and often pointed to as an individual who had endured particularly harsh circumstances. Her husband and two of her children had been killed in the Rwandan civil war. When she returned to her rural village after the war to reclaim her land and property, she found that her husband's relatives had already occupied the house. They threatened her life if she stayed, so she ended up in a refugee camp in Tanzania for six months where she witnessed and experienced acts of violence on an almost daily basis at the hands of Burundian guards. She managed to "escape" from the refugee camp to Mwanza by riding on top of a truck with her three children in exchange for sex with the driver. As violent and disruptive as her experiences were, they were not unheard of among husbandless women in general.

The women of the *Kwanza* social network lived in the general area of Bugando Hospital at the very top of the hill (see Map 4.1 on page 158 for the relative location of each network).[3] The majority also worked in the immediate area, either selling fruits and vegetables or in one case working at a small "*duka ya dawa*" ("medicine shop").

The Mwalimu Network

The second group of women are referred to as the "*Mwalimu*" ("Teacher") social network because the two eldest members were teachers at the same primary school in Mwanza (see Tables 4.2 on page 160 and 4.7 on page 165 for selected characteristics). They struggled to make ends meet despite a strong education, the ability to speak a fair amount of English, and formal employment in a well-respected position. One woman was married but complained bitterly that her husband was taking most of the money she earned as a teacher. The other was recently widowed and embroiled in a complicated legal battle with her late husband's relatives over a small *shamba* about thirty miles south of the city that she and her husband had been leasing. Neither woman had been paid their teaching salary in the preceding four months and would eventually receive only three or four months of formal pay over the next year. Their situation was typical for teachers in Tanzania who, as government employees, were paid haphazardly at best (recent cuts in government spending to the educational sector can be attributed to structural adjustment policies and the pressures of international donors). In order to earn a decent income, the women charged what was commonly known as "tuition[4]" for private, after-school tutoring lessons[5]. In Mwanza, tuition was such a normal practice that parents often figured it in along with formal school fees as the price for a child's education. In fact, most teachers showed up at school but put very little effort into teaching as a form of protest until they received their full wages. Since private tutoring represented the only way that teachers could earn enough money to survive, children whose parents could actually afford to pay for the service received more attention and ultimately a much better education.

In addition to the two teachers, the *Mwalimu* network consisted of nine other women, most of whom were Sukuma. None of these women held a formal job, working instead in *biashara ndogo ndogo* ("small business"). "Doing business" for a living almost always meant selling fruits, vegetables, fish, and other food items. The women of the *Mwalimu* social network lived on the northern base of Bugando Hill and in close proximity to the downtown area (see Map 4.1 on page 158).

The Samaki Network

The third social network is referred to as the "*Samaki*" ("Fish") network because many of its individual members sold fish on one of the major roads that skirted the base of Bugando Hill (see Map 4.1 on page 158 and Tables 4.3 on page 161 and 4.8 on page 166 for selected characteristics). Most women sold fish caught the same day from Lake Victoria with a few individuals occasionally supplementing this with fruits and vegetables. The women of the *Samaki* network had a steady stream of potential customers in the form of workers going to and from a large industrial area along the shores of Lake Victoria. They could be found most days sitting alongside their small wooden bowls of fish, some directly in front of their homes, waiting for factory workers to pass by while doing household chores.

The eldest member of the *Samaki* network was a 40-year-old divorced woman and primary school teacher. While she worked at a different primary school than the two teachers of the *Mwalimu* network, she was also paid irregularly, which compelled her to charge "tuition" as well. She was a good friend of the nurse from the *Kwanza* network and frequently sought her out for health advice. The only other person of the *Samaki* network who held a formal job was a thirty-two year old woman who never married and held a relatively lucrative position as a part-time secretary. Despite her part-time status, the job gave her an income that was more than four times that of most women (this amount was made even more significant by the fact that she had no children to support). Unfortunately, she did not particularly like her boss and claimed that he

continually made sexual advances towards her. However, she felt that the economic benefits outweighed this problem and was subsequently willing to put up with his advances.

As with the *Mwalimu* and *Kwanza* networks, the *Samaki* network also included a married woman. The married woman from the *Samaki* network often complained about her husband's suspected infidelity and the fact that he spent all of his money on "girlfriends" or "second wives" in other cities (she even claimed that he had rented an apartment for one "very young girl" in Mwanza). It was not a strong marriage and she actually feared for her life when he was drinking. On these occasions, she stayed in another member's house (she often stayed here when her husband was in town regardless of the extent of his drinking). She received very little support from her husband, mostly relying on her income from her small business selling fish. She hid her earnings at a friend's house for fear that her husband would steal it.

The Kanisa Network

The fourth and final social network is referred to as the "*Kanisa*" ("Church") network (see Tables 4.4 on page 162 and 4.9 on page 167 for selected characteristics). The name stems from the member's weekly practice of attending Catholic services as a group, usually meeting early Sunday morning to pray and discuss the Bible before attending services. In many senses, the *Kanisa* network was the most tightly knit group and often referred to themselves as an exclusive "sisterhood[6]."

A thirty year old divorced woman working as a part time secretary was the only individual in the group who had a formal job. While she was very happy with her job and hoped for full-time employment, this never happened during the year. One woman of the *Kanisa* network (#5 in the tables) owned a popular neighborhood grocery/salon based in her house. She earned enough money to employ two other women from the network (#4 and #7 in the tables). She was a lively and engaging individual, well liked by the other women, and always had a busy and relatively well-stocked shop. It seemed natural that the daily activities of other women from the *Kanisa* network centered around her house/shop. She also had strong opinions about widows

and the situation of Tanzanian women generally and was well informed on political and economic events throughout the country.

The other women of the *Kanisa* network almost exclusively sold fruits and vegetables in close proximity to Mwanza's main market place. The locations of their houses and small businesses were generally favorable in terms of proximity to large crowds of people but they could not fully exploit this opportunity due to the difficulties and competition involved with setting up a business in the market place itself. Here, they were much more likely to be hassled by police and other government authorities who demanded either business licenses or substiantial bribes, niether of which the women could afford. As a result, their subinesses were relegated to a block or two behind the main market place itself and close to their homes. As with most women, they depended heavily on their own neighborhood to supply them customers for their small business endeavors.

Individual households of the *Kanisa* network were somewhat dispersed when compared to those of the other three networks (see Map 4.1 on page 158). They generally stretched in a linear fashion from the base of Bugando Hill to the top along one of several dirt paths that ascended in this manner. Unfortunately, the path could become a raging drainage gully during the rainy seasons and created a number of problems for those who lived directly on it.

Estimated expenses versus approximate income

The four social networks were conditioned in part by the particularly dismal economic situation faced by husbandless women in Mwanza. An extreme level of poverty effectively compelled them to form strong and relatively compact material interdependencies with one another and shaped the environment within which they constructed their unique patterns of exchange and cooperation. As research involving African townswomen has made clear, however, it can be dangerous to make sweeping generalizations of any kind when discussing poverty, particularly when examining the material basis of social networks. In fact, the degree of poverty (i.e., relative deprivation) may ultimately influence an individual's exchange practices and

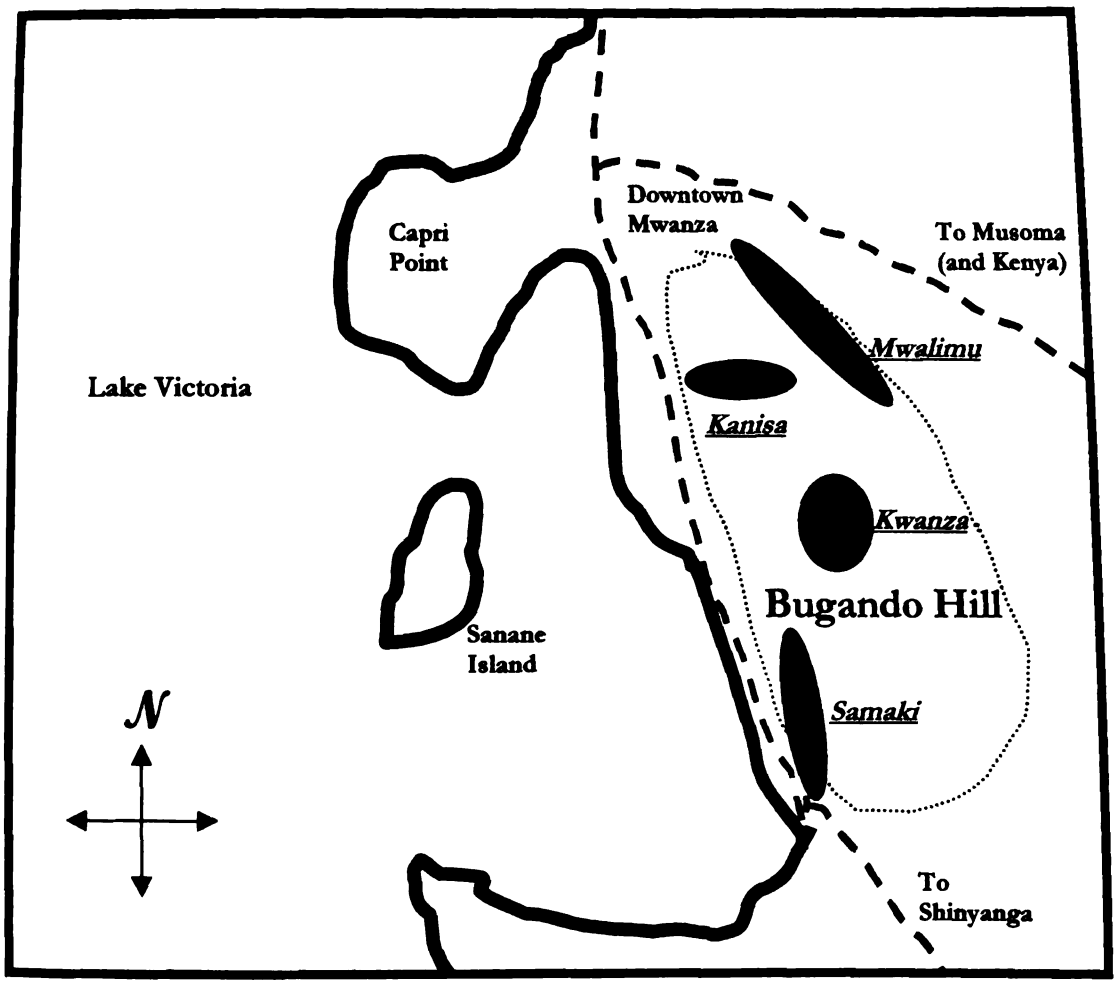


Figure Map 4.1: Approximate location of the four networks

	Tribe	Birth region	Age	Reason for moving to Mwanza town	Time lived in Mwanza town	Husbandless status/time	Number of children (dependent)	Residential status (refers to woman and dependent children if she has any)
1	Sukuma	Mwanza	51	followed husband	20 yrs	widow/ 17 yrs	2	live alone
2	Sukuma	Mwanza	38	followed husband	10 yrs	widow/ 2 yrs	3	live with #3
3	Sukuma	Mwanza	26	run off land by dead husband's relatives	5 yrs	widow/ 5 yrs	2	live with #2
4	Sukuma	Mwanza	38	followed husband	8 yrs	(married/ 11 yrs)	3	live with husband/father
5	Sukuma	Mwanza	37	followed husband	7 yrs	(married/ 4 yrs)	2	live with husband/father
6	Haya	Kagera	18	kicked out by husband	9 mos	separated/ 1 yrs	2	live alone
7	Kuria	Musoma	36	kicked out by husband	5.5 yrs	separated/ 6 yrs	4	live with #8
8	Zanaki	Mara	34	run off land by dead husband's relatives	4 yrs	widow/ 4 yrs	1	live with #7
9	Zinza	Mara	21	followed husband	3 yrs	separated/ 1 yr	1	live alone
10	Hutu	(Rwanda)	28	run off land by dead husband's relatives	2 yrs	widow/ 3 yrs	3	live alone

Table 4.1: Members of the "*Kwanza*" network: selected characteristics

	Tribe	Birth region	Age	Reason for moving to Mwanza town	Time lived in Mwanza town	Husbandless status/time	Number of children (dependent)	Residential status (refers to woman and dependent children if she has any)
1	Sukuma	Mwanza	42	born here	42 yrs	widow/ 2 yrs	3	live alone
2	Sukuma	Mwanza	38	wanted to live in Mwanza (no other reason)	10 yrs	(married/ 8 yrs)	3	live with husband/father
3	Sukuma	Mwanza	31	kicked out by husband	3 yrs	separated/ 4 yrs	3	live alone
4	Sukuma	Mwanza	29	run off land by dead husband's relatives	2 yrs	widow/ 2 yrs	3	live with #5 and #6
5	Sukuma	Mwanza	31	run off land by dead husband's relatives	2 yrs	widow/ 2 yrs	1	live with #4 and #6
6	Sukuma	Mwanza	24	followed husband	4.5 yrs	separated/ 3 years	0	lives with #4 and #5
7	Jita	Mara	36	followed husband	6 yrs	separated/ 2 yrs	3	live alone
8	Haya	Kagera	35	run off land by dead husband's relatives	3 yrs	widow/ 3 yrs	3	live alone
9	Nyamwezi	Mwanza	30	followed husband	6 yrs	divorced/ 5 yrs	2	live with #10
10	Zinza	Mwanza	27	run off land by dead husband's relatives	2.5 yrs	widow/ 2.5 yrs	2	live with #9

Table 4.2: Members of the "*Mwalimu*" network: selected characteristics

	Tribe	Birth region	Age	Reason for moving to Mwanza town	Time lived in Mwanza town	Husbandless status/time	Number of children (dependent)	Residential status (refers to woman and dependent children if she has any)
1	Sukuma	Mwanza	40	born here	40 years	divorced/ 5 yrs	2	live with #7
2	Sukuma	Mwanza	27	run off land by dead husband's relatives	3.5 yrs	widow/ 4 yrs	2	live with #3 and #8
3	Sukuma	Mwanza	31	run off land by dead husband's relatives	4 yrs	widow/ 4 yrs	1	live with #2 and #8
4	Sukuma	Mwanza	36	run off land by dead husband's relatives	1 yr	widow/ 1 yr	3	live alone
5	Sukuma	Mwanza	42	followed husband	11.5 yrs	separated/ 8 yrs	2	live alone
6	Sukuma	Mwanza	25	followed husband	6 yrs	separated/ 2 yrs	2	live alone
7	Jita	Musoma	32	originally came to Mwanza to look for a husband (no longer desires a husband)	15 yrs	never married	0	lives with #1
8	Jita	Mara	37	kicked out by husband	2 yrs	divorced/ 5 yrs	1	live with #2 and #3
9	Haya	Kagera	33	run off land by dead husband's relatives	3 yrs	widow/ 3 yrs	3	live with #10
10	Haya	Kagera	40	wanted to begin small business in Mwanza	4 yrs	widow/ 8 yrs	5	live with #9
11	Kuria	Mara	30	kicked out by husband	5 yrs	separated/ 6 yrs	1	live alone
12	Kaguru	Dodoma	23	followed husband	8 yrs	(married/ 4 yrs)	1	live with husband/father
13	Sumbwa	Mwanza	36	run off land by dead husband's relatives	5 yrs	widow/ 5 yrs	3	live alone

Table 4.3: Members of the "*Samaki*" network: selected characteristics

	Tribe	Birth region	Age	Reason for moving to Mwanza town	Time lived in Mwanza town	Husbandless status/time	Number of children (dependent)	Residential status (refers to woman and dependent children if she has any)
1	Sukuma	Mwanza	30	kicked out by husband	5 yrs	divorced/ 5 yrs	1	live alone
2	Sukuma	Mwanza	36	run off land by dead husband's relatives	1.5 yrs	widow/ 1.5 yrs	3	live alone
3	Sukuma	Mwanza	32	run off land by dead husband's relatives	2.5 yrs	widow/ 3 yrs	2	live alone
4	Sukuma	Mwanza	28	followed boyfriend (with whom she had a child) – but no longer with this man	7 yrs	never married	1	live with #5
5	Sukuma	Mwanza	35	followed husband	10 yrs	divorced/ 1 yr	2	live with #4
6	Jita	Musoma	26	followed husband	5 yrs	widow/ 3 yrs	3	live alone
7	Jita	Ukerewe	42	kicked out by husband	6 yrs	separated/ 6 yrs	2	live with #8
8	Nyamwezi	Mwanza	30	run off land by dead husband's relatives	5 yrs	widow/ 5 yrs	1	live with #7
9	Kerewe	Ukerewe	36	kicked out by husband	5 yrs	separated/ 8 yrs	2	live alone
10	Kwaya	Mkoani	32	followed husband	5 yrs	separated/ 3 yrs	3	live with #11
11	Hutu	(Rwanda)	26	run off land by dead husband's relatives	2.5 yrs	widow/ 3 years	2	live with #10

Table 4.4: Members of the "*Kanisa*" network: selected characteristics

Category	Minimum required for mother and two dependent children	Frequency of payments	Extra fees
Food/daily essentials	$1.30	every day	none
Water	$.06	every day	each household spends as much as $.80/day at least twice each month when forced to buy water from a vendor
Business expenses	$.80	every day	start-up fees = $7.80 to $11.00
Shelter (rent)	$56.50	once per year	none
School fees	$15.70	once per year	"tuition" = $4.70 to $7.80

Table 4.5: Major expenses

	Main income generating activity	Approximate income/day	How often contributed to share group each month	How often received share group funds each month	Estimated dollars gained/lost from share group participation each month
1	nurse	$12.60	4 times	0-1 time	- $15.70 to - $7.80
2	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	+ $3.10 to + $6.30
3	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	+ $3.10 to + $6.30
4	received money from husband	$4.70 - $6.30	2 times	0-1 time	- $6.30 to - $3.10
5	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	+ $3.10 to + $6.30
6	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	2 times	0-1 time	- $3.10 to + $3.10
7	works at medicine shop	$3.60	4 times	0-1 time	- $7.80 to - $1.60
8	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	2 times	0-1 time	- $3.10 to + $3.10
9	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	2 times	0-1 time	- $3.10 to + $3.10
10	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	+ $3.10 to + $6.30

Table 4.6: Approximate income and share group participation of the "*Kwanza*" network

	Main income generating activity	Approximate income/day	How often contributed to share group each month	How often received share group funds each month	Estimated dollars gained/lost from share group participation each month
1	teacher	$10.20	3 times	0-1 time	- $9.40 to + $1.60
2	teacher	$10.20	3 times	0-1 time	- $9.40 to + $1.60
3	sells medicinal bark	$2.40 - $6.30	2 times	0-1 time	- $4.70 to + $3.10
4	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	- $3.10 to + $3.10
5	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	- $3.10 to + $3.10
6	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	- $3.10 to + $3.10
7	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	- $3.10 to + $3.10
8	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	2 times	0-1 time	+ $1.60 to + $4.70
9	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	2 times	0-1 time	+ $1.60 to + $4.70
10	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	+ $3.10 to + $6.30

Table 4.7: Approximate income and share group participation of the "*Mwalimu*" network

	Main income generating activity	Approximate income/day	How often contributed to share group each month	How often received share group funds each month	Estimated dollars gained/lost from share group participation each month
1	teacher	$10.20	4 times	0-1 time	- $9.40 to + $1.60
2	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	- $1.60 to + $3.10
3	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	- $1.60 to + $3.10
4	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	+ $1.60 to + $3.10
5	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	+ $1.60 to + $3.10
6	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	- $1.60 to + $3.10
7	part time secretary	$8.60	2 times	0-1 time	- $9.40 to + $1.60
8	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	- $1.60 to + $1.60
9	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	- $1.60 to + $4.70
10	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	0-1 time	+ $1.60 to + $4.70
11	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	- $1.60 to + $3.10
12	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	- $1.60 to + $3.10
13	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	0-1 time	+ $1.60 to + $3.10

Table 4.8: Approximate income and share group participation of the "*Samaki*" network

	Main income generating activity	Approximate income/day	How often contributed to share group each month	How often received share group funds each month	Estimated dollars gained/lost from share group participation each month
1	part-time secretary	$9.40	3 times	1 time	- $15.70 to - $7.80
2	sells fish	$1.10 - $1.90	1 time	2 times	+ $4.70 to + $7.80
3	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	2 times	+ $4.70 to + $7.80
4	works at a grocery store	$5.50	3 times	1 time	- $15.70 to - $7.80
5	owns home grocery and salon	$13.30	4 times	1 time	- $15.70 to - $7.80
6	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	2 times	+ $4.70 to + $7.80
7	works at grocery/salon	$5.50	2 times	1 time	- $15.70 to - $7.80
8	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	2 times	+ $4.70 to + $7.80
9	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	2 times	+ $4.70 to + $7.80
10	Sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	2 times	+ $4.70 to + $7.80
11	sells fruits/vegetables	$.80 - $1.60	1 time	2 times	+ $4.70 to + $7.80

Table 4.9: Approximate income and share group participation of the "*Kanisa*" network

network participation. Therefore, a much closer examination of the women's economic situation is required here. One way to achieve this is by first defining the women's estimated expenses and comparing these with each individual's approximate income. The subsequent disparities provide a more detailed description of each individual's degree of poverty and will shed light on how and why she was drawn into an exchange network of material goods and services.

Estimated expenses

Table 4.5 (page 163) presents the five general areas that comprised most of the women's major expenses. The estimated amount associated with each area represents the bare minimum that a woman with two dependent children would require in order to survive in Mwanza. For example, "Food and daily essentials," requires $2.90[7] each day ($1.00 U.S. = 637.23 Tanzanian Shillings).[8] This amount is very low and reflects a relatively strict diet of *ugali* (an oatmeal-like substance made from maize), which made up a large proportion of meals for the women and their children. *Ugali* was occasionally supplemented with bread, beans, and various fruits and vegetables. The usual practice involved purchasing a single tin of maize for $5.50-$9.40, which would feed 3-4 people for approximately one week. In addition to *ugali*, a woman and two children would require the following items each week:

- 1 sack of charcoal ($4.70-$7.80; charcoal is more expensive during the rainy season because it is more difficult to make);
- 1 gallon of kerosene ($2.35-$2.43);
- cooking oil:
  - gallon ($7.00; good for a week);
  - tin ($2.50; good for two days);
  - ½ tin ($1.10; good for one day).
- 1 bar of soap ($.60-$.80; used for both personal hygiene and washing clothes);
- 1 roll of toilet paper ($.30-$.60 shillings);

There were substantial and unpredictable variations in prices from day to day for most items in Mwanza. Prices were never fixed (despite the best efforts of the IMF/World Bank) and the smallest purchase entailed a long and elaborate process of bargaining and informal negotiations. Prices also depended on such things as the condition of the roads to and from Dar es Salaam (lorries hauling supplies to Mwanza were regularly detained for weeks when the roads became impassable during the rainy season, which caused substantial price hikes in various items, particularly cooking oil). Fluctuations also resulted from the relationship between the buyer and seller. While most women tried to develop a stable relationship with a particular vendor by establishing a certain rapport and familiarity, it was not always easy. Selling charcoal, kerosene, and cooking oil was a lucrative business and securely in the hands of men who were quite willing to raise the prices at a whim (and possibly willing to do so since most customers were women). In the most extreme cases, a male vendor would not lower his comparatively high prices until a group of women banded together to boycott and generally harass him. This strategy was very effective and usually occurred when a vendor's prices increased drastically from one week to the next in direct comparison to the prices of others. Dramatic price increases on the part of a single individual prompted women to complain loudly and dramatically when passing his stall in the market place. Their sharp cutting commentary was often characterized by clever innuendoes regarding not only his business sense but his masculinity as well. It was difficult for one man to defend himself from a collective onslaught such as this and he usually lowered his prices within a few days. At the same time, however, there were always a few vendors who were willing to push the limits by testing just how high they could raise prices before inciting a negative reaction among a majority of regular customers. As a result, the cost of food and daily essentials was a constant process of give and take. Although the estimate of $2.90 per day for this area increased substantially from time to time, it very rarely decreased.

Water was a second major expense for the women. While the cost was minimal in comparison to other things, the time and energy spent in the performance of this one task cannot

be overestimated. Fetching water was a job that each household had to perform about three or four times each day. Water was regularly collected and sold in five-gallon buckets; which was usually the maximum amount that most people were willing or able to carry. On the average, five gallons were used each day for washing clothes, five gallons for cooking activities and drinking water, and ten gallons for bathing. While water was free to residents of Mwanza until the year prior, at the time of the research they paid a fee of $.01-.$.02 to fill a five-gallon bucket from a public standpipe owned by the city. By using an average of twenty gallons of water each day, every woman spent approximately $.06 per day in this area.

Mwanza's water supply system, which used diesel-powered pumps to draw water directly from Lake Victoria to the top of Bugando Hill, broke down almost daily.[9] Only a handful of public taps were in place on the hill but it was impossible to predict whether or not they would be open at any given time. As a result, a thirty-minute water run could turn into a two-hour citywide search. To prevent this, women often opted to buy their water from mobile water vendors who strapped several five-gallon buckets of water to a bicycle and charged as much as $.16-$.19 per bucket. It is difficult to assess how often each household had to resort to this practice because many women preferred to fill up their buckets directly from Lake Victoria before buying it from a vendor. However, it is safe to estimate that each woman experienced at least two "bad water days" each month when they were forced to spend at least $.80 for water instead of the normal $.06.

The water situation in Mwanza has been so notoriously bad that even Bugando Hospital could not rely on a daily supply of water until 1994 when it purchased its second pair of electric and diesel pumps (after the initial ones were stolen). Before this time, the hospital was forced to rely on the city's fire truck to fill a large holding drum on its grounds each day. Additionally, the city's sewage system is almost 40 years out of date and relatively useless. Almost a million gallons of raw sewage pour each day into Lake Victoria while water is pumped from the lake for domestic use just over a mile away. For the women of this study, the water situation obviously

contributed to serious illnesses such as intestinal worms, typhoid, schistosomiasis, cholera, and child diarrhea which, in turn, dramatically increased their expenditures on health care.

Business expenses were also a major expense for most women. These fees were relatively fixed for many individuals at $.80 per day, an amount that went towards an early morning purchase of tomatoes, mangoes, bananas, fish, or other food items. Many women allowed themselves to spend $.80 in this area and only rarely invested more than $1.60 (usually when they anticipated large crowds in their area due to a sporting event or political rally).

Start-up fees of $7.80-$11.00 must also be figured into business expenses. Specifically, each woman made an initial payment to a particular farmer or fisherman (or more likely a middleman) in the form of an "association fee." The purpose of an association fee was to foster a relationship between individual women and a farmer and/or fisherman and, simultaneously, discourage them from shopping around each day for the lowest price. In exchange, the women were given a slight discount on particular items as a means of increasing their own profit margin. Most women were either reluctant or found it difficult to pay an association fee to more than one person, a practice that was discouraged in any case by an unwritten rule that only a single association could be formed at any given time. When a woman formed an association with another individual then the previous association was usually considered null and void. Since it was enforced by word of mouth, it may have been possible to break this regulation by maintaining multiple associations in a discreet manner. However, it was impossible for most women to maintain more than one because it was much too expensive and it could seriously undermine their reputation as respectable businesswomen (and the effectiveness of word of mouth as a policing strategy in Mwanza should not be underestimated). Although the length of an association varied it was in the best interests of most women to maintain a strong, lengthy relationship with a single farmer or fisherman because it allowed them to bargain for greater discounts or else it helped them arrange specific deals. For example, some women were able to negotiate a finder's fee for bringing new "associates" to a particular farmer/fisherman. In almost

all of these cases, these individuals were either women from the "finder's" social network or women who would eventually became absorbed into that network. As a result, a single farmer or fisherman could have an indirect yet substantial influence over a single network of women.

Since only four women owned their own house, rent was another significant expense. Rental costs were paid either semi-annually or annually and obviously varied with the type of dwelling. Payments ranged anywhere from $23.50 per month for a single room in a house equipped with electricity and running water to $4.70-$7.80 per month for a 5' x 10' mud-brick shack with thatched roofing. The latter represented the lowest rental costs in Mwanza and, in most cases, required an annual payment. Only two women lived in a house equipped with electricity (both of whom were among the four homeowners) and no woman could afford the luxury of running water (it could cost as much as $300.00 to $400.00 just to install the pipes and bribe the necessary officials). The majority of women lived in the small mud-brick structures that dominated Bugando Hill, thus paying rental fees of between $4.70-$7.80 per month (or one lump sum of $56.50-$94.20 each year). The women preferred to pay rent in one lump sum because they only had to worry about it once each year (monthly payments were relatively uncommon in Mwanza in any case, although a person could occasionally negotiate quarterly payments for a very nice house with full amenities). Living conditions were particularly harsh on Bugando Hill and space was at a premium. While some of the women's dwellings stood alone, most were built onto the pre-existing wall of an adjacent house so that long, multi-roomed, mud-brick structures stretched across the slopes wherever the terrain permitted. Pit latrines were squeezed in between houses and boulders and were usually shared by several households.

The final significant expense were school fees for children, which were the only other fees paid annually. School fees ranged from $15.70 per year for a single child in primary school to $94.20-$109.90 per year per child for secondary school. Secondary school was generally considered a luxury in Mwanza, which generally reflected the situation in Tanzania where relatively few individuals (mostly male) have received a secondary school education. A primary

school education was considered a necessity, however, and very few of the women were willing to forfeit their children's education at this level. The majority of women's children were of primary school age so fees were approximately $15.70 per year for each child. As discussed previously, "tuition" for private tutoring lessons was an extra cost associated with a child's education. Tuition ranged anywhere from $4.70-$7.80 per month per child. While most women considered tuition a necessity, very few could actually afford it (only three or four of the wealthiest women paid tuition fees on a regular basis).

Health fees could also be considered a significant expense but they were paid haphazardly and whenever the situation absolutely warranted. Health fees may not have been mandatory but they were significant since it was rare when a woman and her children were completely healthy for long stretches of time. In fact, it seemed like at least one individual from every household was suffering from sort of health problem (usually malaria) at any one time. Health considerations easily depleted any extra money the women may have acquired.

Hospital treatment was free in Tanzania until January of 1997 when the pressures of economic liberalization forced them to charge their patients (although treatment for highly infectious diseases like TB and syphilis remained free of charge since they were considered such an extreme danger to society). At Bugando Hospital, for example, every individual had to "open a card" as part of a patient identification process at the entrance ($2.40) and pay admission and registration fees (amounting to $10.20) simply to get in the gate. Fees varied considerably after these initial charges. For instance, x-rays cost anywhere from $2.40-$4.70 and HIV screening cost $1.60. Medicine was in such short supply at the hospital that nurses were regularly dispatched to the central market place in order to scour the small "medicine shops" and bargain on the informal market. It could be very expensive and often only possible to buy and sell in very small quantities. The most sought-after medication was chloroquin (for malaria), which cost $2.40 per tablet. A common practice was to purchase one or two tablets and cut them into halves

or quarters in an attempt to prolong the effects[10] or sell them for a profit. In the end, about half of the women purchased several Chloroquin tablets on a monthly basis.

At this point, it is possible to estimate the minimum amount required to survive each month for a woman and two children of primary school age in Mwanza. Health expenses are not included in this estimate since it was possible to survive without spending any money in this area (and some women regularly went long stretches of time without any health-related spending). While primary school fees may not have been mandatory in this respect either, they were rarely ignored and are subsequently included in the overall estimate. Taking the preceding discussion into account, then, the minimum amount required to survive each month for a woman and two children of primary school age involves the following:

1.) food/daily essentials = $2.90 per day (or $88.10 per month)

2.) business expenses = $.80 per day (or $23.50 per month)

3.) water = $.06 per day; two days/month = $.80 (or $3.30 per month)

4.) shelter = $4.70 per year (or $56.50 per month)

5.) school fees = $31.40 per year (or $2.70 per month)

Total = $122.30 per month

This amount of money is relatively small for most people in Mwanza; surviving on $122.30 per month is not living well by any means. The irony is that such an amount in cash would be a fortune in rural areas, but in the city it represents the bare minimum for a woman and two dependent children to survive. Moreover, if health and other miscellaneous costs were taken into account, this amount would easily increase by at least fifteen to twenty percent.

Work activities and approximate income

While the women were employed in both the formal and informal sectors of the Tanzanian economy, getting paid and/or generating income was always an unpredictable affair. Even women with well-respected and relatively stable formal jobs — such as teachers, secretaries, and nurses — were almost always paid haphazardly. While this was a common

phenomenon throughout Tanzania, particularly if an individual worked for the government (which was the country's largest employer), women tended to receive the brunt of national cash-flow shortages and economic problems stemming from recent privatization efforts. Their plight was due in part to the common practice of taking what little cash was available and paying men in more powerful and prestigious positions before working down the chain to women who held the lowliest jobs. Thus, doctors were paid before nurses, managers before secretaries, and school head masters and male teachers before female teachers. The combination of inconsistent and inadequate pay checks and gender discrimination had a dramatic impact upon the income of those women of the four social networks who held jobs in the formal sector; whose paychecks were effectively halved. Subsequently, holding what appeared to be a good paying job on the surface was never an insurance against daily survival. If such individuals did not manage their money well than they could swing from extreme economic paucity to relative stability with a single paycheck. The realization of the ease and quickness with which individuals could and did go from one extreme to the other was often a major factor for these women's desire to participate in informal market activities to supplement their formal incomes, though in most instances they had very little time to do so.

While women who worked in the informal sector could generate income on a more regular basis, they typically earned far less than women in the formal sector did (even after taking into account the problems associated with the latter). The income generating activities of the women who worked in the informal sector typically involved selling small piles of fruits, vegetables and/or fish on the streets/paths of their immediate neighborhood. For these women, the major obstacle entailed making enough money to survive from day to day as opposed to managing bulk payments that were received haphazardly. However, even these women had "good" and "bad" days that were defined, for example, by the difference between selling seven tomatoes and ten.

As a result of the unpredictability and dramatic swings in income associated with the women's primary work activities, it is impossible to provide an exact figure with respect to any one individual's daily income. In fact, the unpredictability of income levels is an important contributing factor to network formation and maintenance. At the same time, however, it *is* possible to provide estimates of the women's average daily income based upon their main work activities. These averages are necessary in order to demonstrate how far short most women fall from the minimum monthly income required to survive (as estimated in the previous section).

Keeping in mind the general caveats discussed above, each woman's main income generating activity and approximate income are listed in Tables 4.6-4.9. For most, income rarely exceeded $1.60. For those who worked in the informal sector selling fruits, vegetables, or fish, $.80-$1.20 represented a normal day; $1.60-$2.30 a good day that occurred possibly four or five times each month; and anything above $3.10 an exceptional day that most women experienced perhaps four or five times each year[11]. On the average, selling fish was slightly more profitable than selling fruits and vegetables; which is reflected in the average incomes associated with these activities.

Each network also included at least one or two individuals who earned more than $3.10 each day on a more regular basis with some earning as much as $5.50-$7.10. As evident in the tables, these were typically individuals who worked in the formal economic sector. While they made much more than others, the figures provided in the tables reflect the unpredictability of receiving paychecks. Thus, while women who were employed as teachers and the nurse from the Kwanza network should have been making as much as $23.50-$31.40 each day from their jobs, in actuality they only received about half that amount (and often less).

In terms of these estimates, it is clear that the vast majority of women did not earn enough money from their primary work activities to meet the minimum monthly income required to survive. In fact, most fell well below the figure calculated in the previous section of $122.30. Even with a relatively optimistic estimated daily income of $1.20 each day for fruit and vegetable

sellers (adding $.80 to this figure because the estimated income listed in Tables 4.6-4.9 is *net* income) than monthly income would be $2.00 x 30 days = $60.00. Therefore, the women fall short $122.30 – $60.00 = $62.30 *every month simply to survive*. If similar estimates were made for those who sold fish (given an equally optimistic daily income of $150 each day or, after adding $.80 as was done above: $2.30 each day) than monthly income is $2.30 x 30 days = $69.00 each month. Women who sold fish would also fall considerably short of the $122.30 required to survive each month (specifically $122.30 – $69.00 = $53.30 each month). Again, these estimates assume that every woman has a relatively good day every day of the year; something which simply never happened to any individual. In the end, women who worked in the informal sector as food vendors had a particularly hard time making ends meet.

Confronting poverty through networks of exchange and cooperation

Until this point, the existence of distinct networks consisting mainly of husbandless women has been presented without highlighting what in fact makes them unique social entities. The disparity between the women's actual income and the estimated income required to survive is the stepping off point for defining the networks as such. Put simply, since most women did not earn enough money to survive, they continually turned to one another in order to make ends meet and in doing so created critical material flows and exchanges that effectively defined each network.

It is important to note that individuals did not always notice or comment on their exchange relationships, at least not until something occurred to threaten or undermine them. In fact, the interdependence of network members that grew from these exchanges were often more apparent when the relationships themselves were interrupted in some way. Since network members were so dependent upon one another, however, it did not take much to cause a breakdown in the flow of daily material exchanges. An individual's seemingly insignificant action could lead to a considerable amount of disruption within the network of exchange relationships since it had consequences that were easily magnified as they were felt down the line.

Such ramifications ultimately contributed to the interconnectedness and distinctness of each network.

The most obvious type of material exchange, which will be examined first in the following discussion, involved the women's participation in rotating credit associations; or what were referred to locally as "share groups" (the term will be used here to refer to these activities – though it should be recognized that they are essentially the same thing as rotating credit associations). While share groups were formed and reformed on a continuing basis, they were almost always done so among the women of a single network. Thus, they were not simply an effective means of redistributing money but also a way to designate legitimate network members.

Share group participation was only one means by which the material boundaries of a social network were formed and maintained since the women's material exchanges went well beyond cash to include common household items and daily bits of pragmatic information. Members of a specific social network continually walked in and out of one another's homes or rooms on a daily basis in order to borrow things, ask for a favor, share information about an open water pipe or particularly cheap price on charcoal, or to simply talk and share gossip and news about daily events. In these ways, the women of each network were drawn together by a complex yet routinized exchange of material goods and services that supplemented (and often superceded) share groups. In the following discussion, these broader, non-monetary material exchanges and pragmatic services are examined separately and in terms of seven critical areas: childcare; food donations and the significance of illness events; fetching and boiling water; washing clothes; sharing household items; protection; and information.

Share groups

Share groups (i.e., rotating credit associations) were very popular among the women and every individual participated at least once every month in a share group with three or four other women of her respective network. There were often two or three share groups occurring simultaneously, each containing a subset of network members that overlapped (i.e., one

individual would participate in more than one share group simultaneously). In each share group, every woman generally contributed $.80-$160 (sometimes more) to the pot, which was then given to the individual who most needed it. Participation in share groups reflected a certain amount of trust and commitment, so it was an extremely rare occasion (occurring possibly a dozen times during the year) when an individual from outside of a social network contributed to a share group. It was not a wise decision for an unfamiliar woman to participate in a share group because it was unlikely that she would receive the money. An individual had to be familiar with the situation of the other women in order to participate and eventually benefit from share group activities. They were typically formed among women who knew and trusted one another, which in this case meant they were formed from within each network. Every woman could easily point out the individuals who they thought would be good share group members – as well as those who they thought would not.

The final three columns of Tables 4.6-4.9 illustrate each woman's involvement in share group activities (by network affiliation). Few women could afford to participate in a share group more than once each month. In fact, participation was a direct reflection of approximate income with women who earned the most money contributing the most to share groups. However, they did not receive the most in return for their investment. In fact, just the opposite occurred as the wealthiest women who contributed the most to share groups ended up losing the most money. Similarly, women who earned the least who contributed the least to share groups ended up gaining the most money. Subsequently, share groups were an effective means of redistributing money to the women of each social network who needed it the most.

Although beneficial, the overall effects of share groups from a monetary perspective were relatively minimal. Under the best possible circumstances, the poorest women of each network could only hope to gain $2.40-$7.80 each month from their participation in share groups. Few individuals benefited beyond this range; there were possibly a dozen instances throughout the year when individuals earned $12.00-$15.00 each month, while only three times when a woman

brought in more than $16.00 each month. While the extra money generated from share groups was particularly helpful for women who sold fruits, vegetables, and fish (i.e., the poorest women of each network), it was not enough to help them meet minimum monthly income levels; they still fell well short of the amount required to survive with the addition of share group earnings. Moreover, even the poorest women lost money in share groups; it would have been too conspicuous if somebody collected money every time. Women who lost money in share groups did not express it as a loss, however, but as a contribution they were happy to make to a friend who, as one woman put it, "has done the same thing for me." Periodically losing money to share groups was also significant because it demonstrated a certain degree of sacrifice that a group of women were willing to make for a friend. The willingness to lose some money at least some of the time was an important way for the women to demonstrate who were significant people in their lives beyond their children. From each woman's perspective, the trusted few were generally a subset of other women from her social network (it would be misleading to suggest that every woman pointed to every other woman of the network in this respect with the possible exception of the *Kanisa* network). Taken collectively, then, participation in a share group became an effective means of fixing and maintaining the boundaries of each network.

Childcare

The need for childcare was constant since the women averaged two dependent children. A very young infant (under the age of two) presented less of a problem since the woman typically carried the child on her back wrapped in either a *kanga* or a blanket of some kind with very little trouble. For women with older children, childcare was also not a problem for about half of each day during the week because most children were in school until mid-afternoon. However, from the time school let out until well into the evening these children not only had to be watched but closely supervised to insure that they carried out important daily chores. Chores ranged from fetching water and sweeping the house and yard to hawking magazines and newspapers for downtown vendors or finding a quick day job with a shopkeeper by cleaning his floors or running

errands, etc. It was impossible for many women to oversee their children in this capacity while they were working. Childcare was not only a problem for women with formal jobs who were away from home much of the day but also for those who sold food in the immediate neighborhood and close to their own homes. Food vendors did not like to abandon their businesses for more than thirty minutes for fear of losing the one sale that could transform a typical business day into a very good one.

The most common means of addressing problems associated with childcare for most women involved delegating certain tasks to another woman from her network. Sharing childcare responsibilities took several forms including partnerships between women, a well-organized network/group activity, and an informal neighborhood watch system. The women of the *Samaki* and *Mwalimu* networks best represented a childcare system based on individual partnerships. In both networks, several women with formal jobs did not return home from work until late evening and would have had a particularly difficult time with childcare if they did not rely extensively on network members. Inter-network partnerships proved very effective in particular because the children were well aware that disobeying their after-school charges was as good as disobeying their own mothers. Women who fulfilled this role were commonly referred to as "second mothers" or "after-school mothers," signifying the importance and close relationship between everyone involved. On those occasions when both the mother and "second mother" were not available to watch children, childcare duties were usually passed on to yet another woman of the network, who could be charged with the care of children from four or five other women on a given day. Although partnerships were made between specific women at a collective level, childcare remained within each network in the same manner as share group activities, though in a more stable and routinized manner. Women were not paid for these duties and it was generally viewed as a favor extended to a friend in need.

Childcare was so well organized among the women of the *Kanisa* network that it reached beyond individual partnerships to become a definitively network-oriented activity. There were

three individuals (#'s 4, 5, and 7 in the tables) who worked at a home-based grocery/salon in the immediate neighborhood. The daily operation of this business demanded that at least two of the three women be present at all times. Subsequently, they were designated with childcare responsibilities for the other women's children (a need that ranged from seven days each week for several women to anywhere from 1-4 days each week for others). In this instance, childcare was a service provided to the members of a consciously defined group, as one woman made clear when she referred to the salon/grocery shop as a place "where our children know where to go when we are not here. It is a place for our group of mothers when we are running our businesses." Normally, one of the women who ran the salon/grocery would leave for several hours each afternoon to insure that the children were performing their after-school chores. The shop itself became a type of informal meeting place for the *Kanisa* network as gossip and information flowed from this central location on a regular basis, particularly in the evenings when mothers came to purchase items, do their laundry in the back (a favored spot since the late afternoon sun struck the rocks perfectly), and/or retrieve their children.

In contrast to the *Kanisa* network, members of the *Kwanza* network had a far less formal and group-oriented system of childcare. Women from throughout the immediate neighborhood simply kept an eye out for one another's children, a practice that included but was not limited to the women of the *Kwanza* network. In this way, childcare was part of a larger and more informal neighborhood watch system. Whenever a problem arose with one of the children, however, it was clear that the women of the *Kwanza* network were more invested in one another's childcare responsibilities. In contrast to other neighborhood women (most of whom were married), the interdependencies between network members became apparent when one of their own children did not perform their after-school chores. For example, several women from the network had children who were noted trouble makers and who frequently neglected their water collecting chores. Their negligence led to some bitter discussions at various times throughout the year between the mother of the presumed "ringleader" and two other women from the network. The

women specifically told the mother of the problem child that she ended up borrowing water from them much too often because her son was not being adequately disciplined. She subsequently increased the pressure on her son who was also given an earful by one of the other women and the problem was temporarily resolved. The episode demonstrated how a breakdown of childcare responsibilities was most strongly felt among network members since they were directly implicated in one anothers lives through exchange activities. In this instance, women from outside of the network could afford a certain degree of indifference because the woman did not borrow water from them (and never thought of doing so). Since she did borrow water on a regular basis from women of her network, however, they eventually felt obliged to become involved once the delicate balance between them had been upset.

Food donations and the significance of illness events

Despite the fact that surpluses of food were a rarity for the majority of women, they occasionally donated food items to other members of their respective network. Illness events in particular were characterized by dramatic increases in food donations. While medicine (especially Choloroquin tablets) was freely exchanged during these times as well, it was rarely a surplus item to the extent of food, which could more easily be portioned and donated. Moreover, the women attributed many food items with medicinal qualities, which further linked these particular exchanges to illness events.

When a woman or one of her children became seriously ill, several members of her immediate network would either pool their own food supplies and cook her meals or purchase food for her with their own money. While serious illness events among the women often prompted non-network members (usually married women who lived close by) to bring food to the affected woman's household, it was typically a single, perfunctory visit. In contrast, women from the individual's network generally brought several meals to the house and stayed for much longer periods of time (obviously, if a woman had housemates than they were continuously present). When a woman lived alone (or with her children only) and became seriously ill, another member

of the network typically stayed with her at all times in order to cook her meals and to help out around the household. This person inevitably enlisted the help of other women in the network who, in turn, donated what food they could spare.

Women with the highest incomes were particularly significant in terms of food donations since they were more likely to have a surplus of food and/or money. Each network included individual women who were key in this respect. Thus, the nurse from the *Kwanza* network, the teachers from the *Mwalimu* and *Samaki* networks, and the woman from the *Kanisa* network who owned her own grocery/salon were much more likely to provide food to other women of their respective networks. They made donations during serious illness events as well as when an individual was experiencing hard times in general and a little extra food was markedly helpful. In fact, these individuals were specifically sought out by other women during particularly hard times. They often had an additional incentive to seek out certain individuals such as the nurse, who could provide professional health care, and the grocery/salon owner, who could donate food directly from her store shelves when absolutely necessary.

Further reasons for keeping food donations within the network involve larger neighborhood issues. Broader social issues must be looked at, for example, in order to explain why none of the women donated food to the household of a married woman when she or a family member fell seriously ill. While it was socially acceptable for married women to provide food to husbandless women during these times, the opposite was not necessarily the case because it could easily be construed as undermining the obligations and duties of the husband as well as his kin. On Bugando Hill, periods of illness were times when such kinship obligations were accentuated and the husband's mother, sister(s), and/or sister(s)-in-law were expected to move into the house, care for the ill family member, and take over domestic responsibilities to whatever degree was necessary. Non-relatives were not only exempt from these obligations, but their assistance could potentially threaten the social position of the husband and his family at some point if it was felt to be done as a result of the family's ineptitude. Such a threat was heightened if the person

happened to be a husbandless woman, as evident in the following remarks of one married man who lived on Bugando Hill: "If people saw that I needed the help of an unmarried woman, they would ask, 'What is wrong with this man's family that he needs the help of such a woman – that he is so helpless under his own roof? I can't have that." For many reasons, then, food donations and their strong ties to illness episodes remained within the network.

Boiling water

A supply of boiled water was a daily necessity for every household. It was not always possible for every woman to fetch and boil water themselves, however, because some did not return home until late in the evening. At least two or three women from each network experienced this problem (usually the same individuals who were not able to watch their children during the day), and subsequently relied on other women to provide them with one or two gallons of boiled water each day. In every case, another member of the network performed this task. In the *Samaki* and *Kanisa* networks, a single individual boiled water for several women of their respective networks, usually in the evening after preparing dinner and while she still had access to another woman's cook stove. In the *Mwalimu* and *Kwanza* networks, individual partnerships were formed between women to perform this task. As with the *Samaki* and *Kanisa* networks, the woman who performed this task often benefited by having access to the other's cookstove, which she used to prepare dinner for herself and her children. Thus, the simple task of boiling water for another also became implicated in the exchange relationships that underlined network participation. Since there were always several women from each network whose situation allowed them to remain in the neighborhood all day, they were glad to boil water for those who did not have time.

The interdependence of network members with respect to the simple act of boiling water was clearly illustrated when one woman from the *Kanisa* network took her cook stove with her when she left town for two weeks to visit relatives. The consequences of this action were almost immediately felt by several other women from the network. The woman who normally borrowed

her stove to boil water for herself and two others was able to maintain these responsibilities for the first several days. However, she soon ran low on charcoal and decided to conserve her remaining supply (it was also the rainy season and charcoal was particularly expensive), which then forced the women for whom she boiled water to buy bottled water or "tap water" (one never knew) from a water vendor for almost an entire week. One woman's seemingly mundane action of taking her own cook stove along with her on a short trip had considerable ramifications in terms of the exchange relationships that underpinned the *Kanisa* network.

Laundry

Laundry was another important task that several women of each network were not always able to perform. The significance of doing laundry was heightened by the fact that women did not own many clothes, which meant that the few items they did own required washing much more often. Additionally, a significant job performed almost daily involved cleaning a child's school uniform (a spotless school uniform was a particular point of pride for both children and their mothers). In general, then, clothes ended up being washed every second or third day. In the same manner as boiling water, women who did not have time for washing clothes relied on other women from their respective networks to perform this task. Soap, plastic tubs, and the occasional needle and thread were among the items frequently exchanged between women to perform this task. Subsequently, women who washed another's clothes did in fact benefit by having access to important items that could be used to satisfy personal needs. Washing clothes became a significant activity because it represented another opportunity to strengthen the individual ties between women of a specific network in a mutually beneficial manner.

Sharing household items

Household items refer to such things as five-gallon water containers, plastic tubs for washing clothes, utensils, stools, cooking stoves, soap, and fuel. While items such as these were indispensable not every woman had access to them. As a result, they were continually shared among the women of a network. As previously discussed, when women boiled water or washed

clothes for others they frequently borrowed a plastic tub or stove in order to do the job and would subsequently use it for personal needs. In several instances, a woman who borrowed a cooking stove in this manner paid a small fee for the use of cooking fuel. However, in each case it reduced by over one-half the price she would have paid at the market place. Women who were gone during the day actually preferred to lend out items because it prevented them from being stolen from their homes. Items were constantly circulating among members of each network as women went from one household to another to borrow and/or retrieve everything from a bicycle to a bar of soap. Of course, individuals who shared rooms in the same household particularly benefited in this area by combining items under one roof.

Lending household items was not done cavalierly, however, since every woman seemed to know the exact whereabouts of her personal belongings (probably because most things circulated almost strictly within the network itself). A common refrain associated with these exchanges was "We help one another because we are alone." In this way, the husbandless status of the women became the common denominator for framing their exchange relationships. This idea was clearly demonstrated when several women of the *Kanisa* network exchanged glances and laughed when asked whether or not they could benefit from having other women share items with them. One woman replied that "They can just ask their husbands to buy anything at all for them. If they have a strong marriage he will agree and it will not be a problem."

Protection

Protection for oneself, children, and property was a particularly valuable benefit that the women gained from participation in strong networks. This idea was emphasized frequently by the women themselves, who felt that it would be impossible for a single mother to survive in Mwanza if it were not for the protection offered by other women in her situation. The subject of protection often elicited responses like "we are not like other women" and "we must look out for each other because there is no man." The women's fears were well founded since violent crime has been on the increase in Mwanza over the past ten years. Theft was a particularly common

problem on Bugando Hill and contributed to the general feeling that the police force and judicial system were largely ineffective and corrupt (a belief regularly editorialized in the local and national newspapers). The women rarely considered summoning the police for anything but the most violent crimes. The police were never informed, for example, when relatively expensive and significant items such as a bicycle and cooking stove were stolen. In one instance, a woman from the *Samaki* network actually had several sheets of corrugated iron that comprised her roof stolen directly off the top of her house (roof theft was relatively common on Bugando Hill). When asked whether or not the police should be summoned, she shrugged and exclaimed somewhat disgustedly, "Why? So they can laugh at me and call me a stupid woman?" On several occasions, a woman from one of the networks was severely beaten (usually by a "boyfriend"). The police were not summoned in any of these instances and doing so was barely discussed in any serious manner. Instead, the women tried to prevent such things from happening in the first place by regularly looking out for one another, their children, and their property. Towards this end, word quickly spread whenever a particular threat manifested itself with respect to any one individual. Whether real or not, violence at the hands of men was clearly perceived as a constant danger and specific women seemed particularly vulnerable in this respect at any given time. Even the *potential* for violence had the effect of uniting the women of each network, which was evident in the comments of the women themselves when they said such things as, "She's very lucky she is not alone and has us" and "She better not leave this area [the immediate neighborhood] because he will be waiting for her." Since the potential for violent crime was always considered immanent for particular individuals, protection afforded by participation in a strong network became as much of a pragmatic and routine activity as the exchange of material goods.

Information

A final area where the women benefited from network membership involved the exchange of information. Here, information refers to such pragmatic needs as medical advice,

letting other women know about an open water pipe or a particularly cheap price on everything from charcoal to a T-shirt, and helpful hints on things like conserving water, making candles, mending clothes, and thatching a roof. An especially common topic of interest in this area involved sharing advice on the operation of a small business. Tips and guidance regarding small businesses were a constant subject of conversation between the women of each network. Topics ranged from ways to keep vegetables fresh for longer periods of time to the availability of a particularly strategic location for selling goods during different times of the year or when special events ensured particularly large crowds of people. The women were eager to increase their profits and fully realized that the slightest rise in daily income could lead to tremendous benefits for themselves and their children. Bits of advice regarding the small business were frequently given in the broader context of improving an individual's standard of living.

While general information and helpful bits of advice were readily available and received from non-network members, the fact that the women spent so much time with individuals from their own network intensified its circulation within the network itself. It was accentuated as a result of other types of exchange activities among them. Subsequently, they consulted one another on everything from daily affairs to critical life decisions and became important advisors in one another's lives. The network-based quality of information exchange was clearly reflected in the women's responses to questions regarding the people they would most likely seek out for advice on a wide variety of topics. The individuals whom they chose were overwhelmingly the other women from their respective networks.

Some broad patterns associated with the women's material exchanges

A significant pattern that emerged with respect to both daily exchanges and share group participation involved the position of the wealthiest women (usually women who worked in the formal sector) with respect to the poorest (usually women who worked in the informal sector selling fruits, vegetables, and fish). In general, the wealthiest women of each network profited least by participating in share groups. However, they may have gained the most with respect to

other daily exchanges since they relied extensively on women who remained close to the neighborhood each day who were basically the poorest women of each network. Since the wealthiest women were the most likely individuals to be gone from their homes all day, they were also the most likely individuals to keep the assistance of others. Similarly, the poorest women from each network gained the most in material terms by participating in share groups as well as by having access to crucial household items that the wealthiest women were more likely to own. In effect, a complex redistributive system involving money, property, and the exchange of daily favors and pragmatic services. Interestingly, the women themselves rarely if ever emphasized it as such and the overall effects of their reciprocations were either lost amidst their intricate web of relationships or simply left unsaid.

A second pattern characterizing the women's exchange of material goods and services involves the extent to which they were confined to each network. While share group participation and exchange practices were largely network-based activities, this does not necessarily mean that every woman from each network was specifically involved in an exchange relationship with every other woman in her network. Rather, individuals from within a network cooperated with one another with respect to specific goods and services at different times. The result was the creation of overlapping subsets of network members in which some individuals were always more involved or more central than others with respect to any one exchange or cluster of exchanges. The important thing to note is that individuals from outside of the network were only very rarely involved (for the activities mentioned thus far). When asked who they most relied upon during times of crisis or for certain favors, the women themselves pointed to other individuals of the network (or subsets of those members).

In those rare cases when an individual from outside of the network was mentioned as particularly helpful during times of need. Seeking the help of relatives was an avenue that the women very rarely pursued and only then as a last resort. There are several reasons for this, the most obvious being the fact that most extended relatives lived in rural areas and were difficult to

contact. Furthermore, as subsistence farmers most relatives simply did not have access to what most women needed – money. In fact, the few women who could afford it did not like visiting their relatives because it was often the relatives who expected cash from the city-dwelling women (which seemed a common expectation of rural family members with respect to relatives who live in Mwanza). Finally, once they were married the women became the responsibility of the husband and were not always considered true relatives any longer. For the husband's part, refusing to help his estranged wife may have devalued his moral credibility to some degree but not to the point of prompting him into action. Men commonly explained away their indifference in these cases in terms of the "hard times" that faced everyone. The relatively fatalistic response among women was to shrug their shoulders and say "What can I do?"

In the end, the notion that husbandless women must fend for themselves was prominent on Bugando Hill and articulated in the women's own actions and words, particularly with respect to their behavior towards married women. It was rare for a husbandless woman to enter the house of married couple, particularly when the man was present, despite the fact that they interacted and lived among married women and their families. The relationship between husbandless and married women was much more like a business transaction entailing well-defined endpoints (for example, washing laundry for a set fee). While this type of interaction did not characterize all relationships between them, interactions with married women were generally far fewer and markedly different than the informality associated with the comings and goings among network members themselves.

Small business and the space of the neighborhood

From a strictly economic standpoint, becoming a businesswoman was not an easy goal to achieve and depended in large part on the formation and maintenance of steady relationships with customers. Women who were recognized as successful produce and fish vendors had been doing business in the neighborhood for several years. Their success was due in large part to their foundation of relatively steady customers from the immediate neighborhood. Just as the women

formed steady relationships with charcoal or cooking fuel vendors, other people often sought a similar relationship with a particular woman who sold fruits, vegetables, and fish. If she was recognized as a decent and fair individual whose produce or fish were more fresh or of a higher quality in some way than that of food vendors, then she could establish a steady neighborhood clientele over the years. Similarly, a woman who listened to her customers, knew their names, and treated them with respect and politeness was also generally recognized as a "good businesswoman."

Establishing a professional business reputation and developing a base of steady customers depended in large part on consistency and creating a good location from which to do business. Food vendors were fiercely territorial about their "spots," a fact that was true not only of the organized stalls in the central market place, but also of the informally designated "territory" of a particular woman who sold, for example, a dozen tomatoes each day. From a small patch of grass on one of Bugando Hill's dirt tracks to a boulder outcropping that offered high visibility, specific locations from which to do business were zealously guarded. Changing spots was rarely an option for women who had been in the same location for several years since by that time they had gained enough steady customers to make it a relatively valuable piece of property. A specific woman was equated with a specific spot by her regular customers and she stood to lose a substantial amount of business if that location was lost or threatened in any way.

The significance of spatial location and continuity for women from the four networks who sold fruits, vegetables, and fish is illustrated in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 (see pages 193 and 194 respectively). Figure 4.1 shows that the percentage of "regular customers" (i.e., individuals from a particular household who purchased food from a woman at least three times each week) increases with the amount of time she spends in the same location. In fact, after five years in the same location, more than half of a woman's business can come from regular customers. Similarly, women who occupied the same spot for less than one year had far fewer regular customers, (comprising less than 20% of their total clientele). Figure 4.2 illustrates the number of

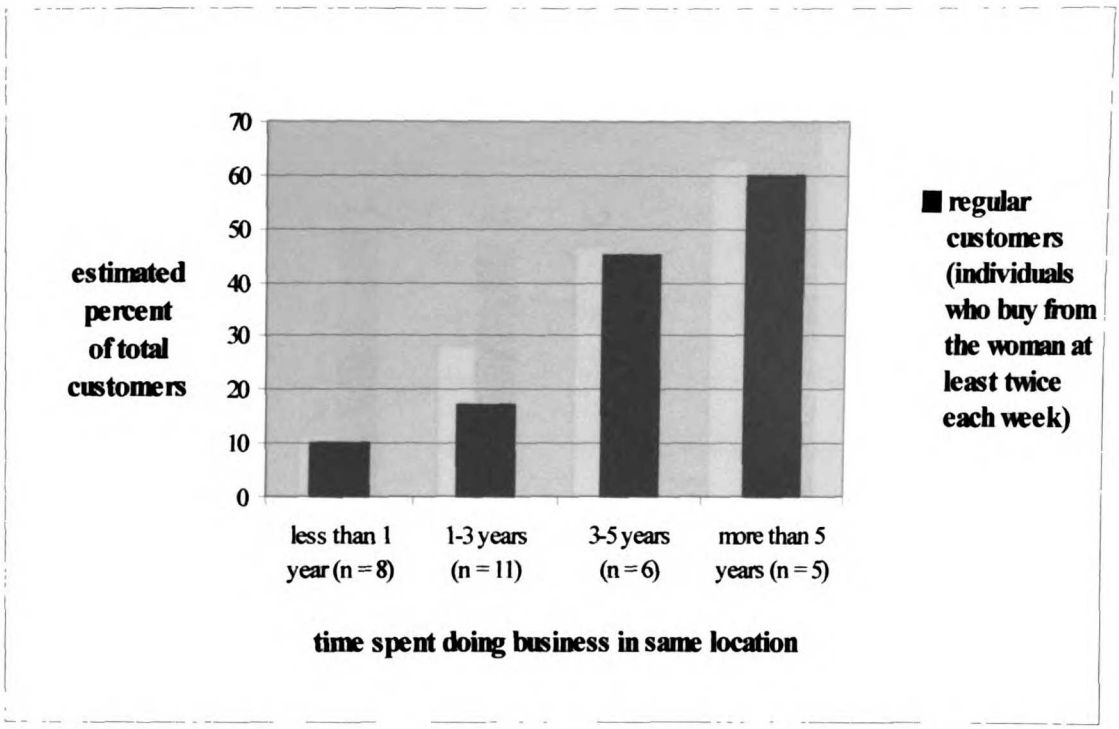


Figure 4.1: Estimated percentage of regular customers for women from all four networks who sold fruits/vegetables and fish

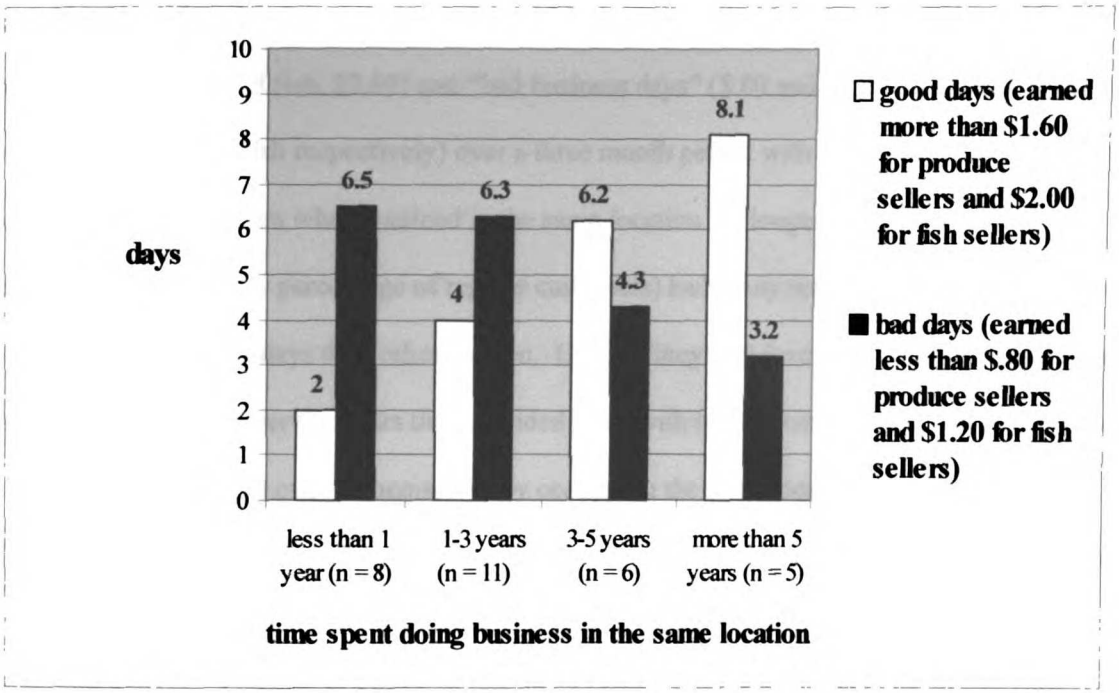


Figure 4.2: Average number of "good" and "bad" days each month by time spent doing business in the same location for women from all four networks who sold fruits/vegetables and fish (during a three month period from March 1, 1998 to June 1, 1998)

"good business days" (when a woman who sold fruits and vegetables earned more than $1.60 and, for those who sold fish, $2.00) and "bad business days" ($.80 and $1.20 for shoe who sold fruits/vegetables and fish respectively) over a three month period with respect to time spent in the same location.[12] Women who remained in the same location for longer periods of time (and tended to have a greater percentage of regular customers) had many more good business days and far fewer bad business days than other women. Clearly, they had developed a strong foundation of regular customers over the years that provided them with an economic buffer, due in large part to the niche they carved out for themselves by occupying the same location over the years.

The location from which the women did business was not or could not have been just any available spot in the city, but somewhat close to their place of residence in order to carry out important household chores and keep an eye on children. Thus, a business location was never far from a woman's home and rarely outside of the neighborhood itself. Over time, then, most women's regular customers were people from the immediate neighborhood. Cultivating a steady base of regular customers went hand in hand with achieving a solid business reputation within the neighborhood itself (as Chapter Five will make clear, a woman's business reputation was part of a more general reputation and respectable social status). Furthermore, people preferred to deal with vendors who they could trust and specifically looked for familiar women from whom to purchase things at a fair price. In terms of business opportunities, then, the space of the immediate neighborhood was absolutely important for the women.

While the women's business interests were balanced against their need to carry out personal household chores and watch children, they were also balanced against the interests of other women in their respective networks. It would have been extremely difficult to maintain the exchange of goods and services that underlined each network if women worked far from their homes and one another. In fact, most of their daily exchanges and transactions would have been impossible to maintain, which was reflected in the fact that women who lived outside of the immediate neighborhood changed their place of residence and moved closer to network members

themselves once they became more involved in the exchange relationships that defined each one. As a result, both the network and the individual business interests of the majority of women were a function of the neighborhood space.

Social networks and the husbandless woman

The idea that husbandless women depend on one another is born out on Bugando Hill by the existence of distinct networks of exchange composed almost completely of widowed, divorced, or separated women. These women experience a severely limited economic situation that fosters an interdependence in which a wide variety of goods and services flow between them on a daily basis. Networks of exchange gradually form through such practices as participation in share groups, helping with childcare, lending household items, or simply doing another woman's laundry or boiling her water. Given the relative deprivation of most husbandless women, the material benefits afforded by these practices cannot be taken for granted. The smallest and most mundane favor had tremendous consequences for the individual and the larger network to which she belonged.

The material aspect of the women's relationships reflects various themes found throughout much of the work cited at the beginning of this chapter. Most notably perhaps are the ways in which operating a small business and participating in share groups contributed to more extensive exchange networks entailing a wide diversity of material goods and services. Subsequently, income-generating activities cannot be viewed in isolation since they are subject to larger network concerns. One obvious difference between this study and previous work is that the exchange networks described here were composed almost entirely of husbandless women who experienced an extremely high degree of poverty. The women's poverty may directly contribute to a second difference involving the relatively high density of their networks when compared to others that may have been discussed in the literature. In other words, each network was tightly interconnected in terms of its exchange relationships and only occasionally reached beyond the dozen or so women who composed each one. It seems clear that the women's degree of poverty

contributed to the tightly knit quality of their exchange patterns. As stated throughout the chapter, this interconnectedness is one reason behind the relative ease by which the boundaries of each network could be defined. It will be seen that this feature has powerful implications that reach well beyond the material realm.

It must also be pointed out that the four networks were not worlds unto their own since each was part of their respective neighborhoods on Bugando Hill. The significance of the neighborhood space was made clear in two respects. First, if the women of each network did not inhabit the neighborhood space and live in close proximity to one another, it would be impossible to maintain the daily exchange of goods and services that underlined their relationships. At some point, a woman had to occupy the neighborhood space in order to fully benefit from participation in a strong network of exchange relationships. Second, the majority of women in each network clearly benefited in their small business ventures by cultivating a foundation of regular customers from the neighborhood. Building up a steady source of neighborhood customers offered a degree of economic buffering for a woman and very likely increased her profit margin. In the end, the material benefits associated with both the network and their small business ventures were underpinned by the neighborhood space.

A final issue that needs reemphasizing at this point involves the disparity between the majority of the women's real income and estimated monthly expenses. It is clear that most women from each network did not earn enough money to survive. Despite the additional income provided by share group participation and the money saved by the exchange of goods and services, women who sold fruits, vegetables, and fish had a particularly hard time meeting minimum income levels. The question then remains: how do they survive? The answer lies with the type of relationship they formed with men *from outside of the neighborhood.* However, it would be misleading to suggest that these relationships were the result of economic necessity alone. While economic needs remained critical to the women they did not stand alone as cold, objective facts defined on the basis of calculated decisions involving estimations of personal

income and expenses. Rather, the economic context framed the conditions within which the women lived, who then utilized their networks as a mechanism to provide their experiences (both past and present) with meaning and legitimacy, a process which fed back into and thus shaped those conditions as strongly as economic factors. In order to fully understand their sexual exchange practices and construction of risk for AIDS, then, the focus must remain on the women, their social networks, and the space of the neighborhood itself, but shift from the exchange of goods and services to the exchange of ideas and information. The symbolic flows between women were critical, becoming the context within which they embodied, understood, and produced their sense of self and place in an uncertain world.

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[1] An important and influential work from the United States that should be mentioned here is Carol Stack's *All Our Kin* (1970). There is a striking similarity between her research among African American women and many of the issues raised throughout this work. Most notably, and with respect to this chapter, she highlights how networks of women form around a wide variety of practices and cooperative relationships as an adaptive response to poverty. Other similarities will become apparent, including the obvious conflicts between exchange networks of women and the relationships between men and women (as either husbands/wives or boyfriends/girlfriends). More specifically, Stack describes how the group/network uses gossip to sharply constrain sexual relationships with men, particularly those who are non-economically productive and may sap the resources of other network members. The resulting image of men is markedly negative (e.g., as highly promiscuous and always drinking) and "successful" relationships are increasingly measured by the women in terms of what they extract from men. In Stack's work, women clearly value their sense of power over men via their ability to manipulate them on a field of material exchange.

As will be seen, all of these themes are also present in this work. Despite the similarities between Stack's description of African American women living in the United States and the description provided here of husbandless women living in Mwanza, Tanzania, I do not wish to dwell on Stack's work at length (which is why I have reluctantly relegated her work to an endnote). Beyond the problems associated with cross-cultural comparisons and my own desire to situate the network aspect of this study in terms of research conducted in Africa as much as possible, there are significant differences between Stack's work and this one. Stack is not concerned with risk and she was writing well before AIDS was a part of the scene. She also focuses on kin-based networks while this work concerns itself with non-kin networks. The extent and degree of poverty is also quite different, as are the structuring influences and available resources (both material and symbolic).

Despite the differences between Stack's work and this one, the similarities are truly remarkable, so much so that I believe *All Our Kin* should be revisited by anthropologists concerned with AIDS among minority populations in the United States. In fact, I would go so far as to argue that, despite being written before the time of AIDS, it ranks as one of the most significant anthropological contributions to date (albeit indirectly) regarding AIDS research in the United States.

[2] While income level (i.e., class) contributed to the differences between this woman and other husbandless women, it is not the only issue. There were multiple reasons why she was not representative of husbandless women and seemed to accrue more respect and social credit than others. She was older, more educated, and held a decent, well-respected job for a woman. She also provided health care services and obtained medicine for many people on Bugando Hill who otherwise would not have these things immediately available. Additionally, she was outgoing, energetic, and as mentioned in the text, quite dignified in manner.

Class-based differences oversimplify the more complex issue of managing both economic and social legitimacy, which is an important theme of this work. Husbandless women who earned more money could not always manage the contradictions between their husbandless status, income level, and/or income-generating activities. Income level did not automatically lead to more respect on Bugando Hill because it directly countered the chastened, humble image of the husbandless woman and the limited (and limiting) expectations placed upon her. Thus, the nurse from the *Kwanza* network was atypical of husbandless women as a result of the extent with which she successfully negotiated the wider realm of economic *and* social capital that all husbandless women had to negotiate. Even she was not immune to its pressures, however, as evident in the apparent derisiveness with which the comment "she is not like a widow" was often spoken (the implications being that widows should be both poor and submissive).

[3] Because spatial proximity is such an important underlying feature of network affiliation, it is necessary to specifically highlight it here. As a general precaution, however, I have purposefully altered each network's location on Bugando Hill while simultaneously retaining the general "flavor" of each network's spatial characteristics.

[4] The actual English word was used to describe this practice.

[5] "Tuition" is a relatively recent development in Tanzania and came about with the liberalization of the economy in the latter half of the 1980's and the subsequent decline of real wages among teachers (even when they were getting paid at all).

[6] How the women saw themselves (i.e., whether they saw themselves as a distinct group) is an important issue that will receive more attention in following chapters.

[7] All figures are provided in U.S. dollars in order to give the reader a better idea of the amounts involved. All amounts have been rounded to the nearest $.10 except in several instances where the amounts were so small that it was necessary to display them to the nearest penny.

[8] This amount is the average exchange rate for a twelve month period from October 1, 1997 to September 1, 1998 (roughly corresponding to the period of this study).

[9] For a good discussion of the water situation in Mwanza, read "To Fetch a Pail of Water" (in Natural History ; 2/99; pp.56-65) by Mary L. Plummer.

[10] According to local physicians in Mwanza, the practice of cutting Chloroquin tablets into halves/quarters simply decreases the dosage and severely limits their effects.

[11] These figures represent net income or what each woman earned after spending $.80 each day on business expenses

[12] The reader might be asking themselves why average income is presented rather than the more cumbersome number of "good" and "bad" days. The reason is that women who sold fish tended to spend more time in the same business location (especially the women of the *Samaki* network) when compared to women who sold fruits and vegetables. Since selling fish was slightly more profitable than selling fruits and vegetables, the estimated daily income would have reflected this fact. Further dividing the sample (between produce and fish sellers) associated with each of the four time categories would have resulted in extremely small sample sizes that are impossible to correct for statistically.

CHAPTER FIVE: ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL NETWORK:

PRODUCING A SENSE OF SELF AND PLACE

As for myself, I'm a widow and I know what that means to a lot of people. And that's not fair to widows because we're not all like that. We should be respected for who we are and not treated like dogs just because we don't have a husband. And I'm more than just a widow [thirty-four year old widow from Mwanza].

Introduction

In addition to the exchange of goods and services, each network was also the site for an intense exchange of ideas and information. The women continually shared their experiences, problems, hopes, fears, and desires with one another and, in the process, reproduced a common identity rooted in revised notions of legitimacy and moral authority. Their reproduction of a new sense of self and place involved a sharp social critique that questioned their ambiguous status as husbandless women. At the same time, it was tempered by their ongoing negotiation with more established forms of legitimacy, morality, and meaning that permeated and defined the surrounding neighborhood on Bugando Hill. While the network may have been the site for an emergent identity among husbandless women, it was a situated identity and thus contingent upon conditions around it.

This chapter examines how the women saw themselves and their place on Bugando Hill. It examines their networks in terms of the flow of communication and ideas, suggesting that they were a powerful normative influence that shaped and disciplined an emergent identity. As the women actively maneuvered to define and occupy a narrow social space between their ambiguous status and the wider realm of the neighborhood, they defined a group identity around a shared set of meaningful experiences and cultural themes. Subsequently, the normative/symbolic function of the networks reinforced and was reinforced by the exchange of material goods and services.

Social networks and the African townswoman: the normative/symbolic aspect

While the normative/symbolic aspect of social networks has always played a significant role in the anthropology of urban Africa (Mayer 1961; 1962; 1964; Pauw 1963; and in Mitchell's

[1969] volume see especially the contributions by Boswell, Harries-Jones, Kapferer, and Wheeldon) few of these earlier studies paid much attention to the situation of African townswomen. The research focus may simply have been reflecting the large male to female ratio that predominated in the urban environment, which was particularly evident in East Africa where cities grew as a direct result of vast concentrations of male migrant labor. However, as increasing numbers of women became part of the urbanization process in the years following independence (beginning roughly in the 1970's) researchers did in fact begin to shed light on the circumstances surrounding their migration patterns and unique situation. It may not be surprising that the early emphasis was on their social and economic marginalization and continued dependence on men (Little 1973); a theme which remained dominant for Tanzania well into the 1980's (Sabot 1979; Swantz 1985). If anything, women's lack of agency combined to define their independence and relationships in the city for most researchers.

A good example of this approach is Epstein's (1969; in Mitchell's volume) brief discussion of women's networks in the mining townships of the Copperbelt. His discussion is extremely salient, particularly his association of various material flows and favors with the neighborhood space and the relevance of these practices for shaping specific, very localized communication/information clusters among woman:

> The neighborhood is socially a more important unit for women than it is for men. Men go off to work during the day and do not have the opportunities to form the same attachments within the immediate neighborhood as the women, who spend more of their time around the house. Many African women still spend most of their time outside of the house itself: they prepare the vegetables, cook their meals, and do their washing up in the open. In this way they see their neighbors doing exactly the same sort of thing and they carry on conversations together. Often they will pop over the fence, so to speak, and do their chores together. Neighbors help one another in a variety of ways: they borrow money from one another, or items of foodstuff if they should suddenly run out, or they

> may put up your mother-in-law if she should come to stay with you, and you consider it would be a breach of the in-law taboo to have her sleep in your own house. Beyond this, sets of adjoining houses become small gossip clusters in which the affairs of the neighbors are made known, discussed and criticized. Neighbors tend to know a good deal of one's private life and movements. [p.96]

Epstein's discussion is excellent and seems to lend itself to the normative impact of neighborhood networks for women. In fact, at a later point in the same article Epstein (following Bott [1957]) makes a distinction between *effective* networks, which show a high degree of interconnectedness and are more likely to reproduce group norms; and *extended* networks which are more loosely knit and exert little or no normative influence. Yet he fails to attribute a very powerful normative aspect to the women's networks described earlier despite the fact that they seem to bear a direct resemblance to effective networks. In fact, he undermines the whole idea of female agency and group identity when he claims that effective networks are more likely to occur among high prestige groups. In effect, norms, ideals, and values are defined and shaped at this level before trickling down to permeate other segments of society (presumably in a hegemonic manner). The entire process is clearly biased towards men, who dominate urban society in Africa, and undermines the whole notion that social networks of African townswomen can have a unique normative impact of their own.

Throughout the 1970's but particularly beginning in the 1980's, the research focus on female peripheralization and lack of agency began to change. Much of the change can be attributed to wider paradigm shifts in anthropology as a whole, particularly the growing influence of gender and feminist theory (for example, Rosaldo 1974; Ortner and Whitehead 1981; and for later examples see Butler 1990; Haraway 1991; Ortner 1996). A particularly important aspect of this body of work was the stress placed on such things as women's domestic clubs and trading societies as powerful sites of female agency (Rosaldo's introduction to her edited volume specifically highlights these types of associations; see also articles by Lamphere and Sanday in

the same volume). Anthropologists began to emphasize female agency in terms of informal methods of change such as gossip, ridicule, and group solidarity in the neighborhood market place and local political sphere. A micro-politics of resistance and identity emerged as the "spaces in-between" dominant patriarchal structures were highlighted and explored. Social networks figured prominently in these accounts as sites that grounded a distinctly female agency and the reproduction of powerful woman-centered symbolic themes.

These ideas, in turn, had an impact upon the focus and discussions surrounding the situation of African townswomen and their own efforts to define and achieve new forms of female agency and empowerment. It became clear that women in Africa were also actively seeking and creating spaces to maneuver from within the highly patriarchal urban environment, especially through informal business and trade activities (Lowe 1976-77; Obbo 1980). From this basis, it was also clear that women were beginning to define an identity beyond "traditional" notions of work and gender in the new urban environment that encompassed such qualities as independence and self-reliance. Moreover, and in the same fashion as gender and feminist theorists had shown for other parts of the World, African townswomen were defining these qualities in terms of their relationships with one another. While their social networks had been highlighted previously as support groups that channeled information and shared gossip (Little 1973), a growing awareness of women's agency and forms of resistance (combined with the women's own efforts and struggles) led researchers to acknowledge social networks as bases of female solidarity in urban Africa (Robertson and Berger 1986; Muller 1989; Tripp 1997). The powerful normative influence of social networks among African townswomen was being featured, particularly as it worked in conjunction with their economic activities and exchange relationships.

A problem that runs throughout much of this work, which is also represented in gender and feminist theory as a whole, involves a lack of attention to the full range of potential differences *between* women. In terms of African townswomen and their social networks, the

problem manifests itself whenever researchers ignore or gloss over the various normative influences and experiential criteria that influence the formation and maintenance of particular social networks. Viewed from the opposite angle, a lack of attention to the exchange of specific symbolic resources and flows often leads to generic constructions of "female networks" in urban Africa. While it may be true that social networks are important sites of agency among African townswomen, the particular form that agency takes may not be the same for all women, nor does it come without a price. It is evident that this work must adopt a more micro-level focus and examine specific types of social networks and particular flows of symbolic capital as well as develop a more nuanced approach that discerns differences between women in terms of the complex array of conditions characterizing urban environments.

This study begins to address these problems by turning to the normative impact of the four social networks introduced in the previous chapter and highlighting the flow of communication in relation to a shared set of norms, values, and ideals. In doing so, it explores the significance of the neighborhood space and the women's husbandless status in shaping a unique yet relatively constrained type of emergent identity and specific form of female agency.

"Cultural themes"

The normative/symbolic aspect of the women's social networks are examined in terms of the production and reproduction of several shared and deeply meaningful "cultural themes." By cultural theme, I refer to frameworks or specific sets of linked meanings that permeate individual experience in terms of both social practices and perspectives. Thus, the cultural themes discussed here are simultaneously constituted by narrative and metaphor (Basso 1983, 1988; Fernandez 1974, 1986, 1991; Kirmayer 1992; Ricoeur 1983; Turner 1980; White 1980); embodied understandings (Csordas 1993, 1994; Scheper Hughes 1991; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987; Taussig 1980); and, for lack of a better definition, techniques of space/time management (Duncan and Ley 1993; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Keith and Pile 1993; Pile and Thrift 1995; Rodman 1992; Rosaldo 1988; Salmond 1982). In short, cultural themes are meaningful social practices,

various aspects of which manifest themselves on a continuum from a well-articulated ideology (or narrative content) and/or well-intentioned act to an implicit, unquestioned, and routinized pattern of behavior (which is more likely but not necessarily a hegemonic form of some kind). Cultural themes manifest themselves in these ways to incorporate past experience with present conditions and, ultimately, to delimit a horizon of possibilities by shaping the expectations of oneself and others. Each theme should not be thought of as mutually exclusive, but as an overlapping set of meanings and perspectives that reinforced one another. They also "linked up" and were sustained by legitimate hegemonic discourses (re)produced from outside of the immediate social network. Together, the cultural themes enacted by the women in this study formed the underlying logic and sense of legitimacy for an emergent identity.

Three cultural themes are discussed here: 1) Being and becoming husbandless; 2) Doing business and the new woman; and 3) Fetishizing poverty and suffering. Together, these three themes defined a broad framework within which experiences were meaningfully defined to form the core features and underlying logic of an emergent identity among the women. While there were individual differences in the ways that each cultural theme was articulated and enacted across the four social networks (just as there were differences between individual women) their combined effect defined a similar social space within which the women (re)produced a group identity. These similarities are significant and cannot be explained away by the simple fact that the majority of women were husbandless (although this is important). The final section of the chapter discusses their self-reflexivity and husbandless status in terms of broader circumstances and social processes that conditioned life on Bugando Hill.

Being and becoming husbandless

The first cultural theme examined here involves the meanings that the women attributed to being and becoming husbandless. Their current status as husbandless women often involved a series of disruptive experiences that called into question accepted notions of gender, kinship obligations, and the authority of "tradition." These experiences were continually drawn upon by

the women and became a critical part of their new female-centered identity. In order to highlight their experiences and the meanings attributed to them, this section focuses primarily on the circumstances surrounding the husbandless status of three individuals (one widow, one divorced woman, and one separated woman).

Adi[1]: A widow from the Kwanza network (#3 in the tables)

Adi was a twenty-six year old Sukuma widow from the *Kwanza* network who sold fruits and vegetables. She lived with her two children (both girls, ages one and two) in a three-room mud-brick house that she also shared with another woman (a widow as well) who had three children of her own. She had married an Ukerewe man (the Ukerewe live mainly on Ukerewe Island, which is just off the coast and to the north of Mwanza) and had moved into his *shamba* on Ukerewe Island soon after they were married. Initially, she described herself as content:

> Before he died I was depending only on my husband's money and from his work and I didn't disturb my mind about anything having to do with family and children and food. We had a *shamba* and he was working and I enjoyed life. However, I was very naïve.

During their third year of marriage, Adi's husband was killed in an automobile accident on the mainland. Adi almost immediately came into conflict with her husband's relatives over ownership of the *shamba*:

> It is Ukerewe custom to find somebody to sleep with me in order to cleanse the house. This has to be done before I can eat or talk or even participate in society again. My husband's brother wanted this done because it was the first step toward inheriting the *shamba – my shamba*! They treated me like I was a girl or a goat...I hated their horrible, outdated ideas about custom and was against their plans from the beginning - but I was totally alone. My relatives were far away on the mainland and they couldn't help me even if they wanted to. They might have been able to pay back the bride price but they had no desire to do this...and besides they could not afford to do it. I was not their

problem anymore. It is very embarrassing to treat women like this but it's custom for many tribes in Tanzania.

For several weeks, Adi resisted her in-laws efforts to take over the *shamba* but eventually concluded that her efforts were futile and there was very little she could do alone:

> I told them that I was not sleeping with anybody...but they insisted...especially the brothers of my late husband. They said it was custom and that I didn't understand and should not question custom. And so they got several village elders who were all old men to come to my *shamba* one night and insist that I follow the rules. I received threats from my husband's eldest brother after that. I feared for my life and the lives of my children and finally ran away. I was robbed of all my property and everything. I barely had time to grab my cooking pot before leaving.

While Adi does not discuss it in this particular passage, she intimated on several occasions that a contributing factor for her relatively hurried departure involved fears that her in-laws would take her children from her. While in-laws did not always make claims to the women's children, it was a particular issue for a number of widows in particular. Some women ended up taking one or two of the youngest and most dependent children and leaving older ones behind (particularly boys, who were more highly prized by in-laws due in part to inheritance laws). Others did not wish to part with their children under any circumstances and were forced to flee under direct pressure to do so if they were somehow made to believe that their in-laws were scheming to take their children from behind their backs. Adi represented the latter case since she believed that she had "uncovered a plot" to take her children from her when overhearing a discussion between her husband's brother and another man in which the former complained about the potential for losing land within has lineage as a result of having female children only.

After fleeing her rural village, Adi came to Mwanza to find her sister who lived in the city with her husband and two children:

I came to Mwanza because of my sister and also because the city is the only place to earn money and begin a small business. I arrived with my two children and with very little money but luck was on my side because I managed to find my sister. She helped me for a short period but her husband became angry and impatient. He beat me and my children. There were constant beatings. My sister pleaded for me to stay but she couldn't convince him of anything. It is very hard for a woman to approach a man, even her own husband. I did not want the things that happened to me to also happen to my sister. So I left. I was lucky because by that time I had sold some things and made enough money to start my small business and rent a room with (her housemate). I thank God that I met her because she understood my situation and helped me a great deal. I used to be a skinny woman and now look at me, I'm fat and healthy.

Adi's account of the circumstances surrounding her husband's death and subsequent arrival in Mwanza highlight several issues typical of the woman's experience in these situations. In general, beliefs associated with gender and kinship conjoin with traditional inheritance laws to severely limit a widow's options in Northwestern Tanzania. Many of the widows in this study were made aware of their ambiguous position and tenuous hold on the *shamba* within several weeks of their husband's deaths. As with Adi, they routinely described their unquestioning dependence on their husbands as a "naïve" acceptance of "outdated customs" or "horrible traditions." The "robbing" and general mistreatment of widows in "traditional society" was a well-articulated theme among all women. It became a particularly strong rallying point for critiquing their tribal identity as a somewhat homogenous "traditional hang-up" characterized by the mistreatment and degradation of women. As widows, the women were incredulous[2] that they would receive so little respect and have very little legal recourse, particularly after dedicating much of their adult lives to their husbands and husband's relatives as well as to the upkeep and maintenance of the *shamba*. The experiences of widows were well known and well articulated since there were women from each network who had experienced a relatively similar set of circumstances as Adi's. As a result, they

became an exceptionally meaningful basis from which to question a woman's dependence and long-term commitment to a man.

Adi's account brings to light several other significant issues. First, it illustrates the consequences of a woman's initial and ongoing resistance to accepted ideas regarding widows and women in general, the most notable being violence at the hands of men. Male violence was a pervasive experience in all of the women's lives. Many feared for safety of themselves and their children on an almost permanent basis since the potential for male violence was always "out there" and something they felt should always be taken into account. As such, it became an effective means of limiting the range of possibilities available to them. A second important issue involves Adi's perspective on Mwanza as the antithesis of tradition. This opposition was a common means of framing life in the city and the women regularly described Mwanza in terms of progress, development, and the potential for modern living. At the same time, cities like Mwanza were the logical choice for women like Adi since they represented the only viable place where they could earn an income. For women in these situations, the city was never just about being the last place to go, but also a place for a new and modern beginning as they left tradition by the wayside. A final issue that needs to be pointed out is how Adi associated the events surrounding her husbandless status in terms of her own physical health and bodily appearance (something she did on many occasions). Such associations were common among the women and they viewed both exploitation and self-realizations as being quite literally writ on their bodies.

Shemsha: a divorced woman from the Mwalimu network (#9 in the tables)

Shemsha was a Nyamwezi woman born and raised in Shinyanga District (located in the southern part of Mwanza Region) who was divorced from her husband for five years at the time of the study. Initially, she had followed her husband to Mwanza when he took a job at the local brewery. Shemsha had two children from the marriage (two girls, ages six and eight), both of whom lived with her in a small two-room house with thatched roofing. She shared the house with

another woman from the *Mwalimu* Network (who also had two children). Shemsha describes the circumstances surrounding her divorce in the following passage:

> As soon as we moved to Mwanza I began a small business and it quickly became successful. But my husband didn't want me to do any business and only wanted me to stay home doing absolutely nothing at all. He wanted me under his fist but I resisted and began doing business anyway. The family atmosphere changed after that. This was when he began living only to hurt and insult me. He even burned my clothes. I was constantly weak and had many bruises. I tell you the truth that I grew very thin and looked like an old woman. He began to drink when he was not a drunkard before. He bought less food for the family and sometimes no food. The man was simply not providing for me. And he was sleeping with trash outside of the marriage...and prostitutes. I suspected his adultery myself but it was confirmed by other women that I do business with (she mentions two individuals from the *Mwalimu* Network). I divorced him for fear of further persecution and AIDS that he might bring to me from his prostitutes. Besides, by that time I was practically supporting my children myself and had already made arrangements to live with (her current housemate).

After the divorce, Shemsha and her two young girls moved into the crowded house on Bugando Hill. Despite earning relatively little money from her small business selling fruits and vegetables and her meager living conditions, she felt that she was in a much better situation when compared to life with her husband:

> Since I divorced my husband I have had more and more opportunity to progress with my business plans because I am not troubled at all by him. Now, I'm arranging things nicely. I love my business plans because they allow me to develop a healthy family atmosphere. You know, I also believe that an important value in life is sharing and helping one another. Unfortunately, I still fear for my life and those of my children because my ex-husband still lives here in Mwanza. He says that he wants me back but I am so much

happier without him and have learned to survive on my own. I think he's just lazy and a drunkard now and can do nothing for me but hold me back.

The circumstances surrounding Shemsha's divorce illustrates several significant issues, the most important of which is how a woman's small business activities can lead to a conflict between husband and wife. In Shemsha's case, her husband's customary role as provider for the household was clearly threatened by her ability to supplement domestic responsibilities with small business activities. This issue is significant in part because it highlights that operating a small business is an option for *both* married and unmarried women; it is not simply the recourse activity of husbandless women who are forced into earning an income by any means possible. Rather, a small business is an attractive prospect for all women and considered a great benefit of life in the city. As Shemsha's case demonstrates, however, married women require the support or, at the very least, implicit compliance of their husbands. But this matter is not easy to negotiate since the small business frequently disrupts or threatens the accepted roles of husband and wife. In many cases, it leads to the demise of the woman's business activities before they have a chance to get off the ground. In other cases, the husband might comply but insist on taking the wife's business profits, which may again prompt her to quit her business altogether or, as was the case with the married woman from the *Mwalimu* Network, hide most of her profits at another woman's house. In many instances, the husband wins out in this process, particularly if there are children involved since accusing his wife of neglecting their children is an especially damaging and effective tool at his disposal. Such accusations were a common means of scrutinizing and questioning the credibility of particular women in the general conversations, jokes, and gossip among men on Bugando Hill.

Shemsha eventually resolved the tension between her business interests and her expectations and duties as a wife by opting out of the marriage. Separation and divorce is a particularly difficult time for a woman, however, and if she is not careful than she can quite literally end up on the street. Therefore, a quick and sudden separation/divorce is not in the best

interests of the woman, who requires a transition period of some kind when she can steadily (and sometimes only partially) get out from under a dependency on her husband and lay the foundation for a new life elsewhere. Such transitions characterized the experiences of women from the four networks who were divorced and separated. In Shemsha's case, she gradually expanded and strengthened her relationships with the women of the *Mwalimu* network over a period of a year while she remained married and living with her husband. She insinuated herself into the exchange relationships of the network over time by moving her small business into the network's general "territory," participating in their share groups on an increasingly regular basis, and sharing childcare responsibilities with another woman. At the same time, she was making new friends and gaining much needed confidence to leave her husband through her interactions with them. Information was being exchanged as part of this process, the most damaging of which involved the women's confirmations of Shemsha's suspicions regarding her husband's infidelity. When combined with the violence (and drunkenness and laziness) that Shemsha attributed to her experiences with her husband, the information provided by other women became a strong incentive for her to finally carry out her plans. In the midst of all these experiences, Shemsha was being exposed to the ideals of female sharing and cooperation that came with participation in a strong network. She was made aware of the fact that the events of her own life were not unique, which then defined the options available to her in a more obvious and clear-cut manner. In the end, making arrangements to rent a room with another woman from the *Mwalimu* network was simply the culmination of a long series of events that defined Shemsha's particular transition period.

The events of Shemsha's transition period did not stand alone since they were notably similar to those of other women. For example, similarities are evident between Shemsha's experiences and those of the married woman from the *Mwalimu* Network who, as mentioned previously, hid her small business profits at the house of another woman. Like Shemsha, this woman was also experiencing difficulties with her husband as a result of tensions between her

small business interests and her domestic responsibilities. In a very real sense, she was in the early stages of the same transition period experienced previously by Shemsha and many other women. In fact, throughout the year she began spending more and more of her time and energy with the women of the *Mwalimu* network and began to articulate (quite noticeably) separation from her husband as a viable option. Overall, then, the transition process was a significant period that structured a woman's options as entailing a choice between competing worlds: one involving the accepted but ignoble world of male dependency and one comprised of female assertiveness, independence, and cooperation. The final case more clearly illustrates the struggles and contradictions involved in this process.

Elsa: A separated woman from the Kwanza Network (#9 in the tables)

Elsa was a twenty-one year old Zinza woman who had been separated from her husband for eleven months when I first met her. They had come to Mwanza together over three years ago (from Mara Region, which is located to the north of Mwanza Region along the Kenyan border). Elsa followed her husband to the city after he had received a tip from his eldest brother about a possible factory job. She decided to separate from him soon thereafter due to her increasing suspicions about his infidelity. It was a relatively amicable separation, however, and the husband paid for Elsa and their two year old son to move into a small mud-brick room built onto the back of a larger house (her room had a separate entrance). After their separation, Elsa's husband also changed residences and moved to Bugando Hill (though he lived on the opposite side) and she continued to "date" him from time to time. Elsa was in the midst of a particularly difficult stretch with her small business selling bananas and rice-cakes and was considering returning to her husband:

> He asks me to come back to him and live with him in our old house again (which was still for rent at the time) but I haven't decided on these matters just yet. I was very angry and disturbed with him for his adultery. And now life is difficult for me and I have my

son to think about. He'll have to go to school soon and school fees will be a new worry for me. Life is very difficult for me.

Elsa was relatively young and quite shy. While her agitation over whether or not to return to her husband was readily apparent, she often framed the decision in simple, pragmatic terms. She rarely spoke of her feelings for him beyond being "very upset" and "agitated" over his adultery and her continued suspicion that he was "throwing away all his money as a sugar-daddy[3] for a very young school-girl somewhere in the city."

Elsa received a considerable amount of help and advice from several women of the *Kwanza* Network. One woman loaned Elsa some money as a start-up fee to establish her small business and a second cared for Elsa's young boy at least one day each week (she occasionally gave her firewood as well). The nurse cared for Elsa's boy when he was sick and regularly advised her on health issues. In these ways, Elsa was slowly socialized into the exchange relationships of the *Kwanza* network. At the same time, and more significantly perhaps, the women had taken it upon themselves to advise Elsa regarding the problems she was having with her husband. The nurse articulated this practice as she talked about her conversations with Elsa:

> I tell (Elsa) that she should not go back to that man. She should be finished with him completely because he does not respect her. She has a small boy to think about now and he does not need a family environment where the man is always running about and bringing home young schoolgirls. I know this man and he is a drunk, a drinking man who likes to go about without a care. (Elsa) is a young mother herself but not educated in these matters and needs guidance.

Through her increasing participation with the other women of the *Kwanza* Network, Elsa received direct advice like this on a regular basis from at least two or three of the older women. When Elsa returned to her husband for several days (what the women often referred to as a "date") she neglected her small business. Her absence did not go over well with the woman who loaned Elsa

the money to start her small business and she made a point of informing her that this was a serious mistake. The woman described this particular visit in the following excerpt:

> I told her (Elsa) that for the sake of her young boy she has to tend to her business every day. She can't rely on her husband and must empower herself and make her own way now. That man of hers is a drunkard and beats her – she told me this. I think he's truly crazy, absolutely crazy. She will certainly face difficult times but she has to overcome these initial problems. Little by little it will get better for her, it's always little by little, every day. She can't neglect her business or it will crumble. She can't go back and forth like she's doing. It's not right for the child or her own health to do these things. I told her about my sister who separated from her husband and tried to go back to him, only to receive more beatings and disrespect. He (her sister's husband) would even bring girlfriends home with him. It's like she (her sister) had no meaning at all to him.

The circumstances surrounding Elsa's situation are significant because they illustrate how the women gradually but powerfully absorbed others into the network. In Elsa's case, this was done by "recognizing" her naivete about men and her "unhealthy" dependency on her husband, as well as her "outdated" assumptions about motherhood. The women were keenly aware of Elsa's indecision regarding her marriage and were not hesitant to express their own opinions regarding the matter (and defining it in the process). In doing so, they continually asserted the legitimacy of being a husbandless mother while simultaneously decrying any other possibility. The advice that Elsa received in this way, which occurred on an almost daily basis and was not simply the result of one or two conversations, was based in large part on appeals to motherhood and her responsibility to her child. In this context, motherhood and a "healthy family atmosphere" were increasingly equated with female assertiveness and cooperation than with the marital responsibility and the obligations of husbands and wives. In fact, women constantly harangued men as they recounted their own experiences. Women like Elsa were suddenly privy to daily accounts of male violence and gender discrimination, which were themselves associated with

rural-based "tribal traditions" that the women described as being ridiculously out of place in Mwanza. Many of these accounts were told in a direct attempt to convince Elsa to leave her husband, as was the case with the woman who conveyed her sister's situation when she lent Elsa money. In more general sense, stories about their husbandless status were a frequent topic of conversation among the women and continually expressed in jokes about men, passing comments about married women in the neighborhood, and the constant telling and retelling of the experiences of a sister, mother, neighbor, etc. For the majority of women, the circumstances surrounding their husbandless status were the most disruptive and significant events in their lives. It was not surprising, then, that they shared their experiences and opinions with one another on a regular basis and in such a wide variety of ways. The information conveyed by these accounts resonated strongly for women like Elsa, who increasingly viewed herself as wavering between two mutually exclusive worlds in which the very bedrock of motherhood stood in the balance.

While this fundamental opposition was defined and imposed upon Elsa, other potential avenues for assistance were simultaneously depicted as totally out-of-reach (and as being rooted in Elsa's youthful naivete). Many options were in fact closed to Elsa, such as seeking help from her in-laws (many of whom lived in Mwanza). Few women (Elsa included) seriously considered their husband's relatives as a source of help in any way. The women's practice of recounting the experiences of women like Adi, in which the individual was "robbed" of her property and personal rights and confronted with physical violence, reinforced the futility of looking for help from in-laws. While birth relations represented a more viable option for women, particularly for younger women like Elsa, this option engendered ambiguity and apprehension as well. In the case of women who were divorced or separated, paying back the bride price was often an imposing obstacle and one of the "traditional hang-ups" with which the women simply did not wish to deal. Most rural families simply could not afford to return the bride price or else were hesitant to do so, hoping instead that the marriage would work out in some way. The few women who pursued this route were often admonished by their parents to "stick it out" and stand by their

husband. A divorced or separated woman would also have to confront a significant degree of shame and stigma after returning home upon a failed marriage. Such a deterrent was particularly strong in Elsa's case who feared her return home would cause a scandal implicating not only herself and her child but her father and brothers as well. In the context of the network, Elsa's fears were reinforced when the women recounted their own experiences and/or those of people they knew and these included similar repercussions and circumstances. As part of these descriptions, the women regularly highlighted their tribal identity and the negative aspects of "custom" in a way that played upon an individual's fears. Thus, in Elsa's case (who was Zinza) women would make such statements as "Oh, yes, Elsa is Zinza so she cannot go back home. She will no longer be accepted."

The women isolated themselves further by drawing upon the stigma of being husbandless and defining it as a barrier toward interacting with the majority of their neighbors on Bugando Hill. The most common line of thinking in this respect entailed the idea that husbandless women could not and should not befriend their neighbors because it would lead to certain trouble:

> I am afraid to get to know my neighbors too well because people might think that I am dealing with their husbands. If I were to become too friendly with my neighbors then women will say that I am trying to sneak around with their husbands because I don't have my own. Other women are always talking and telling stories about these things happening. Education makes a difference in people's attitudes, if people are educated they might realize that this isn't so. But I don't know...it's hard to know how people will act. I have to be careful. It's like trying to force yourself into the mouth of a crocodile. [thirty-two year old widow from the *Kanisa* Network].

At times, some women seemed to support the idea that husbandless women were predisposed to being the "other woman" (while being careful to exclude themselves). For example, a widow from the *Mwalimu* network was particularly fond of recounting the following events, which

occurred when she was living in Bukoba (in fact, she was often prompted into telling this story by several other women of her network, who always found it extremely amusing):

> When I was living in Kagera I saw many single women carrying their (water) bucket with food in it and pretending as if they were going to take water from a well but they were going to see their sugar-daddy or boyfriend. And they cooked delicious food for them which was better than the meals prepared for them by their own wives. If anybody sees her with the bucket they of course think she is going to get a little water now and then from a well. However, she is carrying food for her sugar daddy. It isn't easy for people to realize what she's doing because she is so well behaved around her neighbors. I was really surprised to see that behavior from these women. Funny thing is that the man's wife cooks him beans but his second-wife cooks him a delicious chicken and you never know where she was able to get it.

When similar events and stories circulated among the women of a network, they contributed to the idea that their husbandless status could be a barrier toward interacting with other people on Bugando Hill. They subsequently limited an individual's options beyond the interdependence fostered by the relative safety and "logic" associated with participation in the network itself. The positive qualities of female assertiveness and cooperation were not simply being defined but were being defined as the only viable option for a husbandless woman. To this end, the reliability and trustworthiness of men, immediate and extended family, and married women, were systematically called into question. For women in Elsa's situation, the self-reinforcing tendencies of stories, personal experiences, and opinions that circulated among the women of each network presented a limited number of opportunities and an extremely narrow path to follow.

The ambiguity and potential power of being and becoming husbandless

It is clear that divorced, separated, and widowed women are in a structurally ambiguous position with respect to individual liberties and property rights. For many, similarities in experience are directly rooted in traditional inheritance rights associated with traditional kinship

structures. While the Tanzanian government has passed laws to protect the rights of women like Adi, Shemsha, and Elsa, such legislation often has very little impact, either because the women are not aware of its existence, view it with a mixture of fatalism and hopelessness (a general perspective adopted on the State in Tanzania), or because they are impossible to enforce, particularly in rural areas. As a result, husbandless women fall into a gap created by State ineffectiveness on the one hand and the power of established practices in local contexts on the other. The general situation reflects a very limited space from which to maneuver within and between institutionalized structures, which produces strikingly similar experiences of exploitation and discrimination. In the end, the experiences and extenuating circumstances surrounding the husbandless status of Adi, Shemsha, and Elsa were representative of the majority of women across all four networks.

The fact that the women's experiences were similar allowed them to collectively question accepted gender roles and formed the basis for defining a new type of female-centered legitimacy. The women were not about to accept the idea that their husbandless status was necessarily a blotch on society or a symbol of personal failure. The network allowed them to share common experiences and thus became a site to normalize an "appropriate" perspective on those experiences. As part of this perspective, the husbandless woman became the embodiment of urban progressivism and liberal ideals; an individual who dared to break free of the patriarchal control and male dependency that formed the basis for a homogenized construction of tradition from which it made "sense" to break free. An obvious outgrowth of the women's new sense of self and place in this respect was the representation of men as drunk, lazy, untrustworthy, and potentially violent, yet simultaneously protected by outdated and unfair traditional customs. It may not be surprising that these beliefs were so widely prevalent since they were rooted in the women's very real and structurally ambiguous position. It was the act of sharing these experiences within the network, however, that provided them with their strongest and most articulate voice as a cultural theme.

Entirely new ideas involving gender and personal rights were not easy perspectives to adopt. For many divorced or separated women it entailed a long, slow process of disengagement from male dependency while they were increasingly socialized into the network. The perspective adopted by the women of each network and the information exchanged between them effectively shaped the decision making process of individuals who were undergoing this transition period. These individuals typically engendered the strongest image of the husbandless women in terms of a female-oriented assertiveness and as striving for the progressive ideals of self-reliance and independent motherhood associated with "modern living." As a result, the process of socializing women into the network was an opportunity for network members to more clearly define and reaffirm the ideals of being and becoming husbandless. An important aspect of this emergent theme involved the responsibilities and duties of motherhood, which were never questioned but drawn upon as a powerful means of legitimating new ideals. Subsequently, motherhood was a particularly influential factor for women who were in the midst of a transition period between "naïve" acceptance of traditional patriarchy and the truly modern female idealized by the network.

Similar experiences of being and becoming husbandless do not necessarily lead to similar meanings being attributed to those experiences. Put another way — and in terms of network interactions — the women did not validate and relate the qualities of self-reliance and independence and the role of the single mother solely as a result of their relationships with one another. Institutionalized structures remained important in this respect and they continued to shape how the women constructed their husbandless status. More specifically, promoting female assertiveness and defining and supporting the role of the single mother were central to the purpose and aims of literally dozens of NGO's, mission programs, and development agencies in Mwanza. These institutions not only insured that development and progress were a strong "background discourse" in the city as a whole but a number of agencies and programs targeted that discourse at single mothers specifically. These programs were important for many women

from the four networks, who could easily point to two or three of these organizations on or near Bugando Hill, most of which focused on the health and nutrition of women and children. Many attended classes that were offered by these organizations. One director, a British community health expert who was in charge of several of these programs and trained local nurses to teach nutrition classes, summed up the aims of his organization in the following passage:

> The obvious goal is to teach the women the things they can do to care for the health of themselves and their children. It's the basic stuff really: nutrition, personal hygiene, and so on. This is the basic, you know, basic community health stuff. Survival skills really. (At this point, he goes into a lengthy and detailed story about a baby who died of malnutrition, tracing that "totally preventable death" to the "mother's complete ignorance." I heard the same story repeated later by one of his nurses while she was teaching a nutrition class). On another level, women gain confidence in themselves by learning to care for themselves and their children. A lot of these women are totally alone and have no clue of how or what it takes to be self-reliant. You obviously see this with all the single mothers who you talk too. So these classes (on nutrition and women's health) are really trying to develop that confidence they need to survive as well.

While not always stated as clearly as this, eradicating a distinctly female ignorance regarding "survival" and replacing it with the qualities of self-reliance and independent living were an implicit aspect of developmental organizations targeting the health of women and children. There was also a clear association between these issues and gender oppression, an idea that several of the programs highlighted by conveying dramatic increases in levels of domestic abuse. In these ways, the programs either directly or indirectly legitimated aspects of the women's discourse of being and becoming husbandless and provided them with information that was easily drawn upon to form a powerful critique of male dependency and even male worth. The knowledge associated with development , progress, and modern urban living increasingly supplanted the role of the man as a necessary part of a functional family. As such, developmental organizations had a strong

impact on the women, often because they represented the only external sites that came close to specifically addressing their situation and validating the viewpoints about themselves.

Doing business and the new woman

One of the most noticeable features of the women's identity entailed a sense of pride they felt as businesswomen. Doing business was not simply an occupation or a survival strategy for them, nor did they define it as the result of their limited opportunities in the formal economic sector (although they did recognize this fact). Being a businesswoman entailed much more and was itself an outward sign of the female independence and assertiveness they defined and so highly valued in their struggle and experiences as husbandless women. Several prominent features of their identities as businesswomen are discussed here: 1) The urban business and the developed self; 2) The entrepreneurial mother; and 3) Space, time, and the business ethic. An important structuring influence of the women's business identity involved the ways that it was acknowledged by the surrounding neighborhood. The perspective that neighbors adopted on the women and their business activities was important because the immediate neighborhood supplied many customers and, more importantly, neighbors represented the most desired and valued type of customer to the women. The women clearly recognized that a customer from the neighborhood was more likely to do business with them on a regular basis.

While attempting to engage their neighbors from a business perspective, the women also recognized the dangers associated with doing so as a result of the popular image of husbandless women as sexually promiscuous. By doing business in the neighborhood space, then, the women were forced to negotiate their identity as business women and their neighbor's beliefs regarding husbandless women generally. The result was a clash between women's efforts to redefine their identifies around their husbandless status while simultaneously distancing themselves from another "type" of husbandless woman who more closely approximated the stereotypical qualities associated with prostitutes (this process will be discussed in more detail at various points throughout the remainder of this work).

The urban business and the developed self

Doing business in Mwanza was not only a logical and necessary income-earning activity for the majority of women, but also a chosen path of self-improvement and personal initiative in their efforts to overcome "tradition" and embrace a modern lifestyle. They viewed the very ability to do business as the result of a new and more progressive urban lifestyle founded on the principles and ideals of "development." Business activities were in stark contrast to their experiences of life in the village, where the impracticality of doing business and lack of demand was defined in terms of a pervasive ignorance and lack of development. Small business activities represented an achieved status from their perspective, which was a prevalent theme in our discussions regarding their business ventures. These ideas are evident in the following excerpt of a conversation with a twenty-six year old Sukuma widow from the *Kwanza* network:

Woman: When I first came here (to Mwanza) I changed little by little. First, my home, then my business – I started my business plans – then my mind. Now I attend to my business, which is getting stronger and stronger every day.

Chris: What do you mean when you say that your mind changed?

Woman: I mean that I changed how I think about – about myself. My business allows me to be an independent woman, which is a thing that I never experienced before I came here.

Chris: Why not?

Woman: Well, because it is truly impossible to do business in the village since there is no money there. But even if there were a lot of money my husband would never have allowed me to pursue my business plans. A woman can't do business in the village because they're not developed there. There's no education. People are generally very narrow minded. A woman is not allowed to do anything.

Chris: And so you came to Mwanza?

Woman: Yes, I came to Mwanza but it was a long time before I had the courage and even knowledge to do these things and to pursue my business plans.

Chris: Knowledge of what?

Woman: Well...it's true that my business has made me stronger in many ways. I'm a stronger person now because I don't need to rely on anybody. The city is truly modern in these ways and I am provided with every opportunity to pursue my business plans.

Even after many years in Mwanza, women regularly recalled their experiences of life and work in the village with a similar distaste as a means of highlighting the self-improving benefits of their present business activities:

> My life is totally different now. Before I was a businesswoman I worked only as my husband's slave on the *shamba* because I didn't know any better. I have replaced my *jembe* (a hoe-like digging stick) with these (she points to a calculator, pen, and pad of paper with calculations of profit estimates and business expenses). [thirty-four year old Zanaki widow from the *Kwanza* network]

> I can't believe that I used to dig in the dirt like a cow everyday for so many years. I refuse to live like that any longer and with God's help my business plans will progress nicely so that I won't have to. In any case, I am so involved (note: she uses a local slang form of the Swahili verb *kupenda*, which literally means "to like" or "to love") in my business that returning to the village is impossible at this point. [thirty year old Nyamwezi woman; divorced; from the *Mwalimu* network]

> I will tell you something that is the absolute truth. I might go through difficulties when my small business is not profiting me at all, but it allows me to be developed This was really impossible to do in my village because the people are animals without education or development (another woman sitting nearby laughs). No, I tell you the truth and really it

is not a laughing matter. People are backwards in my village. I know this for a fact because I used to be too (the woman who laughed nods in agreement and says, "She is telling you the truth. I was laughing at her belief that people are animals. We are finished with farming like that."). [thirty-one year old Sukuma widow from the *Mwalimu* network]

Doing business was an outward sign that the women were involved in the entire process of development and modernization. In this light, independence and self-sufficiency were the ultimate goals and most important benefits of having a business. Their business activities were a means of achieving and displaying these qualities while leaving behind the traditional constraints and "backwardness" associated by them with experiences of life and work in the village.

The entrepreneurial mother

Doing business was not only an activity that helped the women achieve the ideals associated with modernity and development, but it was also defined as a path toward becoming more effective (and modern) mothers. One of the most important goals of every mother was to provide her children with an education, which was itself tied to the modern ideals that the women strived for in their business ventures. It was also strongly believed that educated children were more likely to take care of their mothers in their old age. All of these ideas were continually linked together so that motherhood and doing business became self-reinforcing endeavors:

My business plans are really for the benefit of my children. I always have my children in mind. I have dedicated my entire life to them. I work for them so they can attend school and be educated. I want them to be able to get a good job that pays well so that they will take care of me in my old age. Maybe if they are educated they will respect their family relations too. I hope they will realize that my business was for their benefit. (pause) But *it's also for my benefit too. [twenty-seven year old Sukuma widow from the Samaki network]*

I am both a businesswoman and a mother. These are the two things that I am. And as a business mother I provide for my children's education and they will then provide for me down the road. [thirty-six year old Sukuma widow from the *Kanisa* network]

I invest in my child's education because he is my security in old age. It is an investment, a business investment. [twenty-one year old Zinza woman; separated; from the *Kwanza* network]

The vast majority of women did not view themselves as retiring to the village in their old age (which was still a common desire among men). In keeping with their new ideals, they imagined themselves retiring in the city, living in their children's house, and being cared for by their children and grandchildren. In this scenario, men (as either husband or father) were conspicuous only by their complete absence. The women's business ventures thus supplanted the role of the man in raising children and ultimately became an investment in an independent future that sustained a particular view of the family. In fact, the language of business[4] was often used to characterize a healthy family atmosphere in which the man had little or no role to play:

When I was married, my husband only got in the way of my business plans and was not providing for the children. If he refuses to provide for his own children and won't let me pursue my business plans, than how can a child be raised? The productions graph[5] for our family went down and the children were not earning a profit. [thirty-six year old Kuria woman; separated; from the *Kwanza* network]

Raising a family is like a business. When there is no input you will get no output. My ex-husband never provided any input, so I made a decision: it was either my husband or my business. I think the smart long-term investment for the sake of my children and myself is in the business. [forty-two year old Sukuma woman; separated; from the *Samaki* network]

As "business mothers" (a common term among the women) the women's business activities were an investment of time, money, and energy in their children's education and well being. Doing business was not only a legitimate activity of mothers, but also a core aspect of "modern motherhood" and an activity that single mothers pursue in order to embrace development. The man as both father and husband had little if any role to play in this process. In fact, the whole point of being a successful business mother was to invest a wide variety of resources in areas that allowed her to be entirely self-sufficient and independent for the remainder of her life.

The women's association of business activities with motherhood imbued their sense of self and place with an unquestioned social legitimacy. While their status as husbandless women potentially threatened their activities on Bugando Hill, their status as mothers did not. Integrating the ideals of motherhood with those of their business identities clearly sanctioned their interactions with neighbors along the lines of customary roles associated with women. Few people were likely to question the women's relatively public presence on Bugando Hill when put in terms of motherhood. It was one of the few resources they had at their disposal and it made sense for them to capitalize on it and link it with the more contemporary path towards social legitimacy denoted by doing business. As "business mothers," the women embodied both cultural continuity and change in an accepted, mutually reinforcing manner.

Space, time, and the business ethic

The final aspect of the women's business identities involved a far-reaching and shrewd sense of enhancing the business potential of every opportunity. While this idea was somewhat more diffuse than their beliefs concerning progress, development, and motherhood, it was equally significant as a contributing element to a larger cultural theme. It was most evident when the women adjusted such activities as childcare and domestic tasks to compensate for the time and energy required to do business and the need to be physically close to their business locations. In fact, their business interests dictated the entire rhythm of their lives in both a temporal and spatial sense. Even when not directly involved in the daily operation of their small businesses, however,

the business ethic of profit and loss remained a fundamental and driving force in their lives. Since childcare, household chores, and business activities conjoined to severely limit the amount of time for women to interact with others, it was thought necessary to enhance the business potential of every "free" opportunity. To this end, chance meetings with people from the neighborhood were punctuated by statements such as "So you know I am doing business now..." or "I will give you a very good price on tomatoes..." It was common to hear the women pitch their businesses in this way on those occasions when they visited the house of someone from outside of their immediate network. For example, they might point to some oranges or bananas on a table and claim, "Those don't look so fresh, maybe you would like to come and see me..." In effect, every moment of the women's lives was lived *through* their business interests and viewed in terms of profit and loss.

The women from the *Kanisa* Network took this practice a step further by purposefully appointing several women to remain behind after Sunday Mass in order to strike up conversations with church-goers and casually mention their small business activities. They recognized the benefits accrued as a group from this practice because their business locations were so close to one another and formed a kind of "alternative marketplace":

1st Woman: You see, we know that we sell our produce at a very fair price. But over there (the central market place) they sell things very high. It is highway robbery[6]. But people continue to buy there anyway because it might be all that they know.

Chris: So it's like you're in competition with the central market place. Is this what you're saying?

1st Woman: Yes, exactly. It's a healthy competition.

2nd Woman: We're like an alternative market.

1st Woman: Yes, that's it exactly. An alternative market. But we need to put out the word.

2nd Woman: Advertise.

1st Woman: Yes, advertise. We need to advertise our businesses. It's so true. We're businesswomen after all.

Chris: And that's why you hang around after church like that?

2nd Woman: Yes, yes, yes...it's an act of business. It's like –

1st Woman: Well, yes...and we do talk about the sermon. We don't forget why we're there in the first place. (laughing)

Chris: Ah, yes.

1st Woman: You know it's true that we talk about two things at the same time after church: God and our small businesses.

3rd Woman: It's all so true. Church is like free advertising. (laughing)

While women from the three other networks did not specifically organize as a group in this way, individuals did recognize that their prices were generally lower than those at the central market place and subsequently made an effort to "get the word out." Women who did not operate a small business on a daily basis (i.e., the nurse, teachers, and secretaries) proved useful in this respect because they had more opportunities to interact with other people and spread the word about a friend's business activities. They specifically targeted people who lived on Bugando Hill, however, because they were more likely to shop at the central market place and pass by the women's business locations (and become regular customers). Every conversation and encounter was increasingly constructed as a business opportunity and as a chance to advertise the women's small business ventures. As one woman put it: "Whenever I'm talking to someone I'm always thinking if I should inform this person of my small business." Another woman put it similarly: "Everyone is a potential customer, so every conversation today could lead to profit tomorrow." The idea that "everyone is a potential customer" was not simply an oft-repeated phrase among the women but also a widely *practiced* belief. As a result, the women's lives were increasingly structured by a business ethic of profit and loss even when they were not directly engaged in their

business activities. Founding their interactions with others on the principles of economic profitability and material benefit had become both necessary and appropriate.

Doing business and advertising oneself to the neighborhood

The women's reproduction of a business identity entailing a combination of urban ideals, new forms of motherhood, and the business ethic of profit and loss was only possible with the implicit acceptance of their immediate neighbors. Their neighbors' affirmations were of particular importance because the women desired their business and targeted their professionalism and the business aspect of their selves specifically at them. As a result, the women were advertising their small businesses to their neighbors as well as their identities as businesswomen. In this light, their efforts to embody the ideals of development and urban progressivism and associate these with the unquestioned legitimacy that comes with motherhood were a strong and effective means of defining a valid social space on Bugando Hill. Acting toward everyone as a potential customer was an equally effective way to promote this space. In the end, their business activities were a means of making their husbandless status respectable among their neighbors by diverting their views of them from potentially predatory females looking for a man to respectable, self-reliant businesswomen.

People from the neighborhood were well aware of the women's situation and acknowledged their efforts and identities as businesswomen. In fact, they typically juxtaposed the women's business activities with their husbandless status, as evident in the following discussion between myself and three male "ten-cell[7]" leaders from Bugando Hill:

1st Man: More and more widows are moving here to Mwanza. So many come here now from their villages.

2nd Man: There are many on Bugando Hill of course. And it's true that life is particularly difficult for them. They don't have a husband, sometimes no family, or the family doesn't want them any more.

Chris: And they're not all widows.

2nd Man: That's right. You know there are many more divorced women these days. Divorce is an increasing fact; it's a fact of life in today's world. But the result – the result is the same for the woman. She has a very difficult time of it.

3rd Man: Yes. And many of these women end up on the streets down by the (he mentions the name of a hotel in Mwanza well known for its prostitution). They become prostitutes because there's nothing else for them. There's no jobs.

1st Man: They'd be better off married. But not everyone wants to marry them. They're used goods.

Chris: What about the women who are widows or divorced here on Bugando Hill.

1st Man: Ah. Well, that's a different story. Let me tell you Chris, these women are making an effort to improve themselves by having success with their small businesses.

2nd Man: They're very professional and always treat you with respect. And they have their children to think about. There's many children who end up on the street as well.

3rd Man: Generally these women aren't prostitutes. This is a different story altogether. They wouldn't be allowed to live here...

1st Man: (addressing the "3rd man") Oh, but there are prostitutes on Bugando Hill... What do you mean?

3rd Man: Of course, but I'm talking about these small businesswomen. Well, the fact of the matter is that it's difficult to know.

Chris: How do you know?

3rd Man: It's a small neighborhood. It's a small world here. One knows who's who and what's what. Trust me. But generally the small businesses of these women are a positive thing. The more competition the better. If it's done in a professional manner then why not? You're an American. You're from America. You believe in the free enterprise system don't you?

There was a general feeling that husbandless women were particularly susceptible to becoming professional prostitutes (and prostitution in Mwanza was almost always associated with a particular area in the city surrounding the train depot and the aforementioned hotel). Thus, the husbandless women who lived on Bugando Hill and engaged in small business activities were almost immediately recognized as "trying to improve themselves" by circumventing a sexual proclivity peculiar to their situation. As husbandless women, they were continually juxtaposed with "prostitutes," who were viewed as a "type"of husbandless woman themselves. As businesswomen, however, they distinguished themselves from prostitutes through their efforts to embrace the professionalism and respectability that came with their business activities. As one married woman put it: "They are so involved with their businesses that they have no time to run around with men." In this light, the women's efforts to actively promote their small businesses were public declarations (and continued reminders) that they occupied a legitimate social space on Bugando Hill.

Fetishizing poverty and suffering

Despite the women's ideological transformation into progressive-minded entrepreneurs and their ability to define and embrace a legitimate social space based on the ideals of development and modernity, their lives were mired in poverty and their business activities promised very little in the way of substantial economic and material reform. Most women lived in abject squalor on Bugando Hill, surviving from day to day on very little income and food to eat, owning few personal items, and having very little time for anything beyond work and domestic responsibilities. As women they suffered from a general lack of access to resources, but as husbandless women they suffered from the customary route to alleviate this problem (i.e., marriage). An overwhelming poverty continued to structure and pervade every aspect of their lives, which translated into a routinized yet highly impassioned and idealized experience of suffering. Their particular brand of suffering manifested itself in the context of network interactions whenever they "argued" and "displayed" their poverty to one another, particularly

with respect to share group activities. At the same time, the women did not continually enact a moral discourse of suffering solely as a result of their interactions with one another, but actively sought various external sites in Mwanza that acknowledged and at least partially shaped the "appropriateness" of that suffering.

An important aspect of the women's economic situation and the meanings they (re)produced from within a context of poverty was how it heightened the potential for tension and conflict within each network. While poverty obviously reinforced the need for cooperation and unanimity, women were simultaneously compelled to vie for material resources for themselves and their children. They had to do so without directly contradicting group norms and drawing the indignation of others by appearing and/or being accused of being too selfish and greedy. Potential lines of conflict were continually drawn and mended in terms of the expectations that women placed on one another with respect to the redistribution of material resources in a legitimate and timely manner. Subsequently, the same processes of material exchange and need that united the women into distinct social networks also threatened the very foundations of each one due to the particular meanings attributed to them. In many ways, network formation and maintenance was a constant process of negotiation between individual members themselves.

Sharing suffering within the network

In each network, the practice that made the women's suffering most explicit was clearly the decision-making process surrounding the distribution of share group funds. For women who earned the least and contributed about once each month to these groups, it was best to participate with women who were relatively better off since the most outwardly destitute woman in each group had a higher likelihood of receiving the money. This strategy was rarely successful by itself, however, because the level of poverty was relatively equal for many women, who also wanted to capitalize on participation in share groups. The result was a type of competition for the money whereby women would literally argue their case by emphasizing their degree of suffering and need. At these times, each woman conveyed her individual case to the other participants and

the discussions between share group members could be intense and heated. In the context of these interactions, women often presented an elaborate and emotionally charged account of their poverty-stricken situation. The following excerpt is from one such discussion and involves four women from the *Kwanza* network who participated together in a share group and had gathered to discuss who would receive the money (I was present but did not say anything during this particular exchange):

1st woman: (commenting on another woman's remarks that were made previously) I don't understand what you're telling us about her that makes her any different than the rest of us. We all have a hard time of it in our small businesses.

2nd woman: This is true. I know myself –

3rd woman: O.K., I am simply making a parallel here between her situation and mine. (She's speaking about her sister who lives in Shinyanga) Her business failed her at just the point when she was having to pay a new association fee. Just like me, my situation now. It is the exact same situation and very dangerous. That is why I need this money – for my business ventures so I can continue to support my children during this important time.

1st woman: Oh, oh, oh. I see. I thought...never mind.

4th woman: This *is* all well and good. And in fact what you say is true. It is an important time. But why is it necessary to pay a new association fee now? You can do that any time with your own money and in the meantime continue to do business as always. Your small business isn't doing so bad is it?

1st woman: I think we should hear from (the 2nd woman) who has not spoken yet.

4th woman: (to me) She's shy (laughing).

(some miscellaneous conversation here)

2nd woman: I am facing difficult hardships lately with my child who is sick from malaria and might die. On top of that, my house is so – my roof is only thatch and it leaks all

the time. My children's beds are always soaking wet which only heightens their fevers. It is...I pray to God every night for my children's lives. It's like living – like we live like animals. There's terrible suffering in our household day in and day out.

4th woman: What about your business? How did it do this week?

2nd woman: Poorly.

4th woman: You're not good at operating your business. You're not a good businesswoman. It takes time, however, and with God's help you will do better.

2nd woman: Eeeh (signifies 'yes,' though in this case a rather disgruntled 'yes').

3rd woman: My little girl has malaria too. My roof leaks too. Truly, I have one piece of iron on my roof but it's not sufficient to cover everybody. Whenever it rains it's like we're cows huddled under a tree trying to keep dry under this one piece of iron. And just yesterday my son came home from school throwing up everywhere. (at this point, the discussion is interrupted briefly by the 1st woman's little boy, who enters the room and asks her a question in a very somber and pathetic manner. He coughs long and harshly as he slowly shuffles out)

1st woman: I must say that life is particularly difficult for me too. I have been left with no money for charcoal and am forced to feed that one (referring to her child who just left) cold *ugali*. I am almost down to my last meal if my business does not pick up soon.

4th woman: He looks healthy to me (laughing).

3rd woman: As strong as a lion, that one.

1st woman: He has no clothes other than those filthy rags on his back. He needs a new school shirt. Now as you can see he runs around like an animal. I swear to you (she clasps her hands together) that's no way for a child to live. You can see for yourself that he's sick and lives like an animal.

In this particular instance, the "2nd woman" received the funds but only after it was pointed out that the two other likely candidates had both received share group funds quite recently. It was also indirectly suggested that the "1st woman's" son was playing a well-acted part by entering the room in such a pathetic and sickly manner. When we were alone later that day, the "4th woman" (who was the nurse) believed this to be the case and said to me, "that was very clever of her."

This particular share group discussion demonstrates how difficult it can be for a woman to highlight her own poverty and sense of suffering to others since they all live in the same neighborhood, experience relatively similar living conditions, and confront similar problems. In this case, women presented their reasons for deserving the share group funds by emphasizing their harsh living conditions and emotional turmoil (with the exception of the nurse who really did not need the money and rarely received share group funds). At the same time, they critiqued one another on the basis of being slightly better off than they made their situations out to be. This dual strategy typified many of these discussions and continually reproduced a legitimate form of moral suffering. In fact, the women's exchanges were almost ritualistic in nature as they detailed their economic hardships and emotional distress in a highly elaborate manner underpinned by religious references and social nuance.

Share group discussions were also instances where tension and conflict arose between network members. Some women who did not receive the money emerged feeling bitter and cheated by other participants. While they occasionally directed their resentment at individuals who they felt were favoring another woman, most expressed anger at the individual who actually received the money, feeling that she did not deserve it or received it without just cause. On several occasions, women did not speak to one another for weeks at a time after participating together in a particular share group (this occurred in each network). Since roommates and close friends tended to side with one another, the result was the existence of certain factions or cliques within each network at any given time. Women who felt cheated drew heavily on the normative features of suffering and cooperation while simultaneously calling into question the legitimacy of

others. These ideas are evident in the following statements by disgruntled share group participants:

> She does not deserve it [share group money], this is so true to us [pointing to herself and another woman from the same network sitting nearby]. I heard she's getting money on the side from some new sugar-daddy anyway so now she just wants to be selfish and take everything. God knows how much I need a little bit of help at this time. [a woman from the *Kanisa* network talking about another woman from the same network; #10 and #2 respectively in the tables]

> [Share group funds] should go to those who deserve it, which is to say the one's who really need it and can help their children with it. You only need to look at how well clothed her children are compared to mine and you will see who needs what. If she had any Christian sense she would feel this in her heart and do the right thing. [a woman from the *Kwanza* network talking about another woman from the same network; #10 and #3 respectively in the tables]

> I cannot believe that she would accept that gift [share group funds] when she is doing just fine and I am clearly in need. [a woman from the *Mwalimu* network talking about another woman from the same network; #7 and #6 respectively in the tables]

Women who questioned the outcome of a particular share group almost always did so by comparing their own level of suffering with that of another woman (usually the one who received the funds). In the process, they defined and exposed lines of potential and real conflict within each network and continually imbued poverty and suffering with a powerful form of moral authority. While the effect was the emergence (and sometimes reemergence) of specific cliques of individuals within each network, such processes never seemed to reach a point where individuals stopped interacting with other network members altogether, particularly when considering the entire array of exchange relationships. However, the potential for tension and

conflict between network members was always present and particularly unmasked by the contradictions associated with moral suffering in a context of poverty where making ends meet was a daily concern.

Share groups did not always culminate with a discussion over who would receive the money. Some were formed with the recipient of the funds determined beforehand while others were formed with the explicit purpose of helping a specific individual (who did not always or necessarily have to participate). In every instance, however, the principle remained the same: a woman received the money because she was undergoing a particularly difficult time. In a general sense, then, women who wished to receive share group funds at some future date were obligated to display their suffering and economic hardships *to some degree all of the time*. In this light, the decision-making process regarding the allocation of share group funds enacted this particular discourse most explicitly. The decision itself, however, rested on the *constant* maintenance of a discourse of moral suffering. At the level of the network, displays of suffering also legitimated the need for group cooperation and interdependence (i.e., it legitimated the network in the first place), which further reinforced the communal nature of these qualities. Comparisons and assessments regarding the appropriate level of suffering and the balancing act that individuals had to perform between continuous displays of suffering and obtaining material resources also exposed potential lines of tension and conflict between network members. If one individual wished to draw attention to another woman's behavior as being particularly questionable, she usually did so by pointing out a certain material flamboyance and greed, qualities which directly contradicted established group norms of cooperation, interdependence, and moral suffering.

The women maintained and idealized their suffering in various ways within the confines of the network. Individuals who were thought to have experienced a particularly difficult life were frequently pointed to with a mixture of awe and pity and subsequently became the very embodiment of a discourse of suffering. Widows who had lost their land in a violent confrontation with their husband's brothers were notable in this respect. For example, a woman

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from the *Kanisa* network who was cut across her forearm with a *panga* by her brother-in-law was continually highlighted by others as "bearing her hardships well." She was regularly referred to as an example of the tremendous exploitation faced by widows and asked to display her scars as a physical manifestation of her suffering. A widow from the *Mwalimu* network whose wrist was broken in a confrontation with her brother-in-law was referenced in a similar manner. She kept the x-rays of her broken wrist "just in case" she ever decided to pursue legal action against him regarding the "robbery" of her *shamba* and the physical harm inflicted upon her. Legal action seemed increasingly unlikely, however, because it had been over five years since she even had contact with anyone from her village. Her x-rays were more frequently used as graphic evidence to support her story of personal suffering. She never hesitated to display them when recounting her experiences, which were easily and frequently coaxed from her by other women. In fact, when she pulled them out in support of her case during a share group discussion regarding the allocation of money she was stopped in her tracks by another woman's exclamation that, "You're milking a dead cow at this point." In general, the women continually expressed their past and present hardships to one another. Their current living conditions provided plenty of source material in this respect since a leaky roof, a broken cookstove, a sick child, and a particularly tough time with one's small business were daily occurrences. Rather than deliberately hidden from view or downplayed in any way, experiences of breakdown and disruption were displayed and articulated to such an extent that there was often little left to the imagination. In the process, women defined the problems associated with poverty as moral burdens to be born by individuals in their situation.

The legitimacy of the women's poverty and personal sense of suffering was further reinforced by juxtaposing it with the suspect morality of individuals who "showed off" and "loved money." The inherently negative aspects associated with wealth and greed were first made "obvious" to many women through their own experiences involving the loss of their rural *shambas* and property. From their perspective, the same fundamental greed permeated Mwanza,

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particularly with respect to certain "groups" considered generally lacking in morals due to a "love of money" such as traveling businessmen and prostitutes. The women also associated these groups with the AIDS virus, which was a trait of suspect morality and condemnation in and of itself. While the AIDS connection will be discussed at length, at this point it is important to recognize how the women legitimated their own suffering by juxtaposing it with groups who represented the vices of greed and wealth. They constructed an environment where suffering and poverty were the most valid public manifestations of one's self-worth while flashy displays of wealth and prosperity were obvious signs of immorality, sexual promiscuity, and ultimately AIDS.

Meaningful differences based on wealth and material resources also contributed to tension within each network between women who made more money (usually those who were employed in the formal sector) and individuals who obviously made substantially less (who were more likely to operate small businesses in the informal sector). The nurse from the *Kwanza* network clearly felt these tensions herself, expressing them in the following passage during one of our conversations:

> I have to be sure to help other women like myself who are alone because we have a difficult time of it. Of course, I am a bit better off with my job at the hospital – I am a bit better off. So I can help others and God knows that I do this, but what people don't understand is that I have to survive too, I have children to feed and educate too. And this is no simple task for me to achieve, sometimes I think those three [she is referring to three other women from the *Kwanza* network] believe me to have money everywhere – stashed in trees around my house – but I don't, I truly don't. I am not a greedy woman. I have seen enough pain in my life.

Similar feelings reflecting internal tension and discontent along lines of income were also expressed by the two teachers of the *Mwalimu* network, who complained on numerous occasions that other women (all of whom were in their network) put too much pressure on them with

respect to borrowing money. One woman frequently compared these pleas for assistance with those of her family, saying, "If I wanted so much grief I would go back to my village where my family always bothers me for money." In all instances, women were forced to defend themselves on the basis of their own moral suffering and by downplaying or masking any outward appearance of material abundance. While the entire process had the effect of reaffirming the commitment of wealthier women to group norms and the ideals of sharing and cooperation, it did not occur without some degree of tension and potential conflict. Material gain at all costs. For the women, however, material gain was continually weighed against a collective awareness of their obligations to one another. Outward appearances were maintained to this end and an implicit association with self-indulgence discouraged any obvious displays of "non-suffering".

External sources for moral suffering

The women's' reproduction of suffering as a moral resource in the context of poverty and loss was validated to some extent by the way it "linked up" with perspectives from the surrounding neighborhood on the women themselves. It was generally recognized that husbandless women as a group had faced numerous hardships in their lives and their current living conditions were relatively bleak. In many ways, people from the neighborhood *expected* husbandless women who lived among them to suffer, a belief that was itself associated with the women's dubious and relatively stigmatized social position. Such an outlook often prompted many to blame the women for their own problems. As one man put it:

> Of course a woman without a husband suffers a great deal. Life is difficult for them. This is a fact. But is there really any other outcome for her? A woman needs a husband to survive. Most women have the common sense to know this as a fact of life.

For the most part, the women's' meager income and poor standard of living did in fact coincide with the expectations of the surrounding neighborhood. In other words, their level of suffering was appropriate and rarely out of line with their blemished status as husbandless women. While there were several women who earned much more money than others, they were usually

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individuals who held some kind of formal job. Their status as a nurse or teacher afforded some leeway and seemed to offset the negative aspects associated with being husbandless. In general, the expectation that husbandless women were poor and destitute was rarely questioned because it remained relatively intact.

Other external sites also allowed husbandless women to express and legitimate their particular brand of suffering. As mentioned earlier, women from all four networks regularly attended classes on health and nutrition. One NGO-sponsored class on children's health was particularly popular among married and husbandless women alike, most notably because it handed out free vitamin supplements after each class. On average, there were twenty to thirty women in attendance at each class. Many women from the *Kwanza* network were in the crowd, as were several individuals from the *Kanisa* network and two women from the *Samaki* network (although they did not attend as regularly as the women from the *Kwanza* network). The class itself was held at a health clinic after hours and lasted only about thirty minutes. The women were encouraged to remain behind after class to ask questions and discuss any health problems experienced by themselves or their children. Since the class catered to women in general rather than simply to those who were husbandless, the post-class discussions were intended for a general female audience. Over time, however, they were essentially co-opted by husbandless women and underwent what the Tanzanian director described as "a slow take-over of single mothers." This process became clear after each thirty-minute class when the married women quickly left the classroom to receive their vitamin supplements, leaving an overwhelming majority of husbandless women behind as participants in post-class discussions. It was a telling scene and one pointed out to me by the director himself during my initial visit to the class when he pulled me aside and said, "Now, watch this." As the women slowly parted into two distinct groups; one leaving the classroom and forming a line to receive their vitamin supplements and the other remaining behind, the director laughed, pointed to each in turn and said, "Married women. Single mothers."

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The problems and issues discussed by the women who remained behind were not *necessarily* related to their status as single mothers or being husbandless. However, the fact that they did not have a husband was made readily apparent as each woman emphasized her dilemma from the particular angle of being alone. In fact, they defined most health problems as made worse and sometimes as the direct result of the husband's absence. When health problems were defined in this particular context, other women frequently nodded their heads in affirmation and said such things as, "It's so true, it's so true." The women received their vitamin supplements only after these sessions, as if they were being rewarded for articulating and sharing their health problems as part of the suffering undergone by husbandless women. The entire process was seemingly unnecessary for married women, as the director himself acknowledged during the year by officially targeting the post-class discussions to single mothers. Unofficially, however, they were like this for quite some time. The women themselves prompted the change by continually defining health-related issues on the basis of their husbandless status, which was recognized and acknowledged in this case.

Women from the *Kanisa* network created their own outlet for the expression and acknowledgement of personal suffering in the form of a Bible study group presided over by a Catholic missionary worker. They initially approached the head pastor of their church with the idea of forming such a group and found that he was already in the process of putting together Bible study groups for women. Subsequently, he was quite willing to include them as a group (they approximated the desired size of each group by themselves) and assigned a young missionary worker to be their "group leader." During group discussions, the focus regularly turned to the women's own struggles, who regularly drew direct parallels between their own situation and Biblical themes of humility and self-endurance. The underlying message was clear: painful experiences in this life would lead to rewards in heaven and should thus be endured and even embraced. During one discussion, one woman actually exclaimed, "Women without husbands will be very rich in heaven because of our suffering in this life." The missionary

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worker was quick to realize the women's situation and encouraged the general theme of "suffer now and be rewarded later" (while he did not necessarily encourage suffering with respect to husbandless women in particular, the message was broad enough for the women to make this connection themselves and in the context of their own lives). He later acknowledged to me that his strategy involved bringing the message of the Bible and the lessons of Christ to women "in their own terms." At the same time, he was often overwhelmed by this particular group of women's personal accounts of hardship and struggle and admitted as much to the head pastor. The pastor (who was from Ireland) was well aware of the women's ambiguous position and extreme poverty but remained suspicious and warned the missionary worker to be careful. He often felt obligated to convey a similar warning to myself during our own conversations and over the course of several interviews. For instance, when referring to divorced and separated women, he remarked:

> You hear a lot of stories from these women. A lot of stories. You have to be careful because there's sometimes something attached, an ulterior motive. Economic I mean – money. That's not to say that there's also a lot of pain and misery here because there is. There's always a kernel of truth to these things but a lot gets built up around it. You can't hand over the church to the first beggar you see. I know that sounds bad but you learn to be aware of these things.

Notwithstanding the pastor's individual slant on things and his extensive experience in the region (he had lived and worked in Mwanza for sixteen years), his remarks reflect the limited capacity of Church organizations in Mwanza to address the pragmatics of poverty. In effect, the Church could do little beyond what the women of the *Kanisa* network required of it in this instance: acknowledge their suffering as both righteous and ultimately rewarding.

The social network and the emergent identity of husbandless women

The three cultural themes discussed in this chapter: being and becoming husbandless, doing business and the new woman, and the fetishizing of poverty and suffering, permeate all

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four networks. Together, they represent the most prominent features of an emergent identity reproduced primarily (though perhaps not exclusively) among husbandless women. In theory, then, an individual woman from one network could be socialized into another network with relatively little disruption to her sense of self and place. The reasons behind the formation and maintenance of distinct social networks, then, are rooted in the daily exchanges of goods and services that demand a "dense" interdependence of individuals living and working within a certain spatial proximity of one another. The high degree of inter-connectedness characterizing their relationships reinforced and was reinforced by the normative influence of each network. While each network clearly had its individual "quirks" with respect to their normative aspects, the variations were slight and did not threaten the legitimacy of the central themes, which reproduced a relatively similar identity involving the women's continuing experiences of being husbandless.

Although the immediate experiences surrounding each woman's husbandless status were very similar, they were also conditioned by a limited space from which to maneuver and defined by a combination of various factors and historical processes. These have been highlighted throughout this work and include: the gender discrimination associated with traditional inheritance laws and property rights (themselves related to notions of kinship), State ineffectiveness, a lack of opportunities for women in the formal economic sector and a related "feminization of poverty," the role of developmental organizations, and the general stigma and ambiguous social status attached to a woman without a husband in Tanzania and throughout East Africa. The combination of such processes have many implications for these women, the most important of which is the limits they place on their income earning activities and survival strategies in the city, which then contribute to the formation and maintenance of especially dense and spatially proximate social networks.

As the combined experience of social and economic peripheralization contributed to the interconnectedness of the women's exchange relationships, it also contributed to the powerful normative influence and group pressure exerted by each network. The women's agency had its

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limits since it was defined and negotiated against the dominant society, which served as a continuous and omnipresent check on the extent of their efforts to recreate themselves. In effect, the women of this study were forced into a similar social and economic space and once there set about defining a "legitimate" identity and perspective with what few resources they had at their disposal. To borrow terms frequently used by Pierre Bourdieu (1990), but not necessarily to borrow every connotation with which he uses them, the women's emergent identity is a matter of both *position* (i.e., social space) and *disposition* (i.e., a "legitimate" perspective of self and others from that position).

Having said this, one fundamental question remains unanswered: did the women of each social network view themselves as a distinct group (in the manner in which I have described them in the tables)? Put another way, did each woman point to every other woman in her social network and actually claim (in so many words) "She is in my social network?" At first glance, the issue of "network consciousness" is significant because, like similar questions surrounding "class consciousness," it seems to have implications for the ways in which the women embraced a group identity. In addition, and perhaps of more importance, it brings to light issues involving the "reality" of each social network and the extent to which they are anthropological constructions.

The answer to the question of network consciousness is neither a definitive yes (they did see themselves as a group) nor a definitive no (they did not see themselves as a group). It depends in part on the network and its individual members. For example, the women of the *Kanisa* network did in fact see themselves as a distinct group and, as mentioned earlier, sometimes referred to one another as "sisters." Their cognizance of a group dynamic can be traced in large part to a shared Catholic faith (in fact, the term "sister" was associated with certain religious connotations for them), which manifested itself in such group activities as Bible study sessions, prayer groups, and attending Church services together. These activities initially brought many of the women together in the first place since several key individuals had met through

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church or church-related activities. The religious aspect of their identities may have provided an extra push toward forming a shared awareness.

The three other networks were somewhat different than the *Kanisa* network in this regard. While each woman was certainly *aware* of other husbandless women in her immediate vicinity (as everyone was), they did not necessarily *do* things as a group. Each woman did not always engage in some type of relationship with every other woman of her respective network. Rather, it was an individual matter because each network contained members who were more centrally positioned than others. In other words, some individuals (such as the nurse from the *Kwanza* network) interacted regularly with most women from her respective network while other individuals interacted with only three or four women on a regular basis (who in turn interacted with the majority of women from that network). At any given time, there were particularly active sub-sets of relationships between network members — or cliques — with respect to both material and symbolic exchanges. Individuals adopted and enacted a relative perspective on the network (the same thing could be said for the *Kanisa* network as well since each woman had a preferred clique of network members with whom to interact and exchange particular items).

Such cliques also represented points of possible conflict within each network. They often emerged as a direct result of the contradictions between group ideals and the need to survive in a context of extreme poverty. The women had to balance their idealization of cooperation, sharing, and suffering with the satisfaction of material and more immediate (and individual) needs. As a result, each network was maintained only through a constant process of negotiation so that specific individuals interacted with one another to different degrees at any given time.

In a way, then, each network *is* an anthropological construction to some degree. While an exchange of goods and services delineated the boundaries of each social network, as an anthropologist *I* traced the extent and degree of these material exchanges and set the boundaries where I felt they ceased to exist. For their part, the women articulated and enacted the characteristics attributed to their emergent identities in a way that *superseded* each network and

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spoke to (and through) their husbandless status (this is also an anthropological construction, though in a different sense).

It must also be remembered that several married women were included in the social networks. Their situation cannot be ignored, particularly since the circumstances surrounding their marriages contribute to the overall argument. Specifically, I believe there was a growing tension between network participation and the marriage bond in almost every case. In other words, the marriages of these women were on the rocks. Network participation did not help matters since it accentuated and in some cases directly led to the women's problematic relationships with their husbands.

In the end, and to return to the point at hand, it was not necessary for the women to have a strictly defined network consciousness in order to articulate and embody the normative features attributed to their emergent identity. The networks were a particular site that fostered a larger and more comprehensive identity among husbandless women in general. Thus, position and disposition were conjoined in a particularly powerful manner. In many ways, the women were compelled to adopt the cultural themes that underlined their identity by being pushed into (but also helping to create) a social and economic space defined by a particular combination of events. Given the core values and ideals of the identities that emerged from this space, however, their social networks may represent one of the strongest sites for the realization of an African feminism. However, the ideals associated with their particular brand of feminism may only be fully realized if they are able to speak to a more general audience of women rather than being restricted to husbandless women who are forced into adopting them (though in a truly creative way that demonstrates a very powerful female agency in its own right). A key obstacle to this wider actualization is the perpetuation of a combined economic and sexual dependency on men. Among husbandless women in particular the result is a fundamental contradiction between their emergent identities and the structural limitations imposed by their social and economic position. As pointed out in this chapter, this contradiction can be a fundamental source of tension and

conflict between network members and can lead to a split between individual and material necessity on the one hand and, on the other, public displays of group norms and values. The implications of this contradiction between individual survival and group identity in terms of sex -- - and the ways that the women approached and resolved them — have direct implications for their construction of risk for AIDS.

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[1] Pseudonyms are used throughout this work.

[2] It is difficult to understand why the women would not have expected and/or known about the mistreatment of widows from their own experiences growing up. Increased pressures on widows may be a relatively new phenomenon that was particularly exacerbated in recent times by accusations of marital infidelity and AIDS after the husband's death of mysterious causes (or in conjunction with AIDS-like symptoms). The situation may also stem from particularly acute shortages of arable land in certain areas of Northwestern Tanzania due to a combination of soil degradation, drought, and/or bush encroachment and malaria (while there is plenty of land in the general region, the amount of *good* land can be severely limited depending on the specific area). It may also be true that women's views are changing in rural areas and they are simply less willing to be "inherited" by their husband's brother (or the women in this study may represent individuals who are particularly resistant to this practice). While the rural-based factors and processes behind the women's reasons for leaving the *shamba* (and the meanings associated with them) are extremely important, a full examination of these factors is beyond the scope of this study. It is important to note that, in the context of their urban-based networks, the women's particular reaction to these experiences was one of incredulity and disbelief over unfair practices legitimated in the name of "tradition." In other words, the present context induced them to "selectively remember" the worst case scenarios associated with widows and inheritance laws and/or disregard any previous expectations they may have had while growing up.

[3] "Sugar-daddy" was commonly used in Mwanza to describe the man's role in these relationships. It is not a translation of a Swahili term (although there are Swahili equivalents). The actual English term was used in this instance.

[4] It is difficult to pinpoint exactly where the women's use of business jargon originated, although many admitted to having never heard most terms before coming to Mwanza. It was certainly a pervasive feature of the conversations among white collar workers (mostly men) in the immediate downtown area and frequently overheard in those areas. While these men were not representative of people with whom the women typically interacted, their conversations exemplified — though perhaps to a heightened degree — the general rhetoric of business and development that characterized people's conversations as a whole in Mwanza. As topics of interest, doing business and contributing to development were enhanced by their simultaneous promotion in the popular media and by the many NGO's in and around town. Of course, the Tanzanian State was either directly or indirectly behind much of this publicity. As a result, the general atmosphere in Mwanza was one where the language of business was hyped in conjunction with nation building and development efforts. In the midst of the women's network activities and relationships, some ideas were adopted and diffused relatively quickly and easily. Since the language of business was clearly meaningful with respect to certain aspects of the women's identities and daily activities, it may have become particularly amplified in this respect. The "external" source for the women's adoption of business jargon is important because it also informs a broader idealization of the business ethos of profit and loss and developmentalism with respect to their sense of self and place on Bugando Hill. However, it will be discussed in more detail at a later point in the study and with specific reference to their sexual exchange practices and risk constructions for AIDS.

[5] The actual English phrase was used here.

[6] The actual English phrase was used here.

[7] A "ten-cell" consists of ten households and is the smallest political unit in Tanzania. Thus, a "ten-cell leader" is the most localized political official. While these three men were well respected on Bugando Hill, such virtuous qualities were not always attributed to ten-cell leaders.

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CHAPTER SIX: THE RISK CONJUNCTURE

"It can be a very dangerous thing to be me." [30 year old Sukuma woman, separated, from Mwanza]

Introduction

Until this point, very little has been said about the women in terms of risk and AIDS. This is partly due to the idea that what the women actually say about the subject (who is at risk and whether or not they consider themselves to be at risk) is considered less important or at least an imperfect reflection of how they actually experience and act upon risk in terms of their emergent identities. Very little effort will be expended here on the accumulation and aggregation of individual perceptions regarding AIDS and risk in this sense. Instead, the chapter establishes the ways in which the women experience risk for AIDS as a set of relationships established by a conjuncture between external and internal forces.

In terms of the series of questions posed at the end of Chapter Three, the discussion until now has been geared toward answering the first two questions, or defining the internal politics and struggles that constitute one half of the conjuncture. Specifically, the women have formed strong social networks that are particularly well-grounded in daily survival strategies, pragmatic decision making, and the fulfillment of material necessities. In addition, the networks have become powerful sites for the construction of a group identity. In one sense, a shared sense of self is emerging around and at least partially contingent upon past attitudes and assumptions about husbandless women. The particularly harsh circumstances they face when confronting and negotiating a socio-economic hierarchy in which they occupy the very bottom rung seems to reinforce those assumptions. In another sense, however, their new identity is confronting the very meanings associated with their husbandless status (largely as a result of the risk that surrounds it) and they are redefining themselves as "new women" operating in a modern world. In the end, they are utilizing their extensive networks to negotiate a legitimate identity from within the particular space of the surrounding neighborhood. Borrowing from Singer and Week's (1996)

distinction between networks, natural social groups, and the surrounding neighborhood (which was discussed in Chapter Two), it is clear that the women are in the process of forming a natural social group. In other words, they are social networks that exert a particularly strong normative influence on individual members who subsequently produce and/or reproduce a common identity. As discussed throughout this work, researchers have used other terms to define this process or particular aspects of it. One, discussed in Chapter Five, involved the idea of effective networks, or social networks that have a particularly high degree of interdependence and are thus more likely to reproduce a shared set of norms, ideals, and values among individual members. As pointed out, one problem with the term was the way researchers of the time attributed it to groups (mostly men) with particularly high prestige levels. A second problem stemmed from a lack of focus on risk as a particularly powerful normative influence and aspect of group identity. Risk was simply not an issue at the time. As discussed in Chapter Two, however, Crook's (1999) three part classification of risk regimes made it an issue since he specifically took into account risk in terms of its normative impact and structuring influence on group identity. What he calls "informal risk regimes" are similar in this respect to Singer's "natural social groups" (also discussed in Chapter Two). Both refer to the normative influence of social networks and their capacity to transmit values and beliefs that may directly enable certain risk constructions. These ideas are relevant to the study at this point, particularly as a means of framing the final question posed at the end of Chapter Two: can the women's social networks be described as natural social groups (or informal risk regimes)? Put another way: how and to what degree does risk contribute to the women's emergent identity?

This chapter begins to address these questions in terms of a risk conjuncture in which external/expert sites of risk knowledge (some of which are directly related to AIDS) "bump into" the internal dynamics established by the women's daily struggles to survive and carve out a legitimate social space on Bugando Hill. . Sexual risk, AIDS, and husbandless women are so strongly associated with one another by external sources, which themselves permeate and help

construct the space of the neighborhood, that the women are continually forced to incorporate and transform the meanings associated with those relationships. In doing so, they continually enact risk as a conjuncture between the social position they occupy on Bugando Hill and expert/external sources of risk knowledge "from outside" of the immediate context. Sexual behavior and risk for AIDS occur simultaneously and as a result of the conjuncture to become a central structuring principle in the women's lives and a shared aspect of their group identity. In this way, risk for AIDS is viewed as a form of situated knowledge.

The chapter focuses on the most significant external/expert risk regimes that constitute the second half of the conjuncture. Three regimes are considered particularly important: 1) "Tradition" or the relationships entailed by the idea of a "nostalgic community;" 2) public health; and 3) developmentalism. The final section examines the ways in which each of these regimes links up with the internal dynamics associated with network-neighborhood interactions in order to produce a risk conjuncture. The result is that the women's social networks do in fact become natural social groups/informal risk regimes as AIDS becomes a particularly critical feature of their emergent identities.

Risk Regime #1: Public Health

As an external/expert risk regime with a significant presence on Bugando Hill specifically and Mwanza in general, public health is particularly important because of its specific focus on AIDS and sexual risk. If public health efforts have accomplished anything in Mwanza, it is to disseminate the basic message that sex equals risk. Efforts to promote this message have been successful in so far as very few people in Mwanza speak of sex without at least alluding to its riskiness. For most, sex and risk are commensurate with one another. This is an interesting phenomenon in Mwanza, particularly when one considers that sex could be related to many other things (pleasure and reproduction for example). Above all else, however, and as a direct result of AIDS and public health campaigns, sex is now acknowledged publicly as one of the most risky activities that an individual can undertake.

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When examining Mwanza's public health campaigns regarding AIDS, sex, and risk in more detail, however, it is evident that they are limited to being information diffusion campaigns. Very little effort is geared toward the promotion and distribution of condoms, for example, which are extremely unpopular and difficult to obtain. Comparatively few shops in the downtown business area actually sell condoms and those that do offer them for sale do not sell many. In fact, many shop owners considered them to be somewhat useless and a bit of a joke, which only added to the difficulty of obtaining them. Shopowners made it quite clear that women who purchased such items could only be "prostitutes" and "loose women;" an attitude which seemed to be held by the general population of Mwanza. Very few people put any credence in condoms. For most, they generated a tremendous amount of negative perceptions, repudiation, and cynicism.

Obtaining an HIV test was another component of public health programs in Mwanza that, like condom distribution efforts, remained much more of a theoretical possibility than an actualized one. HIV testing was only available at Bugando Hospital or several private health clinics scattered about town. In terms of cost, the hospital was the more viable option. However, an HIV test cost approximately $4.00 U.S. dollars (in addition to the $5.00 U.S. dollars for a hospital registration card necessary to enter the gate). Health care expenditures like these represented a new phenomenon for Mwanza's residents, who enjoyed free health care under State run programs until the year prior. Increasing pressures to privatize had changed all of this drastically, however, putting such things as HIV testing out of reach for all but the higher echelons of Mwanza. Rising costs translated into gender biases in the HIV counseling room at Bugando Hospital, where the vast majority of clients were men. Even among higher-income men, however, it can be assumed that HIV testing proved largely ineffective as a means of changing behavior since, as the head nurse in charge of the AIDS ward explained, most who were tested (which was often done in conjunction with other treatments) did not want to know the

[illegible]

results. In fact, hospital staff described this phenomenon as one of the biggest obstacles to their jobs, often suggesting that it was men in particular who wished to remain ignorant of the results.

As a result of problems associated with condom promotion and HIV testing as well as the relatively tepid efforts to resolve or even confront them, public health efforts in Mwanza (as in most of East Africa) were severely limited to being information diffusion campaigns only. More to the point, a particularly passive and impersonal construction of risk is promoted in posters, murals, occasional talks by nurses and NGO workers, and in the wider news media. Given the seriousness of AIDS, one would at least expect a full-scale information onslaught. This does not seem to be the case in Mwanza, however, where there are few publicly displayed messages about AIDS. In fact, most AIDS awareness posters could be found on the office walls of NGO workers themselves. An overwhelming majority of posters and wall murals in and around Mwanza's public areas were geared toward promoting the rights of street children and were the result of the extraordinary efforts of a single, locally-run NGO. It must also be considered that many people, particularly those who lived on Bugando Hill, were either illiterate or considered the purchase of a newspaper a luxury. The popular media simply did not seem to carry much weight or influence in Mwanza in this regard. Even if such campaigns were implemented on a massive scale it is doubtful how much influence they would have for the average person in Mwanza. In the end, Mwanza's public health campaigns regarding AIDS were a) mostly information diffusion campaigns; b) relied strongly on word of mouth; and c) based on a particular construction of risk entailing suggestion and persuasion.

What is the message that public health campaigns promote in Mwanza with respect to risk and AIDS? Secondly, what is the type of suggested relationship (since it is a campaign of suggestion) based on their particular construction of risk? Basically, the message is very simple and involves two basic components: 1) sex equals risk; and 2) every sexually active person is at risk. It is an interesting message because it is so vastly different than the epidemiological studies upon which it is based. While epidemiological studies have identified and defined a barrage of

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very specific risk groups in Mwanza (as is evident from Chapter One), people are not actually presented with this information. To do so would obviously place a considerable amount of unnecessary and unwarranted stigma on those groups. Moreover, the 'groups' frequently identified in Mwanza, such as young women between the ages of fifteen and thirty-four, are not self-identified groups or ones easily recognized as such by Mwanza's residents. They cannot be easily discerned from the general population and do not constitute specific communities in any way. The end result is a generalized yet highly constricted construction of risk that is reflected in Mwanza's public health campaigns. In an effort to prevent an unnecessary amount of stigma and to make clear that everybody is ultimately at risk when it comes to AIDS, public health strategies continually construct a generic individual whom few can relate to in any meaningful way. The particular risk relationship that these messages engender are essentially a relationship with oneself since they are completely based on strategies of self-responsibility and self-compliance. As everybody is asked to act in a responsible manner, each individual is also asked to rely upon themselves and their own better judgment.

The basic public health message that 1) sex equals risk; and 2) every sexually active person is at risk; has been successfully diffused since, simply put, it is "out there." The women certainly made this clear in their own discussions and comments, as did people in Mwanza generally. As Chapter One indicated, the successful diffusion of this message is also reflected in the numerous knowledge, attitude, and perception-type studies conducted throughout Tanzania that show high levels of AIDS knowledge and awareness (Kapiga et al 1995; Kapiga 1996; Ng'weshemi et al. 1996). In Mwanza, few if any people publicly and openly refute the basic two-part message promoted by these efforts. The real question, however, is whether or not people practice this knowledge and how they make it an *active* part of their lives. The answer to this question depends upon the ways in which it links up with group norms within the risk conjuncture, which in this case leads back to the unique position/disposition of husbandless

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women on Bugando Hill. It is also necessary to examine competing external/expert risk regimes and their particular contributions to a risk conjuncture.

Risk Regime #2: Developmentalism

A second major risk regime operating in Mwanza is referred to here as "developmentalism." The term is borrowed from Mackey ([1999] who borrows it herself from Reynolds [1987, 1997]) and refers to the idea that the prime reason of the nation entails the need to develop the country. In her study of racial discourses in Australia's native title debate, Mackey suggests that the idea of developmentalism and its rationality of progress becomes a particularly powerful racial discourse when linked to a sense of threat and danger (in this case the Aboriginal populations being defined as a risk to the development of the Australian nation). She argues that colonialism is recreated and redefined when discourses construct nation-building as somehow at risk from the interest of particular groups. Others have also highlighted the idea of a close interdependence between risk and 'development' (Baker 1974; Cuny 1983; Morren 1983). As one of these authors, Hewitt points to a central relationship between development and risk by stating that "...hazards are placed, intellectually, socially and geographically, at the frontiers, as part of the unfinished business of modernization" [p.117]. While speaking about natural hazards in this case, Hewitt effectively highlights how practices and policy initiatives resulting from an overriding need to develop the country continually construct and depend on a particular form of risk, namely as anything that stands in the way of progress. Subsequently, risk can be viewed as a necessary if not central part of the missions and objectives associated with NGO's and international development/aid agencies. These insights immediately become relevant in the East African context, where such institutions have an enormous impact at the local level.

In Tanzania, NGO-driven developmentalism has been a relatively recent phenomenon. It can be traced to the mid 1980's when, as Chapter Two pointed out, the country's economy virtually collapsed and it was forced into accepting external aid/loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. As discussed earlier, a stringent set of conditions have been

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attached to these loans in the form of structural adjustment policies, the objectives of which have dictated the growth of a market-driven economy, accelerated privatization, and contributed to an explosion of NGO's whose sole purpose is to bring "progress" and "development" to the country. In fact, as the Tanzanian State concedes more and more power to externally-based NGO organizations at the regional and local levels, few things are not done in the name of development. The presence and power of development as an idea becomes an increasingly effective means of legitimating some actions while simultaneously condemning others.

Developmentalism and the institutions that initiate action in the name of developmental ideals have definitely come to Mwanza since it is a city under siege by an army of NGO workers and programs. Downtown shops literally compete for space with NGO organizations, which occupy some of the largest and most predominant buildings in the city. The automobile traffic is created in large part by fleets of land rovers owned by external aid agencies. Each day, the front page news stories are dominated by the accomplishments of yet another development project. From health promotion and education programs to legal advocacy rights and business management initiatives, each NGO in Mwanza implements its specific project in the name of development, progress, and modernization. Their efforts and messages do not go unnoticed by Mwanza's residents as discussions frequently hinge upon bringing Mwanza "up to date" and obtaining the luxuries enjoyed by the outside World. People touted any project or program considered relatively successful or useful with an immense sense of civic pride. At the same time, they were highly cognizant of a "lack of development" in Mwanza and continually constructed such daily occurrences as power outages, water shortages, and breakdowns in the city's sewer system in terms of developmental ideals and notions. An urban-rural dichotomy was easily and meaningfully constructed from this basis so that village life, which was the penultimate representation of a lack of development, was considered slow, relatively backward, and a place where daily hardships were expected to occur. By contrast, urban Mwanza, as the gateway of development for Western Tanzania, was continually measured in terms of its ability to live up to

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the promises of progress promulgated by the many NGO's and international aid agencies that increasingly inhabited and defined its space.

For most residents of Mwanza, the only means of grabbing a piece of the development pie was to own and operate a small business. The fact that most small businesses operated as part of the informal economy did not particularly threaten the idea that to be a businessman/woman was quite literally "to be developed." Earning and achieving a cash-based living by means of any small business enterprise was generally considered a distinctly urbanized and modern endeavor. As discussed earlier, this idea was particularly strong among the women in this study, whose business activities were a symbol of individual achievement, urban professionalism, and a significant and very public effort to improve themselves. It was not only a means of survival, but also a way to promote themselves and continually produce an appropriate and legitimate social space on Bugando Hill. In doing so, they actualized the rhetoric of developmentalism in conjunction with a cash-based economy and embodied the ideals widely promoted and continually legitimated by a massive influx of NGO programs in the urban space.

What does all of this mean with respect to risk? Following Mackey's ideas discussed at the beginning of this section, it is suggested here that developmentalism also reproduced a powerful construction of risk entailing anything that stood in the way of progress. In Mwanza, developmental forms of risk literally defined its "urbanness" and were infused with many people's decision to migrate to the city and adopt very different lifestyles. For the women in this study, developmental forms of risk were continually drawn upon to provide meaning to their past experiences in the rural village, particularly when patriarchal relationships and "rural ignorance" were described in terms of a lack of development and a failure to fully appreciate progress.

However, there was another even more proximate dimension to risk and developmentalism for the women (and something that is not always fully acknowledged by Mackey and others). Developmental forms of risk were not just used to meaningfully define past experiences and reproduce a general sense of risk as a "lack of," but were simultaneously enacted

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as a powerful form of business risk based on the pragmatics of economic cost/benefit assessments. Once established in Mwanza, most of the women experienced development most directly and intimately in terms of the risks associated with their small business ventures. From their perspective and daily experiences, most risks could be avoided by increasing their profit margin and actively embracing the business ethos of economic cost/benefit ratios. Even their vocabulary was characterized by an amazing degree of business jargon. More often than not, daily conversations turned on material transactions and entrepreneurial concerns. Most importantly, forms of business risk increasingly engendered a particular type of professional, business-like relationship with their neighbors. Business relationships enacted a "modern" and "developed" aspect of the women's identity and continually reproduced forms of business risk. The entire process became even more meaningful and proximate by their level of poverty and borderline status on Bugando Hill. The risk-orientation of these relationships were continually defined and legitimated in Mwanza, which was literally overflowing with external/expert sites of knowledge in the form of NGO's and international aid organizations that gave credence to the ideals of developmentalism. Like public health, however, the implications and full actualization of risk (particularly with respect to sexual behavior and AIDS) as a lack of development and related business-oriented cost/benefit ratio must be understood in terms of the risk conjuncture.

Risk Regime #3: Tradition (Nostalgic Community)

The third expert/external risk regime that had a particularly significant presence in Mwanza and in the lives of the women stemmed from a widespread concern with the maintenance of "traditional" values in the face of massive change. As a risk regime, tradition is inherently different than the more formal and institutionalized risk regimes represented by public health and devlopmentalism. At the same time, however, tradition engendered relationships in the women's daily lives that reproduced very powerful constructions of risk. On Bugando Hill, risk and "tradition" were most closely associated whenever people spoke of "appropriate" relationships between men and women. While many risk constructions in this sense were largely

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an unquestioned and routinized part of gender roles and relations, others were rooted in an increasingly well-articulated ideology surrounding the maintenance of "traditional" morals and values in light of the AIDS epidemic and the disease's appearance in the midst of the seemingly massive social changes characterizing Mwanza's urban environment. As ideas linking risk and gender were applied in response to these conditions, sexual relationships between men and women became more deeply rooted in what can be described as a nostalgic sense of community.

No issue seemed to invoke a sense of risk as resulting from the breakdown of tradition more than AIDS and sex. AIDS was widely associated with the changing conditions of life in the city and it was commonly viewed as an "urban disease." People were highly cognizant of the fact that AIDS appeared on the scene at almost the exact same time as Tanzania's economic collapse and the social changes wrought by rapid urbanization and a cash-based economy. While the modernization process and developmental ideals could be viewed in a negative light in this regard, it has been pointed out in this chapter that they were more commonly thought of as positive processes. Thus, while people generally praised development and progress, they simultaneously lamented the breakdown of "tradition," particularly when it came to Mwanza's changing sexual environment, which was viewed as the natural backdrop for a new urban lifestyle that encouraged careless sexual behavior and the spread of AIDS. In terms of sex, then, AIDS became the preeminent measuring stick for an unrestrained sexual drive induced by a breakdown in traditional social sanctions. In this way, any mention of the disease (including public health campaigns) constantly invoked certain "traditional" notions of risk when it came to the realm of sexual behavior.

In this heated urban atmosphere, where charges of AIDS and unrestrained sex circulated with appeals for a return to traditional ways in a seemingly self-perpetuating cycle, the idea of the risky husbandless woman was enacted on a daily basis. As discussed in previous chapters, there was ample cultural and historical precedent to regard a woman without a husband as wild and unrestrained in many ways, though this was particularly true with respect to her sexual behavior.

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Sukuma tradition was rich in metaphors that defined husbandless women as being at risk because of their unrestrained sexuality (additionally, and as discussed throughout this work, constructions of the risky husbandless woman have been a common cultural theme throughout East Africa, see especially Ntozi 1997). Subsequently, there was a high degree of historical and cultural sanction to consider husbandless women, along with the "hard-core" prostitutes, as one of the most significant risk groups for AIDS. Since the spread of AIDS was attributed to the breakdown of tradition in the city, it was quite easily and effectively associated with husbandless women (in his article, Ntozi highlights the same process for Uganda). While such women were under strict control in the village during the "old days," they were unfettered by tradition in Mwanza and subsequently allowed to pursue their "natural" promiscuity. The very presence of AIDS "proved" this process.

By the same token, and from the man's perspective, there were few other "groups" other than husbandless women to whom one could point as representing a particularly high risk for AIDS. It was a precarious and somewhat self-defeating endeavor to suggest AIDS was the result of wives cheating on their husbands, which directly contradicted the presumption of male control entailed by the marriage bond. It also suggested that men were unable to master women, which threatened the core structuring elements of masculinity and gender relations in Sukuma tradition (as well as most if not all cultural traditions in the region). It also threatened these ideals as they were played out in the patriarchal hierarchy of Mwanza's industrial economy. Certain jobs were for men only because it was "just right" that men work and provide for their women, whose realm was still widely associated with domestic duties and the raising of children. To suggest that there was an epidemic of wives cheating on husbands was to allude to a massive breakdown in men's ability to satisfy their wives or command their own households. It also led to the rather delicate issue of exactly *who* was being cheated on. As one (male) shopowner on Bugando Hill put it: "You better be prepared to back it up with fact if you spread the word that a man's wife is cheating on him, or else he'll come after you with one big stick." In many ways, then,

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husbandless women represented the easiest and most legitimate segment of society upon whom men could pin the spread of AIDS, particularly in an atmosphere where there was a relatively open and widespread opinion on the part of men that women in general were more likely risk candidates for AIDS. While husbandless women were not the only risk candidates constructed in this sense, they were almost certainly the most viable and easily identified ones. In such an atmosphere, marriage was continually reinforced as the sole means of taming a woman's unrestrained sexuality and it remained the most legitimate and socially viable type of sexual relationship for a woman.

As a risk regime and at a more general level, tradition was expressed as an ideology and a nostalgic sense of community; a yearning for the past when life was patterned and structured by seemingly unbroken social obligations and expectations. The urban environment of Mwanza could at times seem comparatively chaotic and uncaring. In the midst of so much external influence and rapid change, appeals for the reestablishment of "tradition" were common and continued to be a powerful source of moral authority. The threat of AIDS ensured that the realm of sexual behavior engendered the most frequent and powerful calls for a return to tradition. AIDS was so easily and meaningfully viewed against the backdrop of traditional breakdown and urban lifestyle changes that husbandless women were made into effective scapegoats for the disease. Their unrestrained sexuality represented a risk to society that was "obviously" contained by traditional sanctions in the past while they became an unbridled risk in the city where the high prevalence of AIDS was a daily substantiation of this "fact." By thwarting the risk associated with AIDS and the husbandless woman, the marriage bond became a means of continually enacting this belief and thus a type of ever-present, routinized risk-oriented relationship steeped in historical and cultural tradition. If the women were to survive both economically and socially, however, it was apparent that they had to somehow resist and/or redefine the belief that their husbandless status represented an inherent sexual risk. The ways in which they did so represent

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the full extent of the risk conjuncture and how their social networks became the most powerful and ultimate risk producing regime in their lives.

The Risk Conjuncture

Enough information has been presented at this point to construct an explanatory framework of a risk conjuncture and show how it can be usefully applied in this instance. The sexual practices and perceptions of the women in this study will be contextualized on the basis of this study (this is the subject of the following chapter). Figure 6.1 (see page 264) is a graphic illustration of the risk conjuncture. The first "half" of the conjuncture involves the women's struggles to survive and maintain a legitimate social space on Bugando Hill. As figure 6.1 illustrates, the four networks of husbandless women do not simply respond to external/expert risk regimes, but engage them as they simultaneously take part in the internal politics that constitute the neighborhood space. In this case, internal politics refers to the women's struggles to not simply survive but survive "appropriately" on Bugando Hill, a process which has been discussed at length in chapters Four and Five.

The external/expert risk regimes particularly relevant to the women represent the second "half" of the risk conjuncture. These are illustrated at the top of the diagram. While the women reproduce these risk regimes in various ways, they are external sites of knowledge and not *initially* reproduced as a result of the women's networks and/or network-neighborhood relations. As external/expert risk regimes "from above," however, the particular risk constructions of these three regimes were acknowledged and/or responded to in some *practiced* fashion by the women. In doing so, the women's networks also became a particular set of risk-oriented relationships, which is why they are also considered a risk regime as well, though one that was not in and of itself institutionalized and operated somewhere in-between more formal structures. In other words, and to reiterate what was said at the beginning of the chapter, the women's networks are a distinctly *informal* type of risk regime. By engaging expert/external sources of risk, the women made sexual risk a particularly critical structuring principle of their group identity. In this way,

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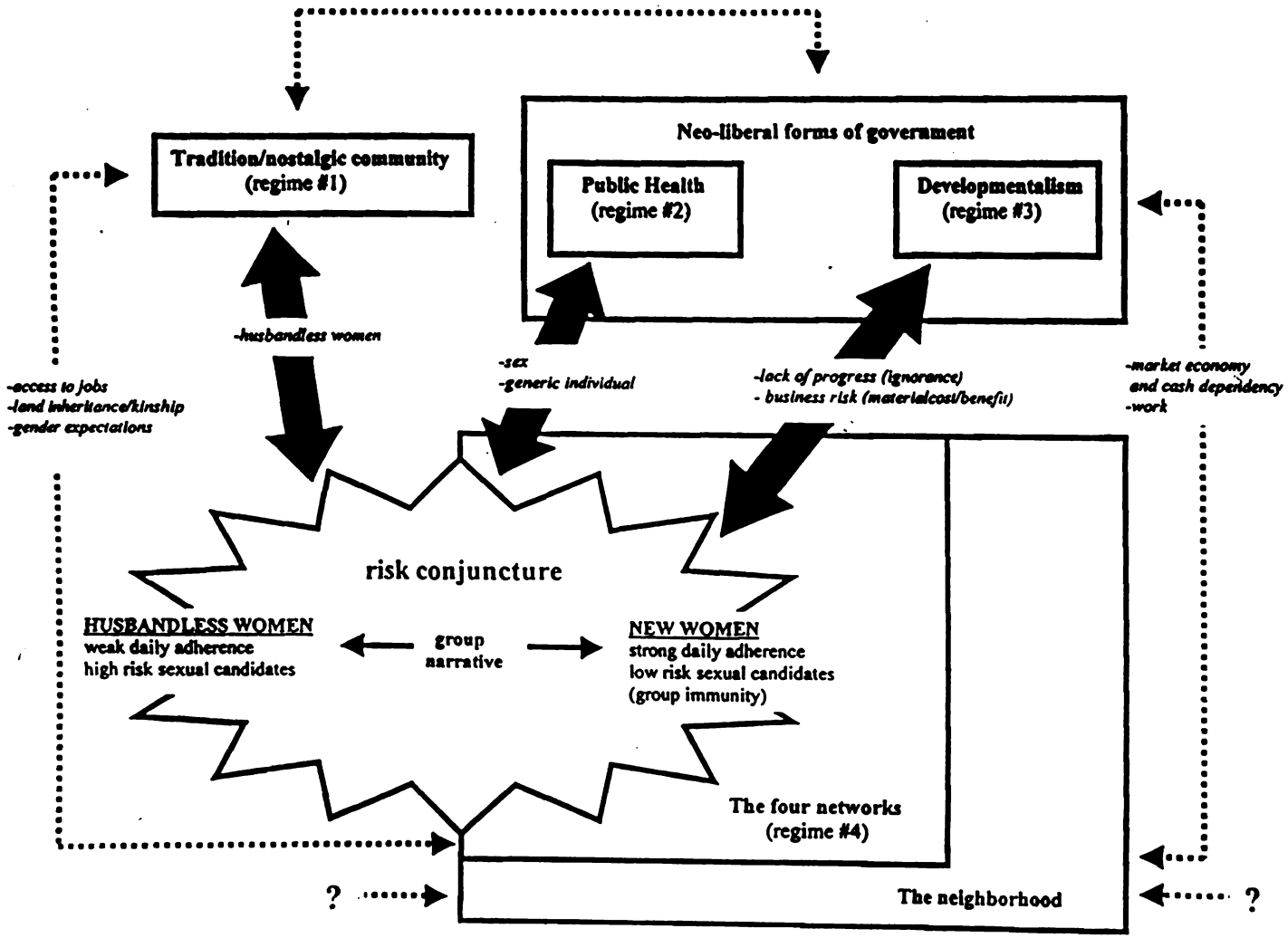


Figure 6.1: The risk conjuncture

risk in general and sexual risk in particular became central elements toward group formation and maintenance in both an economic and symbolic sense. How and why the women believed themselves and their sexual practices to be a low risk for AIDS was both an outcome and a part of this process, which is represented in the figure and the area designating the risk conjuncture itself. Here, the women's emergent identities are part of (or becoming a part of) a shared set of norms, ideals, and values that began to define them as "new women." In order to promote this identity and maintain a legitimate social space in the neighborhood, however, the women had to distance themselves from the overwhelming stigma surrounding the high sexual risk associated with their husbandless status. Exactly how they resisted this type of risk while simultaneously remaking themselves into low risk sexual candidates in terms of their emergent identities and "new woman" status is the key toward understanding sex and risk for AIDS from their particular position/disposition.

While the risk conjuncture is a direct and central result of the linkages between the three external/expert risk regimes and the internal dynamics of network-neighborhood relations, the two halves are also linked indirectly. It is clear that "tradition" and neo-liberal forms of government shape the environment within which the women interact with their neighbors on Bugando Hill. While these influences may not be directly associated with risk, they remain significant precisely because they help to define the environment where network-neighborhood relations occur and risk is ultimately constructed. This process is represented by the dotted lines/arrows (in Figure 6.1). In the case of the women, the specific realms/issues where their influence is particularly relevant are summarized in the figure along the dotted lines/arrows. These issues have been mentioned and/or discussed throughout this work, though a few summarizing words should be said at this point.

With respect to the impact of neo-liberal forms of government, the women's immediate environment has been structured most by the penetration of a market economy, which has contributed to rapid urbanization and the growth of the informal economy and massive

shantytown neighborhoods like Bugando Hill. In this context, ideas and practices associated with work have also changed dramatically. Most notably and with respect to the women, cash-dependent small business activities are not only viable options but actualized ones. While market-driven changes have an obvious impact upon the women's lives and daily experiences, it would be a mistake to correlate them in a direct fashion with the spread of AIDS. For instance (and more specifically) the "feminization of poverty" is not actually a *direct* cause of the AIDS epidemic in Mwanza (or places like Mwanza) as has been suggested or alluded to by other researchers (Hunt 1988; Schoepf 1988; Ulin 1992; Seeley 1994; deZalduondo 1995; Reid 1997). AIDS is not simply or even directly about economic survival. Rather, economic impoverishment shapes the environment within which any number of risk conjunctures are produced by the situated positions/dispositions of various networks and/or natural social groups in the surrounding neighborhood. It is not the intention to negate the relevance of such processes as globalization, market penetration, and a growing cash dependency in an often cash-depleted environment (for women in particular). However, these processes are considered *indirect* contributing factors to the spread of AIDS. A serious "short-circuit" effect occurs when they are elevated to a direct position in the causal chain of events leading to the spread of AIDS because the (re)production of sexual risk is almost always left out of that chain (as is the true complexity of risk and group identity).

Tradition as a collective and often nostalgic sense of community has also structured the environment within which network-neighborhood relations occur on Bugando Hill. One of the most significant and widely practiced factors in this area involves land inheritance issues and notions of kinship. It is quite possible that many of the women in this study would not be in Mwanza's cash-oriented environment if they were able to inherit their deceased husband's *shamba*. Inheritance practices were specifically legitimated and kept alive in the name of "traditional" notions of kinship, particularly with respect to the relationship between a woman and her brother-in-law (i.e. the levirate). While the women highlighted tradition as a rallying cry

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for resistance in this sense, they often did not question other types of "traditional" gender relationships. In fact, their social networks were a daily enactment of female cooperation rooted in notions of "tradition." The same thing could be said for motherhood, which the women did not necessarily question as a means of social legitimacy for themselves, though they did in fact redefine it in terms of their business endeavors and developmental ideals. Even their business activities, however, which operated largely in the informal sector and entailed the buying and selling of relatively small amounts of produce, were considered "women's work." Few men in Mwanza actually operated small businesses in the same manner as women due to "traditional" ideas involving gender and work. In many ways, then, the women's small business activities were a daily display and affirmation of the limitations associated with that work. Few women were successful business entrepreneurs in a strictly economic/material sense, particularly when compared to men, which continually reinforced the limited expectations involving the economic success of women. The point is that tradition in terms of gender expectations and obligations were continually reproduced in the market-oriented environment of Bugando Hill. In the same manner as neo-liberal forms of government and the formal economy, however, land inheritance practices and gender expectations do not directly cause the spread of AIDS in any way. To highlight gender and/or land ownership as direct and causal factors to AIDS would once again represent a type of "short-circuit" effect that simply ignores the central issue of sex and risk. For the women of this study, such processes simply shape the environment within which sex and risk were enacted.

Figure 6.1 also leaves room for other possible processes that shape network-neighborhood relations (as illustrated by the dotted lines/arrows with question marks). Neo-liberalism and a shared sense of tradition are by no means the only forces that shape the social environment and internal politics of Bugando Hill. It is virtually impossible to discuss every indirect influence in this way. However, allowing for such unknowns is necessary. Otherwise, the particular framework in Figure 6.1 would simply be too "neat" and self-contained. The risk

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conjuncture, as a highly dynamic process, should not be viewed and/or presented as an all-encompassing explanation. Some things must always remain open to speculation and potential change. As far as the direct contributing factors to the risk conjuncture, however, the most important risk regimes are represented (at least from the position/disposition of the women in this study).

While the main feature of the risk conjuncture and one of particular concern here involves the ways that risk and sex have become a form of situated knowledge (which is the subject of the following chapter), a few defining characteristics can be mentioned at this point. Perhaps the most obvious feature is that public health constructions of risk based on a generic individual and the idea that "everybody is at risk" do not directly address other sources of risk information, despite the fact that they are out there. Moreover, by asking individuals to be self-responsible and rely on their own better judgment, public health leaves the door open for other risk regimes, in this case "traditional" notions of the risky husbandless woman. Public health campaigns simply do not acknowledge the idea that people will define their own risk groups, particularly when they are empowered to do so by not being directly challenged. In Mwanza, this somewhat haughty and detached disacknowledgement on the part of public health experts continually reproduced a space within which risk in the form of the unrestrained sexuality of husbandless women was allowed to flourish. Since they remained a significant structuring presence in the space of the neighborhood, the women of this study were forced to confront and respond to these ideas on a daily basis.

Left virtually alone to respond to the riskiness of their own husbandless status in this sense, the next chapter will make it clear that the women at least partially reproduced the idea that it represented a sexual risk. As a powerful theme that was already "out there" (and allowed to stay out there), the risky status of husbandless women was an easy and effective way for the women to peripheralize individuals who threatened network-neighborhood relations. They did not necessarily have to be promiscuous or even particularly sexually active to garner accusations

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of sexual risk in this fashion, only perceived as a threat in a general sense and with respect to the other women's efforts to establish and maintain a legitimate social space on Bugando Hill. While these "policing" strategies may have protected the women from the ever-watchful eyes of their neighbors, it also undermined attempts to confront and/or resist the association between husbandless women and sexual promiscuity. As a result, "traditional" ideas of risk were reproduced within each network as the women found it necessary to discipline themselves. Additionally, marriage was continually acknowledged in the public realm as the single most appropriate relationship between a woman and a man. All other sexual relationships remained shrouded in a cloak of suspicion.

While the women did in fact reproduce the idea of the high risk husbandless woman, it was clear that in doing so they had to present their own sexuality in an alternative fashion and as a comparatively low risk. They could not rely on traditional or public health risk regimes in this endeavor, however, and required another form of sexual risk that was socially acceptable to some degree and already "out there." Business risk and develolpmental ideals provided the perfect and somewhat "logical" choice for the women. It allowed them to "other" some husbandless women as those who did not share the values and ideals associated with their emergent identity while not directly threatening that identity. It also did not directly contradict traditional or public health risk constructions, thus ensuring the women a degree of shared risk with the rest of the community (directly resisting those ideas would be socially untenable). The embodiment of business/developmental risk by the women is perhaps the single most significant feature of the risk conjuncture because it led to a particular form of sexual ethics referred to here as an "exchange monogamy."

The idea of a risk conjuncture implies several things, the most notable being that various forms/constructions of risk are available to individuals/collectives at any one time. How and if they decide to acknowledge them depends in large part on their position/disposition within the space of the neighborhood, itself partially defined by a complex network of political

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maneuverings and relationships as groups emerge, break apart, and/or thrive in the struggle for both social legitimacy and sheer economic/material survival. While tradition, public health, and developmentalism represent the three most significant external/expert risk regimes from the position/disposition of the women in this study, the particular form of risk and risk-oriented relationships associated with each are redefined as they conjoin with one another and the internal dynamics of network-neighborhood relationships. In the case of the women, the subsequent risk conjuncture reproduces an exchange monogamy where sex and risk are directly implicated in processes of group formation and maintenance. The main characteristics of an exchange monogamy are the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SEX AND THE SOCIAL NETWORK

Sex is for men and prostitutes. [thirty year old divorced woman from Shinyanga]

Introduction

As the risk conjuncture highlights, there are multiple, interrelated reasons as to why the women's sexual dependency on men involves much more than the pragmatics of economic necessity. First, and as discussed in Chapter Six, it challenges the core ideals associated with their emergent identities that legitimate network-neighborhood relationships. Second, and as Chapter Seven makes clear, an active and obvious sexual life on the part of husbandless women reproduces "traditional" as well as public health constructions of risk, two very prominent external/expert risk regimes that structured network-neighborhood relations on Bugando Hill. The women clearly occupied an awkward and unsteady social position, caught between a sexual-economic dependency on men and the devastating sexual risk associated with their husbandless status that was continually enacted in various ways and legitimated by "tradition" and public health in Mwanza's guarded, often alarmist environment. As the easiest and most effective means "out there" to undermine their emergent identities, sexual risk had to be acknowledged and negotiated if they were to survive on Bugando Hill. Participation in the social network rested on a delicate balance between economic necessity and maintaining the integrity of self in the face of external/expert sources of risk produced and "policed" among the women themselves as they struggled to form and maintain a legitimate social position in the surrounding neighborhood. The women's networks represented the final and most proximate risk regime since they worked within the risk conjuncture to produce a particular type of "low risk" sexual relationship referred to here as an "exchange monogamy."

This chapter describes the major characteristics of an exchange monogamy and the ways that it was actualized and reproduced by the women as a result of network-based behaviors and concerns of maintaining social legitimacy in the neighborhood. The various meanings and social practices that combine to reproduce sexual risk and risk for AIDS are initially examined through

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the circumstances surrounding one woman's experience. This individual actively and openly pursued a relationship with a man that prevented her from successfully negotiating the inherent tension produced as a result of that relationship. Subsequently, she was prevented from full participation in the social network and ultimately driven from the neighborhood itself via a number of disciplining strategies that defined and reproduced a risk conjuncture. Her experiences on Bugando Hill are significant because they do not stand alone. In fact, they exemplify — though perhaps to an intensely heightened degree — the ways in which the women approached and resolved the tensions created by a conjuncture between external/expert sources of risk, their emergent identities, and a sexual/economic dependency on men. The following section examines how these same processes were always present — though perhaps in a more latent fashion — as a result of the daily activities and interactions with one another and their neighbors to produce sexual relationships that did not reach a high risk "breaking point." The result was an exchange monogamy in which the objective of extracting the maximum economic and material benefit with a minimum commitment of time, energy, and emotion linked up with developmental/business constructions of risk to become a means of enacting a type of group immunity from AIDS.

Mwita: "Her business is her boyfriend"

Mwita was a twenty-six year old Kuria woman who moved to Mwanza during the year.[1] She came from Musoma, a relatively large town in Mara Region, where she had divorced her husband approximately six months previously. They had been married for almost two years and had a baby girl (who was seven months old when Mwita first arrived in Mwanza) whom Mwita brought with her to Mwanza. Mwita came to Mwanza to be with her current boyfriend (a thirty-three year old Sukuma man), whom she "loved very, very much" and hoped some day to marry. Her boyfriend co-owned a taxi with three other men in the city. They had also recently moved to Mwanza after realizing that the taxi business in Musoma was "very depressed". Mwita's boyfriend lived with one of his taxi partners in a small house in the Kirumba section of town. Mwita was forced to find her own living arrangements, eventually moving into a house on

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Bugando Hill that was being rented by a woman from the *Samaki* network who was separated from her husband (#6 in the tables). The two women had known one another previously from Musoma, where they attended primary school together and had lived next door to one another for several years. Following her divorce and subsequent to her arrival in Mwanza, Mwita had been corresponding with this woman, who invited Mwita to share her house with her since it was a chance to save a significant amount of money on rent.

It is important to note that Mwita's boyfriend (whom I also became quite familiar with during the course of my stay) may not have been under the same impression as Mwita regarding the status and direction of their relationship. It was quite obvious that he enjoyed his bachelor status and was in no way ready to marry Mwita, let alone live with her. While acknowledging that Mwita was a "girlfriend," he made a point of adding that he had several girlfriends. In fact, he was fond of Mwita and spent a great deal of time with her, but he did not consider himself to be committed exclusively to her. He regularly attended the discos in and around Mwanza with his friends, often with Mwita, but not always.

Mwita began a small business making and selling rice cakes on Bugando Hill, but she attended to it sporadically. On average, she devoted approximately three full days each week to her business. She spent a great deal of time at her boyfriend's house. He admitted that he spent quite a bit of money on Mwita, paying for the first year of Mwita's rent and providing her with money for start-up fees for her small business. In addition, he paid for many of Mwita's meals and new clothes for herself and her baby. At the same time, he was quite abrupt with Mwita when he wanted to be alone or when he was simply "not in the mood" to be with her. Mwita would often not see her boyfriend for one or two-week stretches, during which time she would make more of an effort to establish her small business.

Mwita's presence began to generate a considerable amount of negative speculation and gossip among the other women of the *Samaki* network within three or four months of her arrival in Mwanza. Mwita's habit of spending days at a time with her boyfriend increasingly agitated

her housemate, who complained bitterly that she could not rely on Mwita to do chores around the house and watch her children when required. She had originally discussed sharing childcare responsibilities with Mwita, but often felt that she was forced to take care of Mwita's baby without receiving any reciprocation. She began sharing this information with several other women of the *Samaki* network, where it was also noted that Mwita did not tend to her business interests on a regular basis and made little effort to interact with others. The women also commented on Mwita's evident and self-proclaimed delight in attending the late night discos with her boyfriend, claiming that it was "embarrassing," "stupid," and "not something that a young mother should be doing." The women became noticeably upset when Mwita was among them, due in large part to Mwita's talkative nature and habit of expressing her love for her boyfriend and discussing the things that they did together.

Within several weeks of the time that I first took note of it, the negative gossip regarding Mwita's activities increased to such a degree among the women of the *Samaki* network that it became one of the most frequent topics of discussion. It was clear that the women did not approve of Mwita's lifestyle and that some kind of change was in order. Mwita was directly criticized for her "love of her boyfriend's money" and penchant for "showing off his assets" (a remark at least partly aimed at the Western style clothing that he bought for her). The women regularly questioned Mwita's role as a mother as well as her commitment to her business. The general conclusion regarding Mwita was summed up in one phrase: "Her business is her boyfriend," which emerged as the most common and decisive proclamation of her self worth. For the other women, this simple statement vividly summed up Mwita's dubious behavior and served as a catchphrase explaining its adverse consequences, the most notable of which surrounded her overt sexual attraction to her boyfriend and the risk posed by that relationship.

The women eventually informed Mwita to change her behavior at this time by suggesting that she spend less time with her boyfriend and more time tending to her child and her business activities. Mwita's housemate was particularly adamant about this and directly told Mwita that

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she should move in with him if she loved him so much. Despite her wish to do just that, Mwita was not in a position to move, most notably because her boyfriend was unwilling to sacrifice his bachelor status. Moreover, Mwita's boyfriend had paid a year's worth of her rent and she had expressed her fears to another woman about asking him to pay for another place to live (which had also been suggested by her housemate). It was also likely that he would not receive a refund on his money if Mwita moved out of her current residence on Bugando Hill. Meanwhile, the tensions grew between Mwita and her housemate, who prevented Mwita from entering the house on two separate occasions.

It was about this time that several women made it a point to share their beliefs about Mwita with their customers, particularly the idea that "her business is her boyfriend" (which often became the plural "boyfriends" when repeated to those outside of the immediate social network, particularly other women). In fact, the gossip surrounding Mwita entailed quite a bit of speculation regarding her inability to "control herself" sexually and the danger she was posing to herself and her young child due to AIDS. In effect, AIDS and the unrestrained sexuality of the husbandless woman were frequently drawn upon to undermine Mwita's social credibility in the neighborhood. Such accusations were tied to the idea that restraining and controlling a woman's sexuality was achieved via marriage; a belief which was common among men (and many married women) and had strong traditional roots (as discussed in Chapter Three). The enormous impact of AIDS had the effect of reproducing this idea among Mwanza's residents in powerful ways. For her part, Mwita did not exactly dissuade such ideas from being attributed to her, particularly with respect to her loud and talkative character, manner of dress (short skirts and high heels), and the fact that her boyfriend picked her up and dropped her off (often late at night) in his taxi with the music blaring. These outward appearances and public behavior increasingly drew a negative response from people in and around the immediate neighborhood on Bugando Hill and were linked to the sexual promiscuity of "these young people who go to discos" and "people who like to play sex," all of which were themselves associated with AIDS. The assumed unrestrained

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sexuality of Mwita was thus constructed via such gossip and passing remarks. For example, as Mwita walked by one day, I overheard one married woman snicker, "That girl only loves money and will go around with any man to get it."

Eventually, Mwita's landlord came by and gave her three days to move out. He was a resident of Bugando Hill himself and a regular presence in a neighborhood bar, where I caught up with him the following day:

Chris: I want to ask you...

Landlord: Yes, yes, yes (laughing). I know the topic of our discussion as you informed me before you turned that thing on (referring to the tape recorder). I will happily tell you why I kicked this woman out. It's because I am a respectable man. I am a respectable man (tapping the table after each word). I have several rental properties in Mwanza and they are honest tenants. I don't rent out houses of prostitution (laughing). It will become a haven of AIDS.

Chris: Was this woman a prostitute?

Landlord: Who cares (laughing). It's not important if she is or isn't. It's not my business. People said she was and that's all that matters to me. I'm very careful when I rent a place to a widow[2] (in fact, Mwita was not a widow).

Chris: Where did you hear that she was a prostitute if –

Landlord: Her housemate! (laughing) Among others of course.

Chris: Like who?

Landlord: People who live nearby. I made inquiries. I don't know the truth. Who knows the truth? But people are upset and they come to me asking me what I'm going to do about this and this and about this. I am a respectable man (again tapping the table after every word).

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Mwita's boyfriend picked her up in his taxi later that day. She ended up living with him in his house in Kirumba for several weeks before he found her a room in a house which was owned by his sister's friend.

Mwita's ex-housemate and the women of the *Samaki* network were quite relieved to see Mwita go. They considered her departure an inevitable outcome of what had become an intolerable situation. This is evident in the following discussion between myself, Mwita's ex-housemate, and two other women of the *Samaki* network (who were both close friends of Mwita's ex-housemate):

Chris: So why did it become necessary for Mwita to leave - in your opinion?

Ex-housemate: It's simple. She was going around with her boyfriend so much that she's no good to me. We discussed her duties - responsibilities around the house. Things that she had to do if she wanted to live with me - cooking, cleaning, sometimes taking care of my children. And she just didn't do them. It was all very frustrating. She made life much more difficult for me - not easier.

2nd woman: She had no care for her own child and cared only about going about with men to discos.

Ex-housemate: We tried to help her.

3rd woman: Eeeh (signifies "yes").

Ex-housemate: She didn't tend to her business activities either. So what use is she if she does not look after her child properly, doesn't help around the house, and on top of all this, makes no effort to develop her small business.

2nd woman: Her business was her boyfriend.

3rd woman: That's the absolute truth. She's in God's hands now.

The circumstances surrounding Mwita's residential status and her rather abrupt departure from Bugando Hill are significant because they illustrate the precarious position between a husbandless woman's relationship with men and her commitment to the ideals and exchange

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relationships that come with participation in a strong social network of other husbandless women. Mwita's actions and behavior were a visible manifestation of the male dependency that most threatened the women's identities and exchange relationships. By spending so much time with her boyfriend, talking about him constantly, wearing the clothes that he bought her, and allowing herself to become so emotionally attached to him, Mwita was unable to negotiate the inherent contradictions between sexual dependency, economic need, and the emergent identities of the women that maintained their precarious yet "legitimate" social space on Bugando Hill. More specifically, and with respect to the maintenance of those identities, Mwita's sexual overtness reinforced the high sexual risk attributed to her husbandless status. From the perspective of the women of the *Samaki* network, then, the idea that "her business is her boyfriend" became an easy and effective means of portraying to the rest of the neighborhood Mwita's unacceptability and her lack of credibility as a good mother, sound businesswoman, and productive member of the women's shared social space on Bugando Hill. In the midst of all this was Mwita's inability to fully embrace the expectations and obligations associated with the precarious social space of the women on Bugando Hill and/or comprehend the consequences of her actions in the context of network-neighborhood relations. Over time, the women effectively accentuated the differences between themselves and Mwita in their own actions. As the women of the *Samaki* network increasingly defined Mwita's behavior as a liability, they actively maneuvered to differentiate themselves from Mwita by making it known that she was not acting in an "appropriate" manner.

Mwita's case also represents an extreme example of how the women dealt with the tensions and potential conflict that were present to some degree within each network. The fundamental contradiction between economic (and individual) necessity and the women's (group) idealization of cooperation, sharing, and suffering was experienced by every woman to in some way. Each individual was compelled to strike a balance between the material and symbolic realms as well as their private and public selves. Mwita did not accomplish this task in ways that were legitimated by group ideals and actions. Her private (sexual) life spilled over into the public

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realm and, in so doing, she violated various group norms, particularly the idea that husbandless women must struggle to overcome their suffering through a combination of self-determination and cooperation. Denouncing her behavior became an effective and public means of reaffirming group solidarity and mending any rents that existed between individuals within the same network and which were produced in terms of the same fundamental contradictions. The flip side of excluding individuals such as Mwita was greater inclusion of network members themselves.

In terms of risk, the idea that Mwita's "business was her boyfriend" highlighted the "inappropriateness" of her actions by drawing upon and reinforcing traditional notions that husbandless women were unable to control themselves sexually. The negative gossip and suspect opinion regarding Mwita rapidly spread outward from the *Samaki* social network to permeate the surrounding neighborhood because it was founded on pre-existing risk constructions and a set of related ideas that husbandless women were somehow predisposed to becoming prostitutes (or were akin to being "pseudo-prostitutes"). In this light, Mwita's relationship with her boyfriend was not a "true" relationship, but an illicit act of greed and immorality and due to a lack of sexual restraint. By appealing to this general belief in their disavowal of Mwita's behavior the women of the *Samaki* network may have used it to their advantage, but they also reproduced it as a very powerful and public risk regime. In this way, the women acknowledged that the sexual behavior of husbandless women was a potential threat to the neighborhood and, in so doing, produced a sexual space for themselves which in fact provided them with little room for maneuver.

The immediate space of the neighborhood was important to the sexual aspect of the women's identities in this sense. Bugando Hill was not known as a section of Mwanza where prostitution existed. To define individuals such as Mwita in terms of sexual promiscuity and a generally loose sexual morality and drive them from the neighborhood was a powerful spatio-symbolic statement. The women effectively tapped into a general view that prostitutes and "potential" or "pseudo" prostitutes (i.e., husbandless women like Mwita) were not welcome on Bugando Hill and in doing so readily gained the support and backing of the wider populace. In

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fact, prostitution in Mwanza was associated with a one-block locale in the downtown area and, more specifically, with a single hotel next to the train depot. While this section of town was literally within two or three blocks of Bugando Hill at it's nearest point, in terms of the geography of sexuality it was as distant from the women as any place could possibly be. By forcing individuals from their immediate space, the women reproduced the social geography of Mwanza to their own ends, a process that continually provided them with a degree of social and sexual legitimacy by simply inhabiting the space of Bugando Hill.

The women's efforts to define themselves as a new type of woman by differentiating their own sexuality from that associated with prostitutes was also based on other characteristics. Most notably perhaps was the underlying dichotomy between their public selves and private sexual lives. Prostitution was associated with a very public and overt disposition and thus easily attributed to individuals like Mwita who were relatively open about their sexual lives. The women's sexual lives ran counter to these qualities and were driven underground to an extraordinary degree. The women were simply acting towards their boyfriends like any other woman might act towards her boyfriend or husband: by expecting a degree of *continuity* in his fulfillment of material obligations. Once again, prostitution was located at the opposite end of the spectrum and material satisfaction was characterized by a more vulgar *immediacy*.

One of the few public manifestations of the women's sexuality was the ongoing joking, gossip, and speculation regarding the private realm associated with one another's sexual selves. Here, another characteristic was employed to differentiate themselves from prostitutes: namely, the ideal of female monogamy. Retaining a "boyfriend" for as long as possible was an effective means for women to stress his material assistance in terms of more accepted gender obligations rather than the more blatant "fee for service" transactions that typified prostitute-client relationships. It was clear that a good boyfriend was an individual who provided for his girlfriend in various ways; such material assistance was generally upheld as the mark of a solid man in the

realm of public opinion. Thus, it was not surprising that the few subtle remarks and/or more open descriptions regarding sexual activity drew upon the idea of female monogamy in this way.

Husbandless women and an exchange monogamy

The majority of the women in this study experienced similar social and economic constrictions as Mwita and simply did not earn enough money to survive (in fact, in a strictly material sense Mwita was better off than most). The result was a relatively widespread proliferation of a combined sexual and economic dependency on men. Unlike Mwita, however, the women reproduced a specific type of "low risk" sexual relationship with men that did not threaten their shared sense of self and place on Bugando Hill. Their sexual lives were thus defined and negotiated within the tension-riddled context created by economic necessity and an acute social awareness of the "high-risk" status associated with their husbandless status.

Here, I shift from the ways in which the women distanced themselves from Mwita and potential "others" to the complex manner in which they maintained sexual lives that were considered low risk and that did not upset the balance of network-neighborhood relations (one could say they were low risk because they did not upset this balance, although the women did not necessarily "see" them in this fashion). I specifically focus on three interrelated and overlapping qualities that defined a new type of sexual relationship with men that allowed them to reproduce key aspects of their emergent identities as entailing a low risk for AIDS. These include: 1) a high degree of occasionality and ambiguity; 2) the idealization of sexual exchange; and 3) the balancing of sexual exchange with a female-centered monogamy. While these rather broad qualities only begin to shed light onto the women's actual sexual practices, together they present a more definitive picture of how the women constructed risk and actively made sexual decisions. A defining feature of their new type of sexual relationship — and one which legitimated it as representing a low risk for AIDS — is the central idea of business risk as it is associated with developmentalism and progressive ideals. Within the risk conjuncture, however, the forces that shaped the construction of their own risk status and sexual decision making processes were highly

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relative to their own position, thus reproducing a distinctly husbandless perspective on sex. It should be noted that while the information presented here sheds less light on the situation/perspective of the men who were sexually involved with these women, some details do emerge via the expectations and obligations placed on those who were willing to occupy the socially constructed space of "boyfriend." Ultimately, however, it represented a category that the women created largely as a result of their interactions with one another within the space of the neighborhood.

The periodic and ambiguous sexual life of husbandless women

Women who wished to maintain their personal integrity in the eyes of others could not continuously and openly pursue sexual relationships as Mwita had done. The idea of being "finished with men" was widespread among the women and if flagrantly transgressed would almost certainly have led to similar condemnation and disavowal. Ultimately, it would have undermined the already precarious social position of husbandless women on Bugando Hill. Since their exchange, spatial proximity, and daily interactions resulted in a highly visible lifestyle, it would also have proven extremely difficult for a woman to engage in an intense and emotionally involved relationship with a man without it becoming obvious to the other women of her social network. Finally, it must also be remembered that simply in terms of the time required each day for small business activities, domestic and childcare duties, and exchange practices and interpersonal commitments, it was virtually impossible for the women to spend additional time and energy towards maintaining an extensive sexual life. In the end, a continuous and highly involved sexual relationship was the most compromising position in which a woman could place herself with respect to her commitment to both the ideals and pragmatics of the social network. Designating such individuals as high-risk candidates for AIDS based largely on traditional notions surrounding the unrestrained sexuality of husbandless women was an easy and effective means of undermining her social credibility.

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The fact that many of the women did have an active sexual life was initially made evident in their daily conversations and comments about one another, particularly when the periodic absence of any one individual became noticeable, in part because such absences had clear ramifications for the delicate balance of material exchanges that formed the basis of each network. Even when a woman neglected her business activities or personal commitments for one or two days, a relatively sudden and unexplained disappearance could generate a considerable amount of gossip and speculation as to the reason for her absence. In these instances, other women often wondered aloud or in jest as to how the missing individual was surviving and making money without tending to her business. In most cases, the inevitable conclusion (even if it was not true) was that the woman was "dating" her boyfriend. Since most women were periodically absent for two or three day stretches at a time each month (a duration which was long enough to draw attention to themselves), few individuals were free from this type of speculation. Comments about another woman's potential boyfriend and speculation as to whether or not she was even seeing a man continually circulated among the women. Gossip, passing remarks, and jokes that centered on the possibility of a woman's "business being her boyfriend" were tossed about on a daily basis. These comments were not always confined to the other women within one's social network but were also directed at women from around town or used to highlight a woman from someone's past. As a result, the idea that such a transgression could and did occur among husbandless women continually circulated within the social network, hovering in the background in the form of a particularly virulent risk construction with the moral weight of tradition associated with it, until any one woman's actions (and within the social network this often meant a prolonged absence) caused it to be directed specifically at her. When this occurred, the intensity of this type of gossip and innuendo could reach surprisingly high levels, particularly if the woman in question was more deeply and centrally involved in the network of exchange relationships. In the end, it became clear that a woman had to balance her absences (even if they were not visits to her boyfriend) with the level of gossip and speculation that her disappearance

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inevitably generated. One result was that the women's' sexual lives involved a high degree of occasionality or periodicity; individuals were absent for no more than three days and perhaps two or three evenings each month. These were really the only occasions when a woman could in fact meet with a "boyfriend" because of the necessity to be discreet in a context dominated by gossip, innuendo, and speculation. Thus, in addition to its occasionality, the women's sexual lives also involved a high degree of mutual ambiguity.

The utility of keeping their sexual lives ambiguous *from one another* is significant, particularly in light of the assumption that the "mystery" surrounding sexual behavior among women in East Africa is due to a lack of ethnographic work in this area (Akeryond 1997; Konings et al. 1994; Kapiga et al. 1994; Reid 1997). Of course, this may be true, but the mysterious quality of the sexual lives of the women in this study was not the sole result of an ethnographic void, the perspective of the anthropologist/researcher, or the "delicate nature" of the subject matter. Sexual ambiguity was due less to a gap in anthropological knowledge than it was a functional part of the women's precarious social position on Bugando Hill. Thus, the women's sexual lives existed *for one another* in innuendo, hearsay, and speculation as much as it did from the perspective of an obvious outsider. As with its occasionality, uncertainty and obscurity were useful aspects of the sexual lives of husbandless women and a significant aspect of their unique situation.

One obvious result of both the occasional and ambiguous context of the women's sexual lives was that boyfriends quite literally receded into the background to such a degree that they were never a *visible* presence on Bugando Hill. The exception to this general phenomenon was the occasional appearance of an ex/estranged husband who essentially enacted the role of "boyfriend" by "dating" his former wife-now-girlfriend (this practice will be discussed in more detail at a later point in this chapter). Yet even the appearance of an estranged husband, several of whom lived on Bugando Hill, was relatively rare in the immediate space of the women's neighborhood. Sexual relationships remained sporadic, distant, and vague[3], and one was never

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sure as to whether they were "on" or "off" until a woman's actions or absence triggered enough attention to warrant a rising tide of speculation that ultimately entailed the risk for AIDS engendered by her husbandless status. From the perspective of the other women within her social network, an individual's boyfriend lived and existed elsewhere, mired in an indefinite world of imperceptibility and hearsay. This mutual ambiguity created an environment that sustained and perpetuated speculation on the part of the women regarding one another's sexual lives, which, in turn, encouraged the occasionality of their meetings with boyfriends.

The periodic and ambiguous status of the women's sexual relationships directly linked to assessments of risk for AIDS. It was commonly thought that the less time one spent with a man and the less sexually involved one was with him, the less risk the relationship posed in terms of AIDS. With very few exceptions, women in each of the four networks were adamant in the belief that risk for AIDS was dramatically lowered if not completely eliminated when an individual's sexual activities were decreased to a bare minimum, or to a level commonly defined as "occasional dating." This idea did not directly contradict public health messages involving risk as based on self-responsibility and self-control. In fact, "occasional dating" was viewed as picking and choosing partners carefully and responsibly as a direct result of AIDS. For the women, it further demonstrated their ability to control the unrestrained sexuality stemming from their husbandless status, thus combating a traditional form of risk which ultimately had a much stronger and forceful presence than the rather vague and detached public health messages surrounding risk and AIDS. In essence, the periodic and ambiguous characteristics entailed in "occasional dating" were a means by which the women could actively demonstrate self-control and an ability to manage the risk that they posed to the surrounding neighborhood/community. For the women, sex, AIDS, and risk were often (but not always) an issue of protecting the neighborhood from their potential selves rather than protecting oneself from the neighborhood. Actively demonstrating self-control by managing the potential risk associated with their husbandless status was a way to reduce risk for AIDS from their situated position/disposition in

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the neighborhood. At the same time, it allowed them to "link up" with another form of risk that was actively promoted in Mwanza and on Bugando Hill: developmentalism and business forms of risk associated with economic and material assessments of profit and loss.

The exchange ideal

The occasional and discreet character of the women's sexual activities was not the only means by which they negotiated the social pressures and inherent contradictions of having active sexual lives. The continuous stream of speculation and gossip regarding one another's sexual activities and their risk status not only pointed to relatively active sexual lives but it also demonstrated a recognition of this possibility and the fact that it was allowed to occur as long as it conformed to a shared "ideal". In fact, the social network became a means of defining and maintaining an ideal type of sexual relationship surrounding its exchange value, which was an important aspect of their emergent identities as husbandless women and a means of defining their sex lives as representing a low risk for AIDS. By conforming to an exchange ideal and enacting a form of business risk based on "objective" cost/benefit assessments, the women shared an implicit understanding of one another's sex lives that allowed them to negotiate the idea of being "finished with men." Thus, they were able to maintain an active "low risk" sexual life and retain social integrity among one another and their neighbors.

By continually expressing a sexual relationship's core features as its exchange value, the women essentially measured the success and social legitimacy of their own relationships on the basis of what they were getting from the man for what they were giving to him. In fact, the ideal sexual relationship became a kind of impersonal, commercial transaction and capital investment founded on the business ethic of profit and loss; which clearly appealed to their identities as professional businesswomen. The following discussion between myself and two women from the *Kanisa* network exemplifies these ideas:

Chris: So what is the ideal relationship with a man.

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1st woman: None (laughing). I think if you're going to date a man than you have to form a business contract with him. That would be the best relationship.

Chris: What would that contract say?

1st woman: We provide certain assets to him which are our bodies and he provides for us.

2nd woman: I agree.

Chris: What does he provide?

2nd woman: Whatever we can get from him. It's like trying to take a dead cow from a hyena. But if it was a business transaction you treat it like such and try to increase your profits without paying a lot of start up fees.

1st woman: You see, we have very little to bargain with other than our bodies. But our bodies are our assets. They are our property or bargaining power.

2nd woman: Our bodies are our *shambas*.

Chris: So you have a single boyfriend with whom you enter into a business transaction. Is this it? Just one man.

1st woman: Yes, and in fact that's what many women have to do but they just don't have a written contract.

2nd woman: You can never trust a man to honor such a contract. They like to visit many *shambas*. There's nothing a woman can do about that. That's just the nature of men.

Chris: But not women?

2nd woman: Yes. Unless you're one of these prostitutes but that's a different matter.

Chris: Would you live with this man with whom you had a business contract? Would it be like a marriage with a written contract?

1st woman: No, no.

2nd woman: No way.

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1st woman: You spend as little time as possible with him. That's what you do. In a perfect world, that would be written into the contract. You can't live together.

2nd woman: If you live together, then you give up your *shamba* to the man. Your *shamba* becomes part of his *shamba.*

It was common for the women to define their time and bodies in the emotionless, matter-of-fact context of a business transaction when discussing the ideal sexual relationship with a man. The female body as *shamba* was a central metaphor in this respect and was widely articulated in various ways across all four social networks. For these women, it was a powerful means of conveying their sense of self vis a vis men, which was at least partially constructed by viewing their time and bodies as forms of negotiable capital. The exchange basis of their sexual relationships was itself an outcome of their emergent identities as husbandless women and, as such, it was legitimated and condoned in large part by their situated interactions with one another. It was also firmly rooted in developmental ideals and assessments of business risk based on economic and material cost/benefit ratios. In this sense, business risk linked up very well with the low risk assessment of "occasional dating." In essence, the process of extracting the most material/economic profit from a boyfriend for the least amount of investment (of time and self) had begun to represent a means of reducing risk for AIDS.

The body as *shamba* also spoke to a central issue that was directly and meaningfully relevant to many of the women: namely, the loss of property and rights most experienced to varying degrees after a divorce, separation, or death of a husband. By likening their own bodies with the *shamba*, the women were exposing and critiquing accepted (i.e., traditional) gender biases in an effective manner and referencing their newfound sense of power vis a vis men. They had more control over their bodies and at least some leverage when it came to sexual decision making, particularly when situated on the field of exchange. By drawing upon the metaphor of body as *shamba*, they were symbolically reclaiming what was rightfully theirs from the hands of men. As wiser, more experienced women who bore their burdens well, they were not about to be

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robbed of their *shamba* again through a combination of unfair patriarchal practices and their own rural naiveté. By taking back the *shamba*, the women were redefining gender relations and asserting a shared sense of power over men. The body as *shamba* metaphor highlighted sexual exchange as being not only an area where women *desired* to establish more power over men, but also one of the few sites where they could *actually* (and publicly) accomplish this goal. They were defining and actively demonstrating power in terms of their degree of sexual independence from men.

In exchange for their own investment, the women almost exclusively expected some form of material gain. Since most women earned only enough money to survive from day to day, their expectations were often focused on more substantial economic costs that were typically paid in large, annual installments such as rent or school fees. It was clear that most women were in no position to afford the lump-sum payments associated with these costs. They felt strongly that it was an area where the boyfriend's assistance was not only useful or coincidental but obligatory. As evident in the following conversation with three women from the *Kwanza* network, the very success of a sexual relationship was increasingly measured in terms of the woman's ability to extract an economic profit:

1st woman: A man should provide for his girlfriend. If he doesn't than there's no reason to be with him as far as I'm concerned.

Chris: What should he provide specifically?

1st woman: I think it's fair to the woman that he should provide her with help to pay rent at least which is a huge cost that can't always be met by a single woman.

2nd woman: Yes, rent is a huge cost – like school fees. School fees are another huge cost.

1st woman: This is true.

Chris: What if a man does not help his girlfriend with these things?

2nd woman: What's the point? Then he's no good.

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1st woman: Then you would be a fool to be in such a relationship any longer. Why do you want to waste your time with such a lazy fool? It's only a waste of time and there's nothing else to it.

3rd woman: It's not a good relationship because the man is taking advantage of the woman. It's the same old thing.

1st woman: Maybe the woman isn't doing a good job of demanding help from the man. A woman can't be shy in such matters these days.

2nd woman: Eeeh (signifies "yes"). It's a woman's job to ask for financial help from her boyfriend. You can't think otherwise or you're being very naïve. And God knows that a man also realizes this to be true. But some men remain stingy and refuse to help their girlfriends and at that point it's time to leave him by the wayside because that's a man who doesn't understand a woman's needs. A man must help his girlfriend financially or he's not a good boyfriend. Then she's just a dog at the end of a rope that he holds tight.

The women expected very little from a boyfriend beyond financial assistance, including any kind of commitment that involved substantial lifestyle changes. For instance, few women expected or desired to live with a man or to remarry. Marriage, commitment, protection, and stability were no longer considered the resources that men had to offer. To believe so was commonly perceived by the women as naïve, submissive, and even reckless. They expected men to acknowledge the exchange basis of sexual relationships and a woman's right to demand and maneuver for financial assistance within this context. The man's worth was quite literally measured in economic terms as sexual relationships were increasingly viewed in terms of business transactions and cost/benefit assessments of economic and material risk.

By framing the *ideal* relationship in terms of its exchange value, the most appropriate relationship involved accruing the greatest profit (i.e., convincing the boyfriend to pay for such things as rent or school fees) for the least capital investment (i.e., the women's time and bodies).

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In other words, the ideal sexual relationship for the women was directly linked to the degree of power (i.e., sexual independence) they could assert over the man. In this context, the occasional and ambiguous qualities of the women's *actual* sexual lives can be viewed as a relatively "logical" result of their desire to enact and embody the exchange ideal as well as a means of associating their sexual practices with business constructions of risk. The management of risk was associated with "occasional dating" and periodic meetings with boyfriends and became a direct result of investing as little capital as possible in order to maximize an expected profit margin. In the process, they were distancing themselves from the high risk status associated with husbandless women.

The temporal aspect of their investments (i.e., "occasional dating") was often expressed as a struggle with the man in which the very definition and terms of the relationship itself were under constant negotiation:

> Of course, many women have boyfriends who help them out here and there. But men don't just offer to help women; they are always complaining that girlfriends are too expensive and that women demand too much from them. But of course we do, we are investing ourselves in this relationship and we expect something in return. It's really the boyfriend's obligation to help out his woman but when he does not do this – which is typical of men in general – it's up to the woman to demand something for her investment. All men want a free ride it seems to me, they want to go about like it's a big party and everybody's having a good time, and they don't want to talk about the realities of life for the woman. But it ends up being a big give and take process. You don't want to spend so much time with men when they are like this, but you have to spend a bit of time if you want to profit from your investment. Or else what's the point? [twenty-eight year old Hutu widow from the *Kwanza* network]

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> Men and women want different things from their relationships with one another. The man expects the woman to be his slave; working for him day and night with nothing in return. The woman obviously can't do this because she's getting nothing for her investment. She can't just give over her *shamba* for nothing. She has to bargain with her boyfriend by allowing him to enter the *shamba* only once every so often. [thirty-seven year old Jita woman; divorced; from the *Samaki* network]

In short, the less of herself and her time that a woman invested, the closer she approached the idealized, low risk sexual relationship from the ever-watchful and judgmental perspective of the women in her social network. The more infrequent her meetings or suspected meetings with her boyfriend, the more acceptable her public persona became because she was (seemingly) surviving with as little investment as possible. In other words, she was proving her worth as an independent businesswoman, effectively embodying the core ideals and power associated with the emergent identities of husbandless women, and actively demonstrating the low risk sexual status required of her if she was to survive (in both an economic and social sense). In the end, it was not the man to whom she had anything to prove, but the other women of her social network, whose collective ideals and shared commitments (which were themselves a part of the situated position/disposition of husbandless women) shaped the terms and conditions of risk as it pertained to each woman's sexual activities and overall behavior.

In this context, the ambiguity and secrecy of the women's sexual lives also became significant because it allowed them the space to define and present their relationships in their most legitimate and acceptable sense to the other women of their social network. To this end, each woman emphasized the occasionality of her relationship with her boyfriend, which itself reflected a high degree of power and initiative over him. These features were inevitably the means by which the women alluded to and defined their sexual lives when compelled to do so, either by a rising tide of gossip and speculation surrounding their activities or sometimes, though rarely, in casual conversation (particularly if an individual had recently extracted some form of

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financial assistance from her boyfriend). In this way, the women could represent themselves as the exploiters and manipulators of men as they outmaneuvered them on the basis of the relationship's exchange value. Personal control over investments of time and self also minimized the risk of AIDS in this sense. Men in general and boyfriends in particular were easily duped on the basis of the very qualities central to the women's emergent low risk identities. Subsequently, the individual identity and distinguishing characteristics of the boyfriend receded into the background in favor of the exchange value (and low risk status) of the relationship itself (thus, it might be more to the point to suggest that ambiguity was more closely associated with the boyfriend rather than the relationship). Boyfriends were often referred to as "just another man" and as a faceless representative of a homogenized male. Simply put, they were one-half of a business transaction. The most common and articulated characteristics of boyfriends centered on highly negative (and high risk) qualities such as laziness, drunkenness, greed, and an almost complete lack of business sense. As individuals, men were becoming much less important to the women since they were required to fit the women's pre-ordained role for them. They need only meet their somewhat limited though absolutely necessary economic obligations and accept the risk reproduced by meeting those obligations.

Monogamy and the new boyfriend

One of the most important aspects of the women's sexual lives involved the selection and retention of boyfriends whose interests did not directly conflict with their exchange ideals or undermine their social space on Bugando Hill. It would be an enormous mistake to assume that their desire to extract an economic profit from men necessarily led them to seek multiple boyfriends in order to "maximize their investments". This practice did not occur because economic profit was mitigated by the degree of risk engendered by strategies to achieve a profit. Mitigating sexual risk in particular permeated the ideals and prestige system associated with their emergent identities in both an explicit and implicit manner. Thus, avoiding multiple sexual partners was a crucial though slightly different aspect of "occasional dating" and another risk

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reduction strategy that resulted from a concern with one's social integrity, particularly in light of the widespread belief that husbandless women were predisposed to prostitution and sexual promiscuity. The women's social position was clearly precarious as a result of their "inherent" sexual risk. Thus, to pursue an economic profit in an unmitigated fashion would have only been self-destructive. In this broader context defined by the need to survive and the need to minimize risk by embracing the group identity, it made sense that the exchange ideal of the women's sexual lives should be tempered by an equally strong idealization of monogamy. When combined with the emotional detachment and measured indifference of business risks and transactions, however, the result was a peculiar type of monogamy; which is evident in the following discussion between myself and two women from the *Samaki* network:

1st woman: A woman only needs one boyfriend really. And I don't mean a husband but just a boyfriend. It's not women who go looking for many men to sleep around with...other than these prostitutes. It's men who love to run around chasing young schoolgirls and so on. Women are either looking for a husband or a steady boyfriend.

Chris: Are you looking for a husband?

1st woman: (laughing) Oh no, no. No.

2nd woman: We're finished with men now.

Chris: Are you looking for a boyfriend?

1st woman: Well, she has one, don't you (referring to the 2nd woman)?

2nd woman: Yes, you could call him a steady boyfriend since I've been with him for almost two years. I'm not ashamed to admit that.

Chris: Do you want to marry him?

2nd woman: No way. No. I see him once a month or so. Sometimes it's many months before I see him. He travels a lot. That's how I like it because I don't see him very much and he helps me out with rent and school fees.

Chris: Do you love him.

2nd woman: (laughing) That's a silly question but the answer is no. I don't even trust him when it comes to other women. He has his life and I have mine. All I want from him is for him to realize that he has obligations to me as his girlfriend.

1st woman: That's the perfect boyfriend because they have a special understanding. He has his life and she has hers. That's perfect you see. I would have such a boyfriend if it were possible. But men are hard to find who know their obligations to their girlfriends. I don't even want to see him very much. We're all too busy with our businesses and raising our children to deal with a man every single day. I never see her boyfriend (referring to 1st woman).

2nd woman: You probably never will either (laughing).

The women had a relatively clear idea of their desired type of relationship as well as a sense of the difference between themselves and "high risk" women such as prostitutes and other "types" of husbandless women. As an act of business, extracting an economic profit from a boyfriend was a socially legitimate and economically necessary risk-reduction strategy. To do so with many men, however, was considered an act of immorality and shame. In this sense, the women were actively constructing risk in terms of a new type of sexual identity and sexual decision making process. These practices are referred to here as an exchange monogamy.

Over time, it became apparent that many of the divorced and separated women "dated" their ex or estranged husbands within the context of an exchange monogamy. In these cases, the man as former husband was classified and regularly referred to as a "boyfriend"; a term which signified his new role in the eyes of his former wife and her expectations of him. There were various reasons why it was easier for a woman to enter into a "special understanding" of the mutual exchange value of a sexual relationship with her former husband. In general, there was less hassle involved for the woman and a degree of familiarity and predictability associated with her former husband that may have mitigated any mutual sense of risk for AIDS. In several cases,

women alluded to the idea that their former husbands wanted them back. For their part, however, the women were content to keep the relationship on an exchange basis where occasionality and ambiguity afforded them a sense of power and control. In fact, women who often joked about this aspect of the relationship interpreted the continued emotional attachment of the man as a sign of weakness on his part. Transitioning a former husband into the role of boyfriend also played heavily on the obligations he had to his former wife and their children (when they had them). It was generally accepted that she had the right to ask him for economic assistance and could maintain a considerable amount of pressure on him when the situation warranted. While no woman had any intention of returning to her former husband as a wife, she also made sure that he remembered his obligations. Defining and acting toward their former husbands as boyfriends was a way of satisfying these needs. Additionally, it was an easier and more subtle process for a woman to transition her relationship with her former husband onto a field of exchange than to pursue an entirely new boyfriend since it did not expose her to the same degree of criticism and scrutiny concerning her risk for AIDS from the other women in her social network. Even in the eyes of their neighbors on Bugando Hill, a woman who was occasionally seen with her ex or estranged husband was more apt to escape criticism because she was believed to be "working things out" or "getting together for the sake of the children". But those women who dated their former husbands showed no real sign or inclination of wanting to return to their husbands on a permanent basis or escalate the relationship in any way. Instead, they were actively shifting the conditions of the relationship in order to keep the former husband — now boyfriend — at an appropriate "distance", as evident in the following discussion with a woman from the *Mwalimu* network who "dated" her estranged husband:

Woman: I can only stand him for a little bit at a time. But it is true we have an understanding.

Chris: What do you mean by an understanding?

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Woman: Well, let me tell you this man begs me to come back to him all the time but I refuse. But I am not stupid enough to push him completely out of my life because I have my children to think about and my own well being too. So I keep him at a distance and date him as a boyfriend from time to time while I decide whether or not to return to him. But I tell him he has to change his ways, especially his womanizing. The important matter is that he continues to fulfill his duties to me as his former wife and to his children.

Chris: So when you say that you keep him at a distance...

Woman: I keep him at a distance to where he continues to provide for us but where I don't spend so much time with him that I become sick and disgusted with him. And let me tell you it doesn't take more than a day or two when I begin to get physically sick of that man.

Chris: Do you think he will ever change his ways? I mean will he stop seeing other women?

Woman: Maybe. Maybe not. He's like all men. They are very predictable. You have to know how to deal with them.

Chris: Do you think about dating other men?

Woman: Oh, no, no. No way. What are you talking about? I'm still married to this one. I keep my marriage vows. Not like him which is the whole problem. And there's no need to date other men. My situation is stable at the moment.

As former husbands were increasingly defined and acted toward as boyfriends on the basis of an exchange monogamy, the women simultaneously legitimated their own identities as independent, self-assertive professionals who, based on these very credentials, represented a new type of husbandless woman entailing a low risk for AIDS. By investing as little time and effort as possible with their boyfriends, they were able to carve out and maintain a social position on Bugando Hill. Referring to their former husbands as "boyfriends" to one another was an

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important practice in this respect because it signified the desired distance (not only emotionally but even spatially and temporally as well) that formed the low risk basis of an exchange monogamy. In fact, several women who "dated" their ex/estranged husbands often complained that their (former) husbands would not always use the "proper" terminology of "girlfriend" and/or "boyfriend".

It was also apparent that not every woman dated her ex/estranged husband, either because he did not live in Mwanza, the woman feared for her safety whenever he was around, or simply because one or both did not wish to pursue the relationship in any form (of course, in many instances he was no longer living). Women who were not dating their ex/estranged husbands but who had boyfriends were often much more reluctant to discuss the particulars of their relationship. Because I believed the secrecy and ambiguity of the women's sexual lives were an important and functional aspect of their social position on Bugando Hill, it was difficult (and I believe unethical and somewhat unnecessary) to extract specifics about these men. From the woman's perspective, her boyfriend was still "just another man". He was also an individual willing to accept the ambiguity, occasionality, and relative detachment associated with the exchange basis of their relationship, as well as his economic "obligations" to a girlfriend. Whether or not the man viewed the relationship in the same fashion as the woman, however, is highly questionable. Since the women's boyfriends were never a visible presence on Bugando Hill or in the neighborhood space, an atmosphere of gossip and speculation among the women regarding one another's sexual lives remained pervasive, thus maintaining the mystery surrounding the specifics of their boyfriends. One recurring characteristic often alluded to by the women with respect to those boyfriends who were clearly not ex/estranged husbands involved the idea that they were men who were in some immediate position of power over the women. For example, there was constant speculation that a woman's boyfriend was her landlord, her boss, or the patron with respect to her small business (i.e., the farmer, fisherman, or middleman who gave her a discount on her produce or fish and to whom she paid a start-up fee). While the women

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often alluded to this idea in a joking manner when discussing one another's sexual lives, their jesting always seemed to contain a kernel of truth since having a boyfriend who could give them a discount on rent or who could cut their small business expenses in half was clearly a sound exchange practice. Such men were also in a much better position to understand the specifics of the women's situation because they had first hand knowledge of the particular costs involved. It must also be understood that the women had very little interaction with men other than those who were in "gatekeeper" positions with respect to a major economic expense such as rent (i.e., a landlord), income (i.e., a boss or co-worker), and/or small business expenses (i.e., a small business patron). The women were simply too busy getting by from day to day to have extensive social lives and opportunities to meet potential boyfriends. For the vast majority, social lives were necessarily limited to the other women of their immediate social network. Other than ex/estranged husbands, men with the greatest potential to be "boyfriends" were those in gatekeeper positions. They interacted with the women more than most, could clearly see the immediate needs and wants of the women, and were in the best position to comprehend the general idea of an exchange monogamy.

It may also be true that the women were having sexual relations with the husbands and boyfriends of other women in the immediate neighborhood. It must be kept in mind, however, that such a relationship jeopardized the individual's social legitimacy within the space of the neighborhood and compromised husbandless women as a group to a much greater degree. In fact, there was very little joking or gossip regarding one of the women having a sexual relationship with the husband/boyfriend of another woman from the neighborhood. Women sharply rebuked those who made a passing remark in this regard with such comments as "You should not even joke about such things." Responses like this were qualitatively different than those referencing a comment that alluded to men from outside of the neighborhood. These interactions were conducted in a teasing and light-hearted manner and with much greater frequency throughout the day. Of course, none of this necessarily means that women did not have sexual relations with the

husbands/boyfriends of women from the immediate neighborhood. If such relationships did take place, however, they were suppressed and hidden to such an extreme degree that very few women were compelled to even mention them. It was clear that such a relationship represented one of the biggest threats to the women's sense of self and place on Bugando Hill.

One thing that the women clearly *did not* expect from their boyfriends was sexual fidelity. In fact, the women strongly believed that all men cheated on their wives or girlfriends and that there was really no such thing as a boyfriend who could be trusted. Faithfulness was not a prerequisite of the ideal relationship because it was in "the nature of men" to cheat on women. To believe otherwise was often considered the highest level of naivete and ignorance. Even in those instances when a woman's boyfriend was her estranged husband, the belief was that he had other girlfriends; most of whom were described as "much younger" or "schoolgirls" (there was a general belief that younger women were much more likely to be free of AIDS, which resulted in a particular association between "schoolgirls" and an absence of HIV infection).

. Sexual infidelity was often the most defining and recurrent characteristics associated with men and boyfriends. Women seemed to prefer remaining ignorant of their boyfriends lives beyond their own brief encounters and relatively limited exchange obligations. While this allowed the woman to retain a certain degree of power and maneuverability, it also allowed the man to do as he pleased. As a result, the women's exchange monogamy was a definitively female monogamy. In no way was this aspect of their behavior expected of their boyfriends. When placed squarely on the field of exchange, however, the women considered themselves to be taking advantage of the sexually promiscuous nature of men in a relatively legitimate manner.

The idea that the women's sexual relationships had very little to do with their boyfriends degree of faithfulness (or suspicions regarding their faithfulness) was supported on those occasions when a woman broke up with her boyfriend. There were at least three instances during the year when women from one of the four social networks broke-up with her boyfriend. In all three cases, the woman believed that her boyfriend (two of whom were estranged husbands) had

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in fact been seeing other women while they were "dating." Yet they did not view his behavior as the cause of the relationship's downfall. One woman summed it up in the following manner:

> I didn't leave him for good because he was seeing other women. If that were the case, than I never would have dated him in the first place – or any man for that matter. I left him because he refused to meet his obligations and help pay for my children's school expenses. I've been making time out of my busy life to see him almost twice a month for the last three or four months and I've clearly received nothing in return. It's like trying to get milk from a dead cow. What's the point? [twenty-four year old Sukuma woman; separated; from the *Mwalimu* network]

In the end, the women's sexual relationships were increasingly measured on the basis of their exchange value rather than the man's faithfulness. As was the case with the woman quoted above, the other two women severed their associations with their boyfriends only when the exchange ideal was violated in some way. In one case, the relationship ended after a prolonged negotiation over the woman's rental costs in which the man (who was her estranged husband) refused to pay for more than half of her annual rent. The woman was quite angry and distraught, during which time she repeatedly claimed she was "finished with that one forever", refusing to even mention his name for several months. In the second instance, the woman ended the relationship because she felt that her boyfriend was demanding too much of her time. She continually framed his needs in terms of the exchange value of her time, explaining that her time "was worth much more than he can afford because he's only a small-time fisherman." She had no desire to comply with her boyfriend's wishes and spend more time with him despite the fact that it could have increased the relationship's profitability. Instead, she opted to lessen the time spent with him and take her chances (which eventually led to the break-up). Her reasons for choosing this course of action had to do with the demands placed on her time by raising her children and running her small business. One could take this idea a step further by suggesting that her boyfriend's desire to spend more time with her would not only have undercut the time

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required to perform domestic and network-based obligations, but would have threatened her social legitimacy in the eyes of the other women of her social network and the surrounding neighborhood. Thus, the exchange value of the women's sexual relationships continually tempered by the need for respect and social legitimacy on Bugando Hill. In the end, the strength and viability of the women's sexual relationships resulted from an ongoing balance between various forms of capital that often directly contradicted one another.

Curiously, the women dismissed their own risk of contracting AIDS as a result of a boyfriend's sexual infidelity and/or promiscuity. When pressed, they returned to the idea of "occasional dating" and the low risk qualities that it entailed. Since it was widely believed that all men cheat, the general line of thought was that the only means of controlling their own risk of contracting AIDS was to work toward complete abstinence. Occasional dating, particularly as it was expressed in the women's exchange monogamy, represented the path towards this objective. Less sex equaled less risk, which was the only means by which the women could *actively* minimize risk for AIDS. At the same time, however, it must be remembered that each woman was very concerned with presenting herself as a low risk candidate to the other women of her social network and her immediate neighbors. Thus, as long as this goal was actively pursued, she was minimizing the risk that *others* posed to *her*. Together, the women of each network were representing themselves as low risk candidates by closely embracing the shared ideals of their emergent identities; a practice which translated into a type of group immunity from other "high risk" candidates. Given their constrained economic and social positions, the only possible way to protect themselves from external sources of risk was to turn inward. As a result, risk from AIDS was never a factor in the women's decision-making processes regarding boyfriends. To admit that they were at risk for AIDS represented a direct threat to their social legitimacy by reinforcing the seemingly unrestrained sexuality of husbandless women that had a strong grip on the public imagination. If an individual woman were to admit possible exposure to the AIDS virus, she would effectively undermine her share of group immunity that came with a strong adherence to a

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shared identity.[4] By turning inward, constructing themselves as low risk candidates became one and the same with constructing a shared immunity from others.

Sex, survival, and social legitimacy from within the risk conjuncture

In many ways, the features of an exchange monogamy shift the focus on sexual behavior, sexual decision making, and risk for AIDS from the relationships between men and women to the relationships among the women themselves since they can be considered a natural social group (or informal risk regime). For them, risk for AIDS and sexual decision making did not occur as a result of their interactions with their sexual partners as much as their interactions with one another and their neighbors. The man as sexual partner was almost incidental to this process as he became someone willing to meet the limited expectations associated with the socially constructed category of "boyfriend;" a social role over which he had very little direct control (though individuals may certainly have taken advantage of the opportunities afforded by such a role). The fact that many of the women's boyfriends were ex/estranged husbands and individuals who were in some immediate "gatekeeper" position resulted from the women's struggles to balance economic necessity and sexual risk as they carved out a legitimate social space on Bugando Hill with what little resources they were granted.

The ambiguous and hazy realm of "occasional" dating" and the necessary yet mediated material/economic expectations placed upon "boyfriends" were the result of a dialogue between risk for AIDS and the objective, business-like pragmatism associated with the women's emergent identities. As the women actively addressed their own high risk status by achieving a legitimate social (and sexual) space on Bugando Hill, they continually ascribed a type of low risk designation to both an exchange monogamy *and* their emergent identities. By circling the wagons and turning inward — a practice akin to a type of shared self-reflexivity — the women constructed a powerful group immunity from external sources of risk for AIDS. From their situated position on Bugando Hill they had worked hard and continued to work hard in order to

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become husbandless women who were also low risk sexual candidates for AIDS — "new women" in effect.

When the women perceived the actions of any one individual — such as Mwita — as threatening their efforts to construct a "new woman" status and a valid social space on Bugando Hill, it was constructed as a lack of commitment to network activities and/or ideals. In order to counteract this threat, the women themselves and a potential threat to their social space on Bugando Hill was exposed (or constructed as a result of a lack of commitment to network activities and/or ideals), the women applied various strategies (gossip, joking, and speculation that passed quickly through the network and from there to the surrounding neighborhood) that drew upon risk for AIDS and the unrestrained sexuality of the husbandless women in order to distance themselves from that individual and the threat she represented. While these disciplining or policing tactics grew in degree and intensity only at certain times and with respect to specific individuals, they continually hovered in the background as an ever-present means of maintaining group identity. They also insured the central role that sexual risk and AIDS played with respect to that identity. Thus, the women themselves continually acknowledged the potential risk for AIDS involved in their husbandless status which, in turn, legitimated the need to ascribe a low risk designation to their own sexual lives and emergent identities. In effect, there were husbandless women who were close to the prostitute end of the continuum and there were husbandless women — like themselves — who represented new women of Mwanza.

While sexual relationships are also about the fulfillment of personal and emotional needs and thus deeply meaningful in a very individualistic sense, the women effectively placed themselves in a position where such qualities were dismissed as antithetical to their emergent identities and thus eliminated from the *public* realm. By saying this, it is not the intention here to suggest that the women did not pursue sexual relationships in order to fulfill such personal needs. In other words, they did not embody the group identity at all costs and in terms of rational decision making processes. Rather, the reproduction and significance of an exchange monogamy

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had the effect of sharply dividing their public and private sexual selves. The possibility of public condemnation stemming from an individual's sexuality was so strong that the emotional aspects associated with sexual relationships were pushed deep into the private sphere. Prostitution, by contrast, was defined in ways that blurred the lines between the public and private realms.

Important external sites of risk fed into this continuum where prostitutes and "prostitute-like" husbandless women occupied one end and new (husbandless) women occupied the other. Since developmentalist ideals and constructions of business risk rooted in unemotional and "objective" cost/benefit assessments were a central means of legitimating and practicing an exchange monogamy, the women actively and successfully borrowed from an external/expert risk regime that linked up in a positive fashion with their "new women" status. To designate an exchange monogamy as low risk was a very "logical" result of maneuvering from within an overall risk conjuncture. Likewise, the women reproduced a necessary sexual other by borrowing from traditional notions of the risk husbandless women, which were themselves reinforced by detached, public health AIDS-prevention campaigns. In this way, as each individual was subjected to the norms and values of the group as a whole and the networks became an internal (and informal) risk regime in the women's lives and the most proximate site for the disciplining of sex and risk for AIDS.

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[1] Mwita is not represented in any of the tables or discussions as a member of the *Samaki* network because I considered her to be only peripherally involved in the social network.

[2] He uses the term "Mjane," which translates to "widow" in English. In this particular instance, he does not use the term as a "gloss" for husbandless or unmarried women in general (i.e., it was clear from the context of the sentence that he was specifically referring to the state of widowhood and not to separated and divorced women also). However, "mjane" can in fact refer to a person other than a widow. Specifically, it can be used to refer to someone who is simply not married or who is living in a single state (and can be translated to mean "spinster" in some cases). But this reference was not common among people in Mwanza (other terms were used to refer to divorced and separated women when it was necessary to distinguish individuals on these grounds). Finally, it should be noted that this man, like most people, attributed the same negative and stigmatizing qualities to widows as he did to women who were separated, divorced, or never married and considered past their prime.

[3] For example, I was never aware myself or made aware of a woman becoming pregnant.

[4] Pregnancy would almost certainly have had the same effect, which may have explained why none of the women were ever noticeably pregnant – in this sense, then, the women's idealization of motherhood *preceded* network activity.

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CONCLUSION

And the road which ran across the land and was long and broad had no beginning and no end. At least, few people knew of its origin. Only if you followed it it would take you to the big city and leave you there while it went beyond to the unknown... [Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Weep Not, Child]

Risk and the risk conjuncture

It is not a new idea to claim that risk is a key component of debates surrounding the African AIDS epidemic in East Africa; a majority of the general public as well as those deemed experts talk about risk in one form or another. The problem is that few are willing to do so from outside of their situated position on the subject, which results in a relatively narrow and taken-for-granted perspective on the full range and scope of the discussions as well as those who participate in them. While there is always a continuum between personal initiative and group pressure, individuals are often compelled to occupy the specific space of a particular group (or institution) and, in doing so, enact a shared disposition on risk for AIDS. The point where any one person falls on this continuum has to do with the specifics of group dynamics and the types of forces that compel individual membership. Increasing interest and involvement in any one group results in a greater likelihood that an individual's construction of risk for AIDS will conform to group norms, ideals, and values. When researchers ignore risk in terms of group formation and maintenance, they also ignore the ways that various group positions/dispositions on risk and AIDS conjoin (or not). If one accepts the idea that risk can only be constructed as part of an overall group disposition associated with a specific social position, than how can any one group expect others to "see" risk from their position? It becomes impossible and somewhat irrational to expect dramatic shifts in designated risk behaviors when the very expectation is shaped by one's own (group) position in a relational conjuncture. It is imperative to step back and define a risk conjuncture as well as how it is experienced from a particular group's position before any meaningful and truly relevant action can be taken. This is true with respect to the ways that groups are defined and actually formed among both the experts and the general public.

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Clearly, public health is an exceptionally constrained group position among the "experts" because it refuses to acknowledge the full extent of a risk conjuncture. By simply defining risk from its ingrained position and asking why the actions and behaviors of others do not correspond with that definition, it continually falls back on rational actor models that construct culture as a barrier to be overcome. It is a circular and somewhat self-defeating line of thought because it continually measures the appropriateness of public risk constructions from its own lofty position/disposition above the fray. From this vantage point, the public health "other" is destined to come up short every time. There is little or no acknowledgment of alternative external/expert risk regimes that may have a significant impact upon individual and collective experiences of risk. This is certainly true of regimes that are not directly concerned with AIDS and sexual decision making, which are treated as if they do not operate in the same sphere of influence as public health. Yet individuals do not compartmentalize their lives this neatly and may implicate the risk constructions of various regimes in order to construct a group identity that makes "sense" in the local environment. For the women of this study, risk constructions rooted in "tradition" and "developmentalism" became particularly powerful in this sense and from their position/disposition within a risk conjuncture. While their influence can be attributed to the ways that they were so directly and routinely implicated in the women's lives, it also resulted from the fact that public health refused to acknowledge them (tradition is often acknowledged in a generic sense rather than in terms of group-specific manifestations of risk and stigma). The practices of ignoring other risk regimes is mirrored by AIDS researchers generally when they acknowledge public health as the only expert/external risk regime with a significant influence in East Africa. Yet there are any number of formal and informal relationships that can legitimate various constructions of risk for AIDS. Their simultaneous existence may result in a particular risk conjuncture that explains why AIDS continues to have such a devastating impact in places like Mwanza.

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The idea of a risk conjuncture has significant implications for medical anthropologists as well. Risk is an undervalued concept in medical anthropology despite being at the heart of almost every conception of the body in pain and health. It can be argued that all medical anthropologists are discussing risk and the construction of risk in some way. It has the potential to be a powerful and catalyzing concept within the discipline (or sub-discipline), particularly when compared to other things that tend to fill this role, such as a specific geographical region or what is more likely, a particular disease defined strictly along biomedical lines. Unfortunately, medical anthropologists have not embraced risk in the same capacity, which results in a type of constrained position/disposition among ourselves when we approach the African AIDS epidemic. One ironic feature of an "anthropological position" involves the construction of a relatively elaborate and macro-level critique of public health that increasingly stands alone as time passes. To repeat what was said earlier in this work, a true anthropology of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa is lacking. By critiquing public health from the sidelines, the discipline has reduced itself to being little more than an annoying appendage of a more dominant paradigm. Additionally, the critique often implies that public health efforts have little or no impact on the daily experience of individuals when in fact they can have quite a significant impact, albeit in unintended ways. When anthropology does focus on AIDS, risk, and sex in Africa, it often ends up defining these issues in terms that are much too large and detached from what is actually occurring on the ground. It becomes either a distinctly "African" position/disposition or one defined along similarly macro-level lines such as gender, income level, or ethnicity. When anthropologists speak of "lived risk," the "risk environment," or the "experiential component of risk" in these terms, the "lived" quality of risk is generalized to a degree that is only slightly less abstract than the risk constructions associated with public health. In the end and to return to Merrill Singer's terminology, the quest for generalization and the wider application of an anthropological perspective has resulted in the loss of specific social networks, neighborhoods, and naturally

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occurring social groups. Generalization remains an objective but not when achieved in this fashion.

Ultimately, both the public and the experts are limited by the inherent constraints of their respective positions/dispositions. The ways in which risk is experienced and *practiced* by a particular group in the midst of multiple and often conflicting risk constructions are never fully explored. In one way, the idea of a risk conjuncture forces the researcher to step back to the ultimate level of generalization since the position/disposition of any one group must be situated in an overall relational framework. At the same time, however, it requires a very detailed and relativist approach in order to define the full extent of processes of group formation and maintenance within a particular neighborhood setting. The role of risk to such processes cannot be assumed from a few broad socio-economic characteristics such as gender and ethnicity. In the end, the idea of a risk conjuncture forces one to maintain a balance between generalization and relativism. This is an old theme in anthropology but one that remains useful in order to develop a true anthropology of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

Generalization vs. relativism

As described in this study, the risk conjuncture results from very intimate localized relationships within and between specific social networks and neighborhood settings. In this sense, risk for AIDS is reproduced in ways that are ultimately relative to the four social networks of husbandless women on Bugando Hill. This research has gone into great detail regarding the daily lives and experiences of these women and the micro-politics and micro-economics entailed in their quest for both survival and social legitimacy. The risk conjuncture would either make very little sense or else be much too vague without this level of detail regarding group formation and maintenance. While such broad characteristics as gender, ethnicity, and income level highlight the *potential* for social networks to form in ways that contribute to an emergent identity, they do not provide the necessary level of detail in order to examine actual relationships between people and how they can contribute to a shared sense of self.

Applying the risk conjuncture framework to other groups

The relativist focus of this study begets questions as to the possibility for generalization. These questions are critical if one accepts (as I do) that wider applications of ethnographic findings are absolutely necessary given the nature and scope of the AIDS epidemic in Africa. In fact, there are two broad areas in which generalizations can be drawn from this study. The first involves the wider application of the theoretical framework as a means of assessing risk from the position/disposition of groups other than husbandless women. A risk conjuncture may not be experienced in the same manner for every group, but sexual exchange practices and risk constructions for AIDS may in fact result from similar social and cultural processes. The most notable of these processes have been discussed in detail with respect to husbandless women and include: the material/economic basis of specific social networks, the idea that such networks can become sites for the reproduction of a group identity within the context of specific neighborhoods or very localized communities, the potential significance of risk and/or a sense of group immunity from specific risks as part of a shared identity, and the ways that external/expert risk regimes conjoin (or not) with the inner workings and localized politics of network-neighborhood relations. The situation of at least two other groups in Mwanza can be highlighted in order to demonstrate the basic idea that risk is constructed from a conjuncture between external/expert risk regimes "from above" and the politics of group identity embedded in network-neighborhood relations "from below."

The first group involves the growing population of urban street boys. As in cities across East Africa, the number of boys under eighteen years of age who live on the street has increased dramatically in Mwanza in recent years. Like husbandless women, one can discern distinct networks among Mwanza's street boys by tracing the flow of material goods and services resulting from sheer necessity and daily survival needs. Their networks can also be viewed as transmission sites for group norms and a shared set of ideals involving notions of masculinity and sexual exchange practices. More specifically, a form of sexual contact between the boys known

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as *kunyenga* has become a central means of forming and maintaining an emergent identity (Lockhart, in press). *Kunyenga* is a means of initiating recent arrivals into the street scene and as a way of continually maintaining a strict hierarchy between older and younger boys. It is not considered "real sex" (i.e., sex with a female), but more often described as "getting the shit kicked out of you" or "practice sex." As a result, it is not considered in terms of risk for AIDS (an idea legitimated by public health campaigns in Mwanza that focus exclusively on heterosexual contact). In the same manner as husbandless women, life on the streets for these boys is a complex, dynamic process centered around the establishment of strong social networks and the disciplining of a shared set of group norms where sexual exchange and risk for AIDS are directly implicated. The boys do not simply struggle for survival in a mutually dependent manner but do so in ways that address their own stigmatized position (which also entails being viewed by others as a "high risk" for AIDS) in order to carve out at least a minimally legitimate social space in the surrounding neighborhood (in this case among the shopowners of Mwanza's downtown area where the boys spend the majority of their time). While the situation of street boys is quite different than that of the women described in this study, the theoretical framework involving a risk conjuncture remains strikingly relevant as a means of approaching and understanding the conditions within which risk for AIDS is enacted. Like an exchange monogamy among husbandless women, *kunyenga* can be viewed as the result of a risk conjuncture, though in this case as experienced from the particular position/disposition of the urban street boy.

The small but growing community of mostly white, expatriate miners in Mwanza represent a second example where the basic framework of a risk conjuncture seems particularly appropriate. It was no secret that quite a number of men from the mining community paid local (Tanzanian) women very well to be their "girlfriends," a term that was often qualified with a wink and a smile. Such relationships were common knowledge throughout Mwanza. Many residents on Bugando Hill considered women who engaged in these relationships to be the most hardened prostitutes in the city (whether or not they were is not as relevant as the fact that they

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were widely acknowledged as such). Given the tremendous amount of negative and stigmatizing gossip surrounding these women and their relatively public association with AIDS, I was curious as to how the men viewed these relationships in terms of their own risk for AIDS. Few if any individuals felt themselves to be at risk. Instead, the men expressed a common sense of immunity defined in terms of a self-image as "tough guys" who worked in the mining industry and had faced a tremendous amount of adversity in a wide variety of situations and international contexts. Since most of the miners were South African nationals, many specifically emphasized a rugged sense of self in terms of having "survived" the fall of aphartied and the obstacles overcome in order to begin anew in Tanzania, where the diamond and mineral deposits had subsequently become much more profitable. As one individual put it, "I've survived the best that Africa has to offer, so I figure I can survive AIDS." It was evident that the social networks of largely white South African miners were closely knit, underpinned by economic and material affluence rather than absence, yet equally significant with respect to the formation and maintenance of a group identity in which risk for AIDS was directly implicated. Were sexual exchange practices and risk for AIDS disciplined within these social networks in a similar manner and to the same degree as they were among husbandless women and street boys? Once again, the particular situation of the white, expatriate mining community is extremely complex, but their actions and beliefs point toward the relevance of exploring risk for AIDS in terms of a conjuncture as experienced from their own situated and seemingly group-reflexive position/disposition.

Generalizations regarding the situation of husbandless women

The second broad area where generalizations can be drawn from this study involves the circumstances surrounding the women themselves and how similar these may be to husbandless women throughout East Africa. It was clear that women throughout Northwestern Tanzania were migrating to Mwanza under similar circumstances as the women in this study. The women's ward of Bugando Hospital was literally full of divorced and widowed women who had suffered some form of physical and emotional abuse after having resisted their ex-husband's and/or in-

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laws' efforts to displace them from their rural *shambas*. The same general process of rural displacement and forced migration has been highlighted by researchers working in other areas of East Africa (see especially Ntozi 1997). The patrilineal and patrilocal character of most kinship systems in the region's rural areas does not favor widowed, divorced, or separated women, who have been further stigmatized and peripheralized by their widespread association with AIDS. Upon arrival in urban areas, it is probably true that most survive by engaging in small business activities and under the general buzz and promise generated by developmentalism and progressivism. Together, these processes point to a wider set of circumstances to be explored when it comes to husbandless women. These include such things as the relationships between kinship systems, land fragmentation and/or degradation, urbanization, and social and economic marginalization. Have these processes combined to create similar conditions in cities across East Africa conducive to the formation and maintenance of social networks of husbandless women? If so, and given widespread notions of their "risky" status legitimated by a self-perpetuating cycle of "tradition" and generalized, detached public health campaigns in urban areas, do husbandless women confront and negotiate sex and risk in ways similar to those described for the women in this study? When taking into account the factors and structuring influences that husbandless women throughout the region must face and negotiate, it seems very likely that their position/disposition within a risk conjuncture would be strikingly similar. It is not improbable to suggest that processes of group formation and maintenance and the centrality of sex and risk to an emergent identity are being conditioned in the same manner for husbandless women throughout urban East Africa. If this were the case than the same processes could lead to a more general and widespread risk construction for AIDS that reaches well beyond the particular setting of this study. With this in mind, the program outlined below, which is specifically tailored to the situation and status of the women in this study, becomes much more significant.

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AIDS prevention among husbandless women: a proposed direction

The value of ethnographic research in the area of sexual exchange and risk for AIDS lies in its ability to highlight possible avenues for behavior change. While there may be an inherent value to ethnographic accounts in an area dominated by public health paradigms and associated risk constructions, they should also serve as a foundation for new types of behavioral change models and approaches. When anthropologists do not take their research to this next step, it is more likely to be co-opted by public health as another example of the irrational and somewhat exotic obstacle that culture presents to expert risk identification and management. Having said this, the final part of this work outlines a relatively novel AIDS prevention program specifically tailored for husbandless women. Before turning to the program itself, however, the key issues that it needs to address are summarized below.

1) Strengthen and support the position of husbandless women in rural areas. It is one thing to recognize that inheritance laws must be enforced in rural areas but an entirely different matter to suggest how this should be done. It is impractical to rely upon government officials to single-handedly confront the moral authority imbued by "tradition" in rural areas, particularly when it comes to inheritance laws that are firmly entrenched in notions of kinship. There must be some provision for husbandless women to receive legal and other protection.

2) Break the cycle of sexual-economic dependency among husbandless women in urban areas. It has been argued here that husbandless women *want* to be free of male-dependency and would accept and embrace a fully independent status if given the opportunity. At the moment, however, they have embraced qualities associated with such a status that do not particularly correspond with the daily realities of their economic situation. This fundamental contradiction is reproduced from within a risk conjuncture and explains how risk for AIDS is practiced as a situated form of knowledge (i.e., an exchange monogamy). The women require opportunities to address this contradiction in ways that are meaningful to them.

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- *Cultivate new forms of economic privatization and build upon the women's small business interests.* While globalization, privatization, and the penetration of a market economy are often the primary targets with respect to deteriorating health and the spread of AIDS, critiquing such macro-structural processes quickly becomes a fruitless and redundant endeavor. Economic privatization will remain one of the single most influential forces in places like Mwanza for some time to come. Thus, it seems much more productive to search for novel ways where it can benefit people by reworking and redefining from the ground up the consequences of large-scale structural forces like the IMF and the World Bank. For husbandless women, the small business is the single most viable opportunity in this regard and represents an untapped reservoir of social and economic potential. Small businesses are not only a means of survival but also a way to enact the most fundamental and significant qualities associated with their emergent identities and sense of social legitimacy. Operating a small business is a tremendous source of pride for the women and they would relish any opportunity to expand upon and develop their interests in this area. While they have made great strides, their efforts are ultimately restricted, which results in the reproduction of a particular cycle of risk constructions and sexual exchange practices with truly negative consequences. If the women can achieve a certain degree of social and economic empowerment they will be able to implement new forms of risk for AIDS rather than be forced to rationalize the contradictions generated by the collusion between their emergent identities and their material/economic situation. By developing their small business interests, then, the women are in fact attempting to address the fundamental contradictions that sustain an exchange monogamy and associated risk constructions for AIDS. Programs must take this fact into account and be willing to meet the women halfway rather than ignore everything they have already achieved.

- *Utilize the information-sharing qualities of the networks.* Social and economic empowerment must occur simultaneously with more traditional public health campaigns and associated risk constructions for AIDS. Thus, AIDS prevention programs must continue to have an information diffusion component. In this case, however, such efforts should specifically utilize the social networks of the women since these relationships are *already* risk producing and disciplining sites.

3) Directly address "traditional" notions of the high risk husbandless woman. Public health efforts involving risk for AIDS can no longer ignore other risk-producing regimes. By ignoring alternative risk constructions, they effectively allow them to become a fundamental structuring force; which was the case in this study when a specific manifestation of "tradition" legitimated the association between husbandless women and a high risk for AIDS. Public health efforts must directly address this continued association rather than ignore it. A similar campaign that addressed the stigmatizing association between AIDS and street children in Mwanza was considered an overwhelming success. The program was conducted simultaneously with the establishment of a very successful pizza restaurant operated and co-managed by the children themselves. The dual strategy of directly critiquing their negative association with AIDS and providing them with an opportunity to become more directly involved in the community dramatically improved the situation of street children in the city. Public health campaigns can and should operate under the same principles by directly addressing the negative image associated with husbandless women rather than to rely solely upon a generic and weak information diffusion campaign.

These issues begin to define an area for the social and economic empowerment of husbandless women in both rural and urban areas. A relatively simple program can be designed that specifically builds upon the women's social networks, shared sense of self, and business activities. In doing so, it breaks their sexual-economic dependency on men and addresses the

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contradictions that give rise to risk constructions that produce and are produced by an exchange monogamy.

The agricultural co-operative: addressing an exchange monogamy and risk for AIDS through social and economic empowerment

The program outlined here is a relatively different approach to AIDS because it is not based solely upon information diffusion strategies. Instead, it operates under the assumption that prevention efforts must target the wider social and economic environment and not simply specific health problems and/or diseases. Additionally, it must focus on the daily needs and experiences of specific groups as these are structured by that environment. In the case of husbandless women, it needs to address the key issues outlined in the previous section in order to have an impact upon practices that reproduce a particular construction of risk for AIDS.

Figure 8.1 (see page 318) illustrates the basic framework of the program, which involves establishing a series of small but centrally organized agricultural co-operatives among husbandless women. Each co-operative group is centered on the women's social networks and is directly informed by their unique patterns of exchange, co-operation, and interdependence. In some ways, it operates by the same principles as share group activities, though in this instance a small portion of network earnings would be channeled to a non-profit women's rights organization in Mwanza. With these funds, together with external donations and grants, the organization would serve as a central base for women and provide services in critical areas such as outreach, health counseling, and business classes.

Figure 8.1 also illustrates how each network/co-operative group in Mwanza occupies a middle position between the central organization and a network of rural *shamba's* that would supply each network with a portion of their agricultural output. Women of each co-operative group would benefit from this exchange because it would eliminate the relatively expensive "association fee" and dramatically reduce their daily business expenses. Cutting these costs would go a long way toward addressing the women's sexual and economic dependency on men

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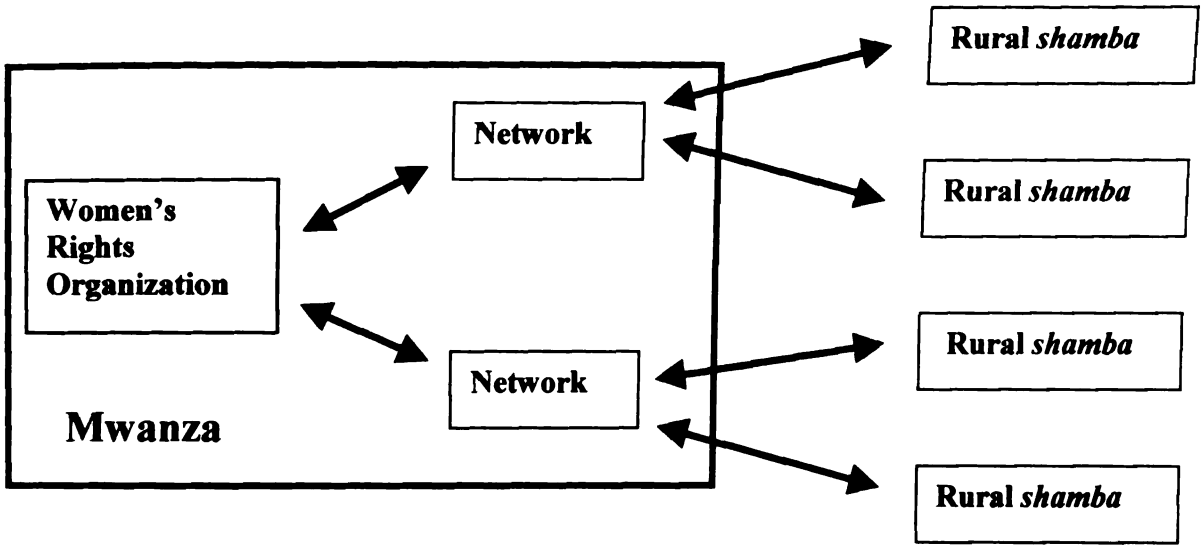


Figure 8.1: Agricultural co-operative for husbandless women

who occupy gatekeeper positions and use this role as a means of regularly exploiting the women. The owners of rural *shambas* would benefit from such an association if they were *husbandless women who required legal protection in order to retain their property.* Thus, in exchange for a portion of their agricultural output, these women would receive direct legal protection (and perhaps health benefits) from the central women's rights organization. The role of the organization could be expanded further to include such things as transportation, fuel costs, and storage needs, etc. The overall framework would effectively unite husbandless women living in Mwanza with their rural counterparts in order to address common problems in a mutually beneficial manner. The contributions of the program can be summarized as follows:

- it builds upon the women's preexisting social networks and patterns of exchange;
- it empowers the women economically by placing the entire process of production, transportation, and distribution in their hands. In doing so, it eliminates the need to pay an association fee to middle men and effectively reduces their daily business expenses;
- it empowers the women socially by targeting the positive aspects of their emergent identities, particularly those engendered by their small business activities; qualities which the surrounding neighborhood recognize as socially legitimate;
- it strengthens the rural-urban connections among husbandless women by addressing the problems involved with inheritance laws and property ownership;
- the women's position is strengthened and reinforced by their association with a centralized women's rights organization. Once united under a common framework with shared objectives, they can become a powerful economic force and influential political block.
- the features outlined above help create an environment that encourages positive changes involving the women's sexual exchange practices and associated risk constructions for AIDS.

In terms of AIDS prevention and behavior change, the most fundamental changes brought about by such a program would occur in what can be thought of as an indirect manner. The

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underlying assumption is that the women's construction of risk for AIDS will change once the conditions within which it is enacted change. It should be pointed out, however, that risk for AIDS is addressed directly (with respect to the health education focus of the entire program) and indirectly (by the creation of a social and economic space from which the women can enact that information). Public health efforts could work in conjunction with the program by being more concerned with directly eradicating the "high risk" image associated with the women's husbandless status. Such efforts would have an added impact when combined with the women's co-operative activities and their positive contributions to the community.

Limitations

While the program outlined above provides husbandless women with a much greater opportunity to become self-sufficient, it does not ensure that every individual will attain this objective. External funding sources might be particularly significant in the initial start-up phase. To rely upon such assistance, however, would undermine the entire purpose of the program itself. Subsequently, there would have to be a "weaning-off" phase in which external funding would contribute less to the program's existence and more towards expansion and development. This does not necessarily represent a problem as much as a general caveat.

Problems could also arise with respect to the agricultural bias of the program. It does not necessarily benefit women who sell fish and other products. Unfortunately, it is much more difficult to place the entire process of production, transportation, and distribution of commodities other than agricultural produce in women's hands. It is not only easier and more realistic to focus on agricultural products but it also addresses problems that confront husbandless women in both rural and urban areas in a mutually-beneficial manner. It is important to motivate and unite the women under a common cause and in terms of problems such as inheritance laws that are particularly meaningful to them.

Problems also arise around the underlying assumption that women's sexual exchange practices will change as they become financially self-sufficient. In terms of risk, it assumes that

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their risk constructions for AIDS, which are enabled as part of an exchange monogamy and reproduce a type of group immunity, will effectively change as they become less sexually and economically dependent on men. Does changing their social and economic position necessarily lead to desired changes in the ways that they enact particular risk constructions for AIDS? This is an important question since the ultimate objective is to change the women's risk constructions rather than to simply change their income level or income generating activities. Since risk is approached as a form of situated knowledge from a particular group's social and economic position (because that position entails a particular disposition on risk for AIDS within an overall risk conjuncture), it follows that strategies of social and economic empowerment that are meaningful in terms of group identity will (in this case) enable risk for AIDS from a more constructive position/disposition. Put another way, it will provide the women with some leverage to practice new forms of knowledge. This cause and effect assumption would be exposed as entirely false if risk for AIDS was not a form of situated knowledge for the women. This might be the case, for example, if an exchange monogamy were perpetuated despite changes in the women's social and economic position, an outcome that is not so far-fetched if one considers that husbandless women might be prompted into *not* remarrying as a result of benefits reaped from participation in a program based upon their husbandless status. While the program must be flexible enough to allow for such considerations (many more of which will inevitably arise as it develops), there will always be a certain degree of faith involved with changing risk by changing the conditions within which it is enacted.

Another way to approach this issue is to fault the program for its indirect approach towards AIDS prevention. It is obvious that an agricultural co-operative is not a health program at all (despite its health education component). Since it has long been recognized that social and economic factors have a tremendous influence on the spread of AIDS, however, developing social and economic programs with an eye towards their health implications is long overdue. People throughout East Africa are inundated with neo-liberal programs designed around

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externally constructed diseases or based upon information (or condom) diffusion strategies only. Meanwhile, the conditions within which those diseases spread are becoming noticeably worse for the majority of people. A vicious cycle ensues involving social and economic peripheralization, deteriorating health, and disengaged public health recommendations based upon notions of voluntary compliance. If one accepts the basic premise that changing health-related behaviors is a matter of promoting social and economic empowerment in culturally meaningful ways, then many more "indirect" programs need to be developed to work in conjunction with traditional public health efforts. Public health programs directly targeting AIDS in East Africa are not necessarily misplaced since people receive and are willing to accept the particular risk constructions of these programs. Unfortunately, they are undermined by the social and economic peripheralization of groups who are unable to fully enact specific forms of knowledge and become mired in a particular position from which they adopt an associated disposition on risk for AIDS. "Indirect" programs are absolutely crucial because they address these problems in ways that are meaningful from a particular group's position/disposition. It is not unwarranted to suggest that the most significant public health programs of the future will be initiated from outside of the health arena itself.

Final remarks

How do husbandless women in Mwanza construct risk for AIDS? As this study has shown, the answer to this question is complicated and involves the ways in which social networks evolve, group identities are formed and maintained, and risk is experienced and practiced within a wider conjuncture between external/expert risk regimes and the internal politics associated with network-neighborhood relations. It can also be argued that the process is relatively simple; there is little mystery surrounding the women's social networks and their struggle to carve out a legitimate existence for themselves in the midst of social and economic peripheralization. Once made clear how little room they have from which to maneuver, it becomes evident that they are acting in a socially "rational" manner and constructing and preventing risk for AIDS in one of the

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few ways available to them. It is also clear that it would take little to build upon their experiences in a positive manner and a way that provides them with their own defense mechanisms against AIDS. In the end, the women's efforts to recreate and redefine themselves are a definitively *good thing*. Their actions and beliefs do not represent an obstacle to be overcome but a beacon of potential by which we ourselves can and should be guided.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Entering/leaving the field and living conditions

I arrived in Mwanza as so many anthropologists have entered the "field:" with a pocketful of research permits and introductory letters but no direct experience in the immediate area and without knowing a single person. After several days exploring the city, I happened upon a Catholic priest who was in charge of a mission program in the region. He offered me a place to stay in his mission's headquarters on Capri Point, which had been built many years earlier and before the "boomtown" atmosphere that characterized that section of town had taken hold. To the priest's dismay, Capri Point had become a hub of growth, which was reflected in the construction of massive company mansions to house the influx of largely white, South African nationals who worked in the mining industry. The neighborhood had become so strongly identified with segregation and wealth in the process that the priest and his young missionary workers were compelled to put their house up for rent and relocate to another section of town. While I could have stayed as long as I wished in the empty house, I knew that the same spatial association that drove the missionaries out would undermine my own legitimacy as an anthropologist. Therefore, I remained for two weeks (rent-free in exchange for repairing the roof of the mission), during which time I acquainted myself with the city, met with local health officials, AIDS prevention workers, and hospital staff, and searched for a place to rent in another, more "appropriate" section of town.

I ended up renting a house in South Mwanza about three-quarters of a mile to a mile from Bugando Hill and the downtown area. The house was small: one bedroom, one kitchen/cooking area, and a large front room. From the beginning of the second month of my stay until my departure, I rented out the front room to members of an international relief organization that worked in one of the Rwandan refugee camps half a day's drive from Mwanza along the Tanzanian-Rwandan border. They used the room as a temporary storage facility for medical and

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other supplies flown into Mwanza's airport and bound for the camps. Individuals from the organization also frequently stayed at my place whenever they were in town.

I found South Mwanza to be an excellent location to live because it had a relatively "neutral" identity, being made up of both small rural and mud-brick huts with thatched roofing and larger "middle class" houses with in-door plumbing and electricity (powered by generators). Moreover, there was no clear delineation between the two; smaller huts and larger houses were widely interspersed, together with a handful of businesses and churches. Other than myself, there were no whites living in my immediate neighborhood, which was directly situated on the main road from Mwanza to Shinyanga and afforded easy access to *matatu's* (a type of private taxi found throughout East Africa) and larger buses.

I often stayed overnight on Bugando Hill at the house of a friend who drove a taxi (sleeping on the floor of his front room). While living continuously on Bugando Hill would have been more convenient, I found that having a house in South Mwanza provided me with some "social distance" and kept me from becoming too heavily involved in my own exchange transactions on Bugando Hill, thus preventing individuals from becoming dependent on me or forming too many expectations of me during my stay.

During the two-week search for a place to rent, I met the widowed nurse (from the *Kwanza* network) who made me aware of the unique situation of husbandless women on Bugando Hill. Since I was interested in an intensive study of specific social networks and peer influences among husbandless women, I was willing to follow the networks wherever I felt they might lead. As the study makes clear, however, the networks of husbandless women that I was introduced to were largely restricted to Bugando Hill, which had the effect of delimiting much of my own research activities to this one area. I also chose to limit much of my research activities to Bugando Hill because of the inevitable difficulties of working with social networks from different sections of town. Mwanza is not only large and spread out across a wide area, but it also has distinct neighborhoods and a complex social geography. I could never fully grasp the nuances

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and subtleties of daily life and network-neighborhood interactions on Bugando Hill, let alone other sections of town. Additionally, since gossip and everyday routines were a significant focus of my research and contribute immensely to my overall argument, moving from one section of town to another would have seriously impeded my ability to tap into these important social practices. I had a choice of either spreading myself very thinly over Mwanza's social landscape and grasping a little about various sections of town, or concentrating much more heavily on daily life and social interactions by focusing on a single section of town. I chose the latter as being much more suited to an anthropological perspective and the ideal of ethnography. The trouble, of course, stems from reading the world in a teacup. Whether or not I am guilty of doing so is for the reader to decide.

The balance that I had to strike between my own participation in networks of exchange and my wish to avoid having individuals become dependent on me was particularly important with respect to my eventual departure. If individuals had become too dependent on me and my own exchange transactions, they would have been adversely affected when I left. Due in part to this reason, I never circulated cash or other direct material resources (in exchange for an interview for instance) and restricted my exchange transactions to those already described (many of which, such as typing classes and tutoring lessons for children, can be described as more diffuse services that, strictly speaking, were not actual materials and benefited individuals regardless of my continued presence). It goes without saying that, as careful as I think I may have been, leaving Bugando Hill after becoming so heavily involved in social life and exchange relationships most likely had some unintended consequences. In the end, ethical responsibility and social morality are paramount but they do not and cannot account for every contingency, nor should they.

Data collection

Data collection involved various strategies, including tape-recorded interviews, more informal discussions that were not tape-recorded, economic/material assessments, and participant

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observation. While the four social networks of husbandless women represented the main subjects of this study, data collection was by no means limited to them. It was necessary to include many people --- both men and women --- as subjects in this study in order to accomplish broader research objectives.

Tape-recorded interviews

Tape-recorded interviews were an important means of collecting data and excerpts from those interviews are featured prominently throughout this work. Unfortunately, a tape-recorder can be extremely obtrusive and was particularly troubling for some of the women in this study. Therefore, I did not use a tape-recorder during my discussions with many individuals until I was absolutely sure that they were comfortable in my presence and were used to having me around. Most tape-recorded interviews were conducted during the final three months of my stay. Eventually, however, every woman from the four social networks was interviewed at least once using a tape-recorder. Some were interviewed many times using a tape-recorder; the practice varied considerably according to the individual. Taken together, there are approximately eighty tape-recorded interviews with the women (averaging about one hour in length).

Tape-recorded interviews were also conducted with a wide cross-section of individuals on Bugando Hill. These interviews were conducted with both men and women (married and unmarried) from all walks of life. The only common feature defining these individuals was that they all lived and/or worked on Bugando Hill. Topics varied considerably; some interviews consisted of very specific questions about a particular event (e.g., an interview with a landlord about evicting a tenant) while others were much more broad (e.g., discussions regarding husbandless women in general, economic issues, the history of Mwanza, political events, etc.). One reason for varying my interview focus and topic was to prevent myself from becoming labeled as the "AIDS researcher" (although I never hid my research interests). I found such a designation had the effect of immediately narrowing the conversation to the things people felt they expected me to hear. In addition, my broad, contextual approach to the issues demanded that

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I focus on all aspects of life on Bugando Hill and, in most cases, people themselves wanted to talk about things other than AIDS. Since I believe risk for AIDS was constructed with respect to everyday life and within a broad social context, it obviously made a great deal of sense to allow people the freedom to discuss things other than AIDS. In fact, people often intimated this idea themselves by continually moving the discussion from AIDS to other matters, such as the difficulties of obtaining clean drinking water or paying rent. I always allowed such "topic switches" to occur during interviews and kept any pre-designated questions to a minimum (which were problematic in any case because they were more likely to be based on my own assumptions).

Tape-recorded interviews were also conducted with individuals who were not restricted to living/working on Bugando Hill. These individuals included community leaders, NGO workers, AIDS prevention workers, and various political officials and business leaders. These interviews tended to be shorter and centered around specific questions, although I allowed them to drift from topic to topic as well.

Informal discussions/conversations

A very large part of data collection involved more informal discussions and conversations that were not tape-recorded. Informal discussions and daily conversations were just as important (if not more so) than tape-recorded interviews. All individuals/groups mentioned previously were subject to this type of data collection. For the most part, I would simply take notes during the conversation or immediately afterwards. Women in particular seemed less threatened by this type of interaction then when a tape-recorder was involved, particularly during the first few months of my stay. In fact, they often laughed and commented on my practice of using the small, rather flimsy "*sungura*" (literally: "rabbit") notebooks that were a common item among children in primary school. Overall, I felt it was a much less obtrusive means of collecting data.

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Economic/material assessments

The collection of data via "economic/material assessments" refers to my efforts to calculate the women's approximate monthly income and expenses as well as "tracing" their material transactions and exchange practices (although the latter also overlaps with what I define as participant observation). While estimating the women's approximate income and major expenses was a relatively straightforward task and a subject that they always discussed themselves in various ways, "tracing" the exchange of material goods and services was much more difficult. In fact, it became the primary focus of my research for the first four to five months of my stay. Initially, I asked several individuals to keep journals in order to record specific types of material transactions and the person(s) with whom they made those transactions. In this way, I was able to make an initial assessment of who participated in exchange relationships with one another and was introduced to other women (who I also asked to keep journals) from what I eventually determined to be distinct networks (the whole process resembled a type of snowball sampling practice). For their part, the women seemed to enjoy recording their transactions in the journals and it proved an effective and easy way to become acquainted with them in an unobtrusive manner. Eventually, I supplemented and corroborated the women's journal entries with my own observations of their exchange practices. I did so in increments over time, so that by the end of the third month I was on Bugando Hill from early morning until late into the evening on an almost daily basis. I typically alternated my time with each network, spending one day with the *Mwalimu* and *Kanisa* networks and the next with the *Samaki* and *Kwanza* networks. Personal observations also allowed me to see other types of transactions that were not always possible for the women to record in their journals (e.g., the exchange of information such as a comment regarding on open water tap).

While tracing the women's exchange transactions was the primary focus research focus for the first four to five months of my stay, it continued throughout the year. For example, I periodically asked the women to record their transactions during a one week period and compared

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this information with my own observations over the same time period (I did not ask the women to keep their journals updated on a continuous basis after the first four to five months because I felt it increased the potential for "burn out" and they would begin neglecting them).

Participant observation

Participant observation was an extremely important part of data collection. Some aspects of participant observation have already been discussed in this section (especially with respect to observations made of the material transactions between the women). It has also been touched upon in Chapter Three in the section entitled "Husbandless women and the anthropologist" (which references my own participation in networks of exchange on Bugando Hill). Here, I want to highlight other aspects of participant observation, particularly with respect to the women's daily routines and conversations with one another.

In terms of daily routines, observations were made regarding the women's daily activities and the amount of time dedicated to them. How much time they spent "doing business" and performing household chores were particularly important in this respect as well as time spent in the neighborhood space. The "time/space management" of both the women and their children was assessed throughout the year through personal observations of selected individuals. In most cases, these assessments were relatively easy to accomplish since individuals had a very fixed daily routine, which was quite noticeable when broken.

Another important aspect of participant observation involved the women's conversations with one another during the day. Strictly speaking, I was not a participant in these conversations; much of my time was spent observing, listening, and/or taking notes regarding them. While I excluded myself from such conversations as much as possible and did not share gossip or invite others to share gossip with me, I did take notes regarding comments that were freely and publicly offered. Of course, this area of data collection is a particularly sticky one and I took every precaution to protect the secrecy of every individual involved. At the same time, the women were well aware that I was interested in the things they talked about with one another and events in

general on Bugando Hill. My constant habit of taking notes at all times during the day was also rather obvious. The extent of my interests was explicitly and implicitly clear to them. In other words, if it was said in my presence, it was potential data (see my remarks on confidentiality below for an exception to this general rule of thumb).

Participant observation also refers to the many instances where I sat in on meetings between various NGO workers, community leaders, and/or government health officials; attended political rallies, health promotion talks, "town hall" types of public meetings, sat in on prayer groups that were popular with some of the women; or such instances of daily life as having a conversation with a group of men at a local bar. I considered each of these situations important to my research in some way and as potential sites for the collection of data.

Of course, I did not record or use information that was expressed to me in confidence. In those cases where the degree of confidentiality was not clear with respect to a particular piece of information or conversational exchange (which were extremely rare and inconsequential), I also did not consider or record it as data. While participant observation has its ethical pit falls and problems, it is an invaluable data collection technique unique to the anthropologist. No amount of standardized guidelines and/or prescriptions for action can or should be made to account for its often open-ended nature; sometimes anthropologists must call it like they see it when in the field.

Data analysis

The analysis of non-narrative data was conducted in a very straightforward and simple manner. In most cases, the techniques used speak for themselves (for example, the presentation and use of descriptive statistics and/or percent frequencies in the tables and charts in Chapter Four). To say anything more about the analysis of non-narrative data here would be both redundant and pedantic.

The analysis of narrative and discursive data was obviously a more complicated process. In general, it involved three broad steps, which are described below.

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Step one: coding of conceptual themes

The first step in analyzing narrative data was the identification and coding of conceptual themes. Such themes could include, for example, the following: "tradition," "progress/development," "risk," "exchange," "stigma," "need," "suffering," "aspirations," etc. Conceptual themes were not mutually exclusive (i.e., "tradition" and "progress/development" could define the same piece of text). The overall process was obviously quite subjective and entailed constant amendment and alliteration. Conceptual categories were continually refined and/ore redefined as they were split into various sub-categories.

KiSwahili makes the process of identifying conceptual categories and sub-categories a bit easier because it is based on a limited number of noun classes, one of which specifically involves "conceptual" matters. This class is commonly referred to as the "u-class" because it typically (though not always) involves the addition of the letter "u" in front of a word as a way of referring to the conceptual meaning of the word. For example, the word for "family" in KiSwahili is "*jamaa*," but by adding a "u" and making it "*ujamaa*," the reference is to the concept or idea of the family, or what can be loosely translated into English as "familyhood." This quality of the language made it easier to code narrative data in KiSwahili (rather than translate it into English and then code it). While the use of u-class nouns was an easy way to identify and code conceptual categories, I did not strictly depend on this method. Most conceptual themes had to be inferred from the context of the conversation itself rather than from a direct one-to-one relationship between a u-class word and my personal assessment of the conceptual category to which it belonged. This particular feature of KiSwahili simply made particular instances of the overall process somewhat easier (and thus worth mentioning).

Metaphors, tropes, common phrases, and typical plot structures were also identified and coded as part of the initial process of data analysis. Important examples that fall into this category involve "body as *shamba*" and "business as boyfriend." In most cases, I did not consider these as conceptual themes in and of themselves, but as "subordinate" to them. The

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result of this process is evident, for example, in my explanation of the "body as *shamba*" metaphor as a means of defining the concept of "exchange" or "business as boyfriend" as a means of meaningfully constructing various sub-categories associated with "risk." I considered these narrative features as a way of speaking in a meaningful and more nuanced manner about broader conceptual themes (this process begins to get into issues related to "step three," however, so I will refrain from elaborating upon it here).

Step two: coding of specific events/topics

The second step in analyzing narrative data involved the identification and coding of specific events and/or topics. Such classifications could involve past events, everyday occurrences, and hypothetical situations (as evident in these classifications, there is a temporal reference involved here). Specific events/topics could include, for example, sexual relationships, boyfriends, the loss of the *shamba*, experiences surrounding a divorce or separation, the death of a husband, life in a rural setting, fetching a pail of water, share group activities, educating children, AIDS, small business activities, paying rent, etc. While these topics were much more numerous and varied then conceptual categories, they were also much easier to identify.

Step three: patterns and comparisons

The final step in analyzing data involved identifying patterns among and between conceptual themes, sub-themes, metaphors/tropes/common phrases and plot structures, and events/topics. Statistical calculations were not used in this process. To do so would have been inappropriate given my methods of collecting and coding data and contrary to my overall theoretical and philosophical approach. I chose to explore certain associations in a more in-depth manner as a result of my observations in the field, rather than have statistical associations direct my every move after-the-fact.

I compared various patterns and associations across all four networks and searched for both similarities and differences that I believed to be particularly significant. I also made similar comparisons between network members as a whole and their (non-network) neighbors on

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Bugando Hill. Again, it should be emphasized that my own experiences and observations while in the field greatly influenced my assessments of what constituted a "significant" similarity and/or difference. Thus, an extremely important feature at this stage of data analysis involved a continuous process of going back and forth between my personal field notes and the coded data.

It should be clear at this point that many aspects of data analysis were both theoretically informed and based on my personal interpretations of events (e.g., the construction of a risk conjuncture). Obviously, such processes are not amenable to precise descriptions of data analysis in the sense that I have (partially) discussed here. It is also clear that much of what I have offered is imprecise and perhaps even a bit vague. Some of this indeterminacy is intentional since I do not wish to make an absolute delineation between method and theory. To repeat what was said in a previous chapter: anthropology is a messy business. I make no claims to positivist assumptions of methodological and analytical rigor, nor do I work under a banner of nondiscriminatory rationalism. To do so would directly contradict my belief in the anthropological perspective as well as the power and process engendered by ethnographic fieldwork.

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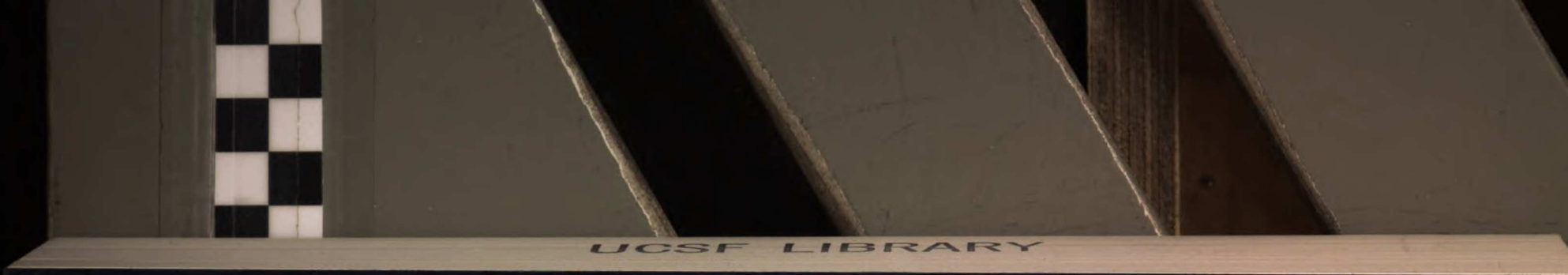
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