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**CONSTRUCTION OF WOMANHOOD IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF WOMEN IN
RURAL TANZANIA**

A Thesis in

Adult Education

by

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ABSTRACT

This critical ethnographic study investigates ways in which women in Yuuri and Sufi in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania negotiate their womanhood identities and what factors have influenced their decisions. My framework for this study is developed from post structural feminist and cultural-historical activity perspectives. I deployed post-structural feminist perspective to understand ways in which women's social positions, spatial locations and their agency shaped their thinking and behavior. From cultural-historical activity perspective, I utilized the notions of history and culture to understand ways in which historical and cultural processes have shaped the current condition of women and shape their interactions.

Specifically, this study explores the following three questions: (1) what are the socio-cultural and historical conditions under which the women in my study operate? (2) How is womanhood represented in people's day-to-day interactions? (3) What are particular women's perceptions and actions about womanhood as identity?

Data collection included two summer semesters of participant observation, personal interviews, archival research, and published materials. I examined historical processes and practices to understand how the various dimensions of power have operated to separate women from men and to deny them freedom to utilize their agency with equal footing with men. I also examined ways in which ideas about womanhood became normalized and maintained in people's day-to-day interactions. Lastly I examined selected women's ideas and behavior as they configure their identity to achieve their life goals.

By examining historical, cultural and social processes and practices, I challenge the argument that construction of identity is a matter of reiterating or repeating the norms that constitute individual's identity. In this study I found that rather than reiterating the norms,

women in this study use various sources not necessarily those prescribed as ‘womanly,’ but configured their identity within the family and other cultural dynamics.

These findings contribute several wider discussions including: how history, culture and social position shape people’s interactions and how these interactions in turn transform their culture. I suggest that identity cannot be separated from its historical and cultural processes. Furthermore, learning is very much connected to learner’s history, culture and social position in the learning activity.

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PREFACE

Talk softly! Sit properly! You climbed a tree? – You are a disgrace! Keep quiet when talked to! These were some of the rules that I used to hear from my mother in the early years of my life. In school “No long hair! No plaiting! Stop complaining, that is un – girlish! In the community, “without a *khanga* (traditional clothing for women)? Women don’t do this.” In the church, “A woman is a part of a man, for God did extract Eve from Adam’s left ribs, and called it a woman, who is to be the mother of the universe.”

Growing up into a woman, I was incensed by the ever-present messages that filtered into me from different directions, repeated over and over again acting as what Althursser calls “interpellation” ushering me into what was regarded as acting appropriately. These messages tacitly or openly aimed at leading me into becoming a good girl, an ideal wife, mother, a teacher who properly understood what was expected as a girl and a woman in Yuuri. Wearing a *khanga* all the time was a must, despite its inconvenience in performing certain tasks that required running or climbing or even if I was sweating or engaged in an activity that required more freedom for my body.

For high school, I attended a boarding Catholic girls’ secondary school in Tanzania. For four years I listened to nuns who could not wait for the day to break before they made new rules. We had to wear uniforms – a skirt that must reach way down below the knees and blouse well tucked in. Those with short skirts were forced to buy new ones, whether they had money or not. Though it was a girls-only school, dressing up appropriately was a rule that had no discussion. We wondered why those nuns were so adamant about long skirts and tucked in blouses. But

there was no complaining, for we were to follow the school rules, just like we followed societal rules at home.

“Rules exist to be broken,” so the wise say. While every student understood all the rules, those written and unwritten, it was difficult to follow them all the time. Many, including myself tried to break a lot of rules, but when we were sure we would not be noticed.

One day, on a Saturday and a laundry day I put on the only skirt and a blouse that was clean. The skirt was a bit shorter than the normal ones that I wore to classes but being a weekend, I did not tuck in the blouse. One who looked at me in a hurry would think I was wearing only a blouse. The skirt itself was not too short, but was short enough to see my knees. My aim was to be the first in the laundry so that I had enough space to wash the many clothes that I had accumulated for two weeks.

Just before crossing the first block, I saw the school principal on my right, who started shouting at me. “Where the hell do you think you are going naked? She quickly grabbed my hand, turned me round and whistled, asking, when did you become a prostitute? What do you think you are, a barmaid? Why can’t you leave school and go sell that body if you think it is much more important to you? She kept yelling at me until everybody in the dormitory came out to see the prostitute who had dared to enter the sacred space. Later the principal wrote a long letter to my parents explaining how ‘immoral’ I had become and explained her concern that I was becoming a bad influence to other good students. With this sensational message, my parents came to school to apologize on my behalf. This humiliated me and made me become ashamed of my behavior and a lesson for me not to break the school rules if I wanted to finish school.

When I got married, I also had to put up with norms and rules that described a married woman in my husband’s family. Cooking and taking care of the home were my primary

responsibilities. Though I was working as a teacher, just like my husband was, I was expected to see to it that the house was clean, food was ready and the family animals were fed. Taking care of livestock included cutting fodder, cleaning the cattle shed and milking cows. I did all the work that was expected of me, although I did not totally agree with the idea that women should be made responsible for the home. Even though I was in a position to employ someone to take care of housework especially because it was too hard for me to complete all the tasks and do my teaching properly, my husband as well as his relatives did not approve of a house girl cooking for them. Other chores were acceptable to delegate, but cooking was considered a wife's chore, come rain or shine.

In my working place as an instructor I was expected to teach research and publish. Since I was junior faculty, I was not assigned a teaching assistant to help with seminar discussions or marking the students' examination papers.

While I could participate in workshops and seminars, my gender got priority and my role as a wife and home maker in my family became a justification for my not being considered to participate in many activities outside my working place. These activities could not only increase my meager salary, but could also expose me to issues that I could research on for publications. In such a situation it was not easy for me to meet all the professional demands and hence, my promotion for tenure was in danger. Because I wanted my marriage to last and also be accepted as a competent faculty, I was not ready to let go of any and therefore, I had to devise ways of achieving both.

At home I went to bed late at nights in and woke up long before daybreak to prepare for the day in order to complete my tasks. In my workplace I had to use bribes to be included in the list of people to attend workshops and seminars. While I was doing all these, 'divorce' and

‘incompetence’ rang quite loud in my mind. I wanted to keep my marriage and also become a good teacher to my students and competent faculty in my university. In doing these activities, to be honest, I wanted to continue being identified as Mrs somebody and a tenured faculty.

It is easy to believe that my choices were based on an illusion that I would be considered a bad woman or incompetent teacher. Others would think about my action as trying to conform to the norms that oppressed me. Hardly would my actions be associated with institution of marriage that transmit ideas about married women and discourage single women or the institution of higher learning that transmit norms of ‘publish or perish’ regardless of faculty position. It also becomes harder to associate my actions with the norms that have been historically developed and accepted as ideal to women and faculty. It is more useful to understand my action not only by looking into my understanding of my roles and acting upon them but also the historical development of ideas about women, the culture in which I grew, my goals and intentions and my ideas about what would happen if I failed to adhere to norms that describe me as a woman in my society.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

This chapter provides an overview of my study, which sought to explore ways in which women in Yuuri and Sufi participate in constructing their womanhood identity, as well as their reasons for doing so. The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section I provide an overview of the concept of womanhood. In the second, I outline the background to the problem, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, the theoretical framework that guided the research, and significance of the study and its overall organization.

The Concept of Womanhood

Women all over the world have engaged in various roles in society. Like other individuals, they do not share the same interests, desires, roles and positions. But with the changes in society, and the urge for organization of things, including people, time and space, women have been assigned womanhood identity in order to identify, categorize and assign them certain roles and positions different from those of men. Womanhood, as an identity signifies certain standards that identify women as normal or abnormal. Identification is a concept that categorizes and places people in certain social and cultural positions (Bruner, Goodnow, and Austin, 1959). These positions in turn, become systems of oppression or suppression. While identification may not always be negative, by and large, women within womanhood system are ranked in a lower position than men within manhood systems. Therefore, womanhood as a social and cultural identity for a group of female human beings places women in inferior positions to men.

In the preface I have tried to explain ways in which I participated in constructing my identity within discursive ideas about my identity as a woman and junior female faculty and also my own objective to fit into my society. I tried to assume my roles in order to become an ideal woman and faculty. These images were maintained despite my suffering. This study is my effort to learn about my own experience and the way we can understand the concept of learning, knowing and constructing identity. My study is framed within two theoretical perspectives - post structural feminism and cultural-historical activity theory.

My approach and analytical focus stem from a conviction that the situations I found myself in and reasons behind my actions did not originate from my internal workings in space and time, but my experience as a woman in Yuuri at a particular time. If my experience was formed as described, what led me to think and act the way I did? This and a host of other questions are explored in this study. Here, *experience* means a process that led into cognition. The root of the word *cognition* means, “to learn,” “to know,” and “to construct identity” and thus the three terms are used interchangeably. Addressing the above questions requires a deeper understanding of the process of learning, knowing and constructing identity. These, I argue, cannot be understood or analyzed outside the context in which they occur. To understand these phenomena, I examined not only how my research participants learn, know and behave, but also how history, culture and their social positions shape their thinking and behavior.

Post structural Feminist Perspective

Post structural feminists consider identity as being formed through regulatory norms and practices that individuals internalize and act accordingly (Butler, 1990; 1993; 1999; Jenkins, 1997). They further identify these norms as emerging within a particular socio-historical,

material and discursive context (Inness, 1998; Walkerdine, 1990; Wald, 1998). Collins, (2000), Mayberry, (1999) and Tisdell, (1998) maintain that women's gendered positions influence their meaning making and experience. Alcoff (1989) has long argued that women's unequal position with men in society shapes the way they learn and construct their identity.

Post structural feminists also believe that women exercise their agency (learn, come to know or construct their identity) when they are impeded from attaining their goals in life. In other words, they do not act unconsciously, but consciously accept or choose to perform the roles that societies assign to them. In this way, they are seen as negotiating and looking for alternatives (Collins, 2000; Mayberry and Rose, 1999). Tisdell (1998) argues that a woman's identity can change from one context or position to another. One's identity, she argues, changes with one's experience, social position and how one exercises her agency to define who she is and what she wants to be.

Furthermore, post structural feminists believe that womanhood identity is not universal or biologically grounded condition of women's experience but is specific to a particular space and time. Individuals therefore, learn, come to know and construct their identity as women through interaction with others within their particular environment. Accordingly, they act according to what they perceive to be appropriate. In a family or community such as in Yuuri and Sufi for example, women come to understand, and assume their roles as mothers and wives because of interaction with others – seeing what others do and what they are told to do. As Hall (1997) argues, “identity” is formed within “the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate,’ speak to us or hail us into place as the social subject of particular discourses” (p. 5).

Learning in Post structural Feminist Perspective

The main idea of learning, knowing and becoming someone is that every individual has a motive that drives her to learn, know and act in a certain way. Because of this, women's actions are understood as being motivated by their urge to become ideal women. Their actions are assumed to help or impede their understanding of social roles. Furthermore, the proper understanding of social roles enables women to assume those roles better. That is, diligence in learning, knowing and enacting womanhood norms and values enables women to be better women, wives, mothers and what have you.

What becomes problematic in this framework is that learning, knowing and acting in an expected way are considered positive actions and rewarded accordingly. We hardly consider whether what people learn, know and do is important to their personal growth or not. Nor do we think about their particular needs, interests and abilities with regards to their learning, knowledge and activities. Society thus lauds social and cultural advantages, albeit unwittingly, transforming them into positive actions while negating individual needs and interests. As such we tend to perpetuate, disguise, and naturalize the socially rooted inequalities, which shape learning, knowledge and identity.

Because people exemplify different needs, interests and abilities, they also differ in the ways they learn, know and their life goals. This misnomer is normally provided with explanations such as ignorance, laziness, uninterested or incompetent – a stereotypical way of generalizing people in negative terms (Nash 2003). Women, who do not conform to 'womanhood' norms for example, have been stereotyped as abnormal, bad, and sometimes cast as dangerous.

Post structural theory is used in this study to interrogate more closely how women in Yuuri and Sufi learn and make meaning of their experiences from their social position and what alternatives they use to subvert social and cultural norms that may act to impede them from realizing their perceived goals (learning and construct their identity as women). The question was: What are particular women's perception and actions about womanhood identity?

Cultural-historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

There is a growing body of research that posits that culture is significant in constructing one's identity (Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998; Engestrom, 1998). Before I move into ways cultural-historical activity theorists (CHATs) explain learning and construction of identity, it is useful to contextualize the concept of culture as is used in this study.

Vygotsky's (1978) identifies culture as existing in any context of two or more people's interaction with each other. His ideas can trace much of its origins in Marx's (1846) philosophy of political economy, in which he developed a theory to explain construction of identity (class) within the system of economic organization in capitalist societies. According to Marx, people enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will. These relations are shaped by the economic structure maintained by legal and political structures. Each economic structure is constituted by particular kind of labor processes, technologies and social relations. According to Marx, the economic structure and labor relations correspond to people's consciousness and how they view the world (Youngman, 2000).

History is another important context within which we can deduce social reality, in that, how people's consciousnesses change as they continuously challenge and negotiate their identity (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978; Engestrom, 1991).

Vygotsky developed these ideas and proposed that people use tools and signs "...created by societies over the course of human history and change with the form of society and the level of its cultural development" (p. 7). According to Vygotsky, people create their culture through appropriating the social tools and signs to facilitate their interactions. In the context of this study - ways women in Yuuri and Sufi learn, know and construct their identity, tools can be anything necessary that people identify as confirming ideas about womanhood. These include what women know and do in their subservient positions as a result of being denied opportunity to develop their capacities as human beings in the contexts of colonial and postcolonial contexts. The ways women think and behave facilitates the development, and maintenance of ideas about womanhood.

While Vygotsky does not negate the idea that people use tools and signs outside their culture, he insists that members of a particular culture rely on specific symbols to frame their thoughts and expressions in intelligible terms. These, he observes, are unfamiliar to people from other cultures. For example, when a woman in Yuuri and Sufi refuses to marry, or demands land from her father, this behavior is considered abnormal in Yuuri and Sufi contexts. The same behavior could probably not be an issue or regarded as abnormal in another community. When I refer to culture I mean collective norms, habits, values and rules that shape people's thinking and behavior in a particular society. Womanhood as a cultural tool had been formed as women interact with others in various spheres of society, where people perceive women in a particular way. In this sense, people's thinking and behavior towards women have been shaped by their perception of women as they assume subservient and unmunerated roles that help maintain them in those roles.

Learning in Cultural-Historical Activity Perspective

Within CHAT, one comes to learn, know and become someone through participating in cultural and social activities. Tools and signs mediate this. In other words, people come to learn, know and behave in a certain way through their active participation in day-to-day activities, which paradoxically is affected and impeded by their social and cultural tools and signs. In the context of my study, effective participation of women in learning, knowing and constructing their identity were to be effected or impeded by what they were doing and how.

Vygotsky however, is silent on differences among and between people in the activity system, in that, he considers social and cultural tools and signs as norms and can be accessible to everyone and can be appropriated in the same way to achieve a common goal (activity system). Though Vygotsky, like Marx and Angel before him acknowledges contradictions in the realization of goals, this is treated as a positive thing to transform an environment. In other words, contradictions in activity system (learning) fuel alternative solutions or motivate other actions. This however might not achieve a positive result in all situations.

In Yuuri and Sufi for example, women participated in education that was imposed on them by political elites, in alien languages and for a different goal than their own. In this way, there was not only a mismatch between women's goals and those of political elites, but also the tools and signs to help them realize this imposed goal were minimal to them. This created a condition that forced women to device other ways of attaining their goals, including getting married, assuming subservient roles and the like. Other consequences resulted from this, but these will not be discussed in this study. Inequality and contradiction in the activity system thus becomes functional necessity, a mechanism to encourage women to take more time and use more energy to achieve their goals.

In my study, the second intention is to further explore the relationship between women's interactions in various activities and the political economy of their surrounding. I explored this phenomenon by looking into ways ideas about womanhood were represented in people's day-to-day interactions. Using CHAT lens, and specifically the Vygotsky's (1978) idea of history, culture and material conditions as key mediators of learning, I traced women's learning back to the socio-cultural and historical processes and practices in rural Tanzania. Specifically I traced the allocation of social and cultural resources in regard to land and education. The question was: What are the socio-cultural and historical conditions under which the women in my study operate? And how are womanhood ideas represented in people's day-to-day interactions?

Purpose and Research Question

Research on learning, knowing and construction of identity has focused on individual's participation in a learning activity, often regarded as construction of knowledge. However, rarely do we consider the nature and goal of learning which shape learning outcomes.

Furthermore, historical analysis of learning in Tanzania has focused primarily on formal learning institutions, the period the formal learning institutions were created, how they have been organized, their achievements, problems and prospects. These are of course, appropriate topics for research. However, we acquire a richer understanding of learning when we get out of the box (formal learning) into informal and the contradictions emanating from them in the context of achieving a perceived goal.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how perceptions and behavior of women in Yuuri and Sufi in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania have been shaped by their structural positions, how these positions shape the ways they interact in day-to-day activities, and how this interactions

have shaped their perceptions of themselves and their behavior. In particular, this study attempts to illuminate the idea of learning, knowing and constructing identity within social-cultural and historical contexts. An exploration of social historical processes and practices, people's day-to-day interactions together with women's own interpretations of themselves and their behavior, provide a unique opportunity to understand how asymmetrical relations of power may shape people's learning, knowing and behavior. Therefore, historicizing women's experiences, identifying social and cultural norms and values, together with women's interpretation of their identity helped me to analyze the concept of learning, knowing and constructing identity.

Because there exists variances within individual women according to their social class, religion, sexuality, and ethnicity, I did not generalize the patterns revealed in this study. Nevertheless, I believe their experiences analyzed in their local, larger and historical environments are worth looking at closely as separate categories in explaining the reasons women participate in constructing their identity. These three categories – historical processes, culture and women's perceptions and behavior are highly significant in learning, knowing and constructing their identity.

Significance of the Study

Studies that focus on how social interaction shape learning, knowing and construction of identity are not new (for example see Maher and Tetreault 1998; Ropers-Huilman 1998; Street 1994). However, these studies do not consider human history and its position in the learning process as key to the development of consciousness, capacity or thinking. Vygotsky (1978) argues that we are what we do (see Vygotsky, 1978, p. 7) in the sense that how and what we learn and know is embedded in a social matrix. In other words, our consciousness is developed through our

interactions with others, mediated by the tools and signs exposed to us. That is, our history, culture and societal goals shape to a large extent our consciousness, thinking and behavior.

Though we may think of society, culture and history as outside human psychic, the fact that we exist and participate in activities in our context, we internalize our socio-cultural and historical goals and reflect them in the ways we think and behave.

Implication of this to adult education is to provide a new understanding of multiple and interrelated factors that mediate learning, knowing and ways we construct our identities. This is especially important in the current integration of diverse cultures and nationalities and an increasing movement of people in the global economy. Adult educators as well as feminists have tried hard to figure out what kind of people (learners) they are dealing with, what their learning goals are, how best they learn and the like. Guidebooks of how to teach and how learners learn best have been written. We seem, however, to lack knowledge of ‘other people’ who we interact with in many walks of life and therefore, lack alternative strategies to help them to learn in a way that is best for them. This lack of knowledge keeps us forcing people to think and behave like us, the way we regard as normal. This situation is not too dissimilar from that of colonialists who identified people within their own frameworks (inauthentic and dumb) and provided education that suited their own (colonialists) goals (Mudimbe, 1988).

Today the field of adult education has expanded from the provision of education solely for the world of formal work. It is expanding its programs into issues such as family, gender, globalization, diversity, multiculturalism and the like. I think it is arguable that much of those co-opted issues serve the same academic and formal professional interests, but that’s an argument best left for further analysis and another study. This study challenges adult educators to reach further and identify various factors that shape learning, other knowledges and other ways of

knowing. I urge adult educators to take a closer look at issues in their field that isolate learners from achieving their best in learning, knowing and constructing their identity, especially those attempting to separate them from their needs, interests, and aspirations. I urge adult educators and feminists to broaden their fields and integrate history, psychology, sociology and culture in order to engage a broad and interdisciplinary field. Such engagement helps in using broader and more sophisticated frameworks in understanding human thinking and behavior.

Newman (1993, 1994, 1999) and Sawchuk (2003) have paved a way to look further from the box, and identify day-to-day people's interactions as sites for understanding how people's interactions shape their learning. My work, I hope, will contribute to such works and others who are bent on fostering multiculturalism and diversity. It acknowledges impediments that one can encounter in the classroom interaction, and other broader contexts. I concur with Sawchuk, (2003) when he urges for an understanding of systems of social, cultural and historical contexts as significant in mediating human thinking and behavior.

Organization of the Study

In chapter 2, I examine literature on identity and construction of identity within poststructural feminist and cultural-historical activity perspectives. Chapter 3 describes the design of the study. This is in four parts - the research purpose and methods, my stance and the strategies used in this study; sampling techniques; data collection, and data analysis plan. Chapter 4 presents the cultural and historical conditions of Yuuri and Sufi, the two communities that this study investigated. In this chapter I locate Tanzania in a world map and the two communities in Tanzania. I then provide a description of socio-historical and political economy in allocation of land and provision of education.

Chapter 5 analyzes constructions of womanhood in day-to-day interactions and activities of residents of Yuuri and Sufi. In this chapter I interpret several symbols, decode metaphors that represent ideas about womanhood. These include: shelter, women interactions in marketplace, marriage rituals and division of labor. My participant's narratives are presented in chapter 6. I present four examples of narratives by women in constructing their identity. I used these narratives as a basis for understanding how socio-cultural and historical processes and hegemonic structures in Yuuri and Sufi have shaped women's thinking and actions. These narratives of women, presenting their life stories and decisions they made on many issues and activities they engaged in, acted as a window for me to better understand their worldviews. They allowed me to interpret their experience as 'women' and understand how the environment had shaped their worldview and how this worldview shaped the way they interacted with their families and community.

Chapter 7 represents the conclusion and implications of my research. It discusses the research findings and offers explanations of the findings. It also provides comments, limitations, implications for practice, and a path for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to examine ways and reasons women participate in constructing their identity, I ground my study in two perspectives: post structural feminism and cultural-historical activity theory. In this chapter I examine literature on ways feminists; particularly post-structural feminists as well as cultural-historical activity theorists theorize identity and construction of identity. The questions this chapter explores are: what explanations do post structural feminists and cultural-historical activity theorists give regarding identity and construction of identity? Do people contribute to the construction of their own identity? If so, how and why? What explanations do feminists and cultural-historical activity theorists give for these questions? How do their explanations differ and in what ways do they resemble? How do their explanations help me to understand experiences of women in Yuuri and Sufi in rural Tanzania? I also look into empirical studies that support the claims made by these theorists. The literature review focused on three major themes (a) women's learning, (b) women's knowing, and (c) women's constructing identity. I then identify epistemological and philosophical gaps that remain unresolved. In examining this literature, each perspective is analyzed and discussed separately. For each, I explicate the premises or assumptions it holds regarding identity and construction of identity. I end my discussion of each perspective with my assessment of its potential contribution to my study. The chapter ends with the identification of an academic void, which then frames my research purposes and questions.

Post structural Feminism

Although the term post structural feminism is a fairly new feminist political stand, the forces that characterize it have been in play for a long time (Weedon, 1997). The main *assumptions* in this perspective are marked by a suspicion of concepts such as: totalizing, essentialism, and foundational. These constructs are understood to create specific kind of structures and systems such as gender, class, age, etc. These are perceived as the roots for constraining and stifling people's agency. As Butler (1990) suggests, social structures and systems are constructed in and through signifying practices in "regulated process of repetition" (p. 145). These processes, according to Butler produce the effects in which social meanings and norms are created. In such a situation, human agency is stifled.

Agency here is not understood as human being's capacity to conceive and execute his/her own actions and projects as drawn from the Kantian tradition, where self is perceived as independent of the social world and its influence, and is thus capable of being the sole author of it's own actions. On the other hand identity is constructed within the regime of repetition of norms. Therefore, human agency becomes a capacity to distance from the discourses that forge her or his identity. For example, a woman will exercise her agency through varying, rather than repeating those discourses that identify her as a 'woman'.

Social structures and relations (in this context womanhood identity in gendered relation) are regulated and shaped according to social and cultural norms, values and expectations. These within post structural feminist theory are considered as totalizing, essentialising, and foundational that put all phenomena under one explanatory idea (e.g. it's the will of God). In this way they become muted and unchallenged. For example an idea that women are mothers and wives by the will of God become entrenched in people's thoughts and actions to the extent that

they become a norm *almost* compulsory. A woman who challenges those expectations is seen as abnormal, immoral and in need of some teachings. Unless proven otherwise these ideas continue to be believed and constructed in the daily language of the people as normal and disseminated in all people's relations. As a result of this, society expects all women to be mothers. The society therefore buttresses women in their social role as mothers and wives, in the social order.

In their oppositional stance of social structures, post structural feminist have played a role in working beyond various concepts and issues that essentialize women. They have debated against various concepts such as meta-theory, reality/truth, social structures and social identities among others with a view to illuminate how gender identity is durably ingrained within those essentializing concepts. Each is discussed separately below.

Rejection of meta-theory

Morrow and Torres (1995) understand "meta-theory" as a set of assumptions underlying explicit processes of theory building and research in the social sciences (p. 19). Meta-theory includes philosophical orientation (which aims to answer metaphysical questions). It also connotes an idea of using certain methodological assumptions about appropriate means to gather evidence. Meta-theory also acts as a model for an explanation of the nature of a phenomenon, in the sense that it attempts to describe a phenomenon in rational, empirical and objective terms. Post structural feminists are suspicious of the underlying certainties that such a framework holds, arguing that reality is situational and negotiable (Jenkins, 1997). They hold a belief that a reality changes with situation and can also be changed. Their premise is based on the belief that reality is does not exist independent of or prior to the language, cultural forms, norms and values, but in a particular social, cultural and historical context.

Post structural feminists' rejection of meta-theory has cast doubt about science, rationality, and the idea of universal knowledge and reality. To them, reality whether empirical, hermeneutic, or critical, is partial, subjective, and embedded in relations of power (Griffiths, 1995). Foucault (1980) asserted, "...truth is a thing of this world" (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

The rejection of meta-theory, however, does not imply that truth is impossible, but that claims to truth should not be universal or totalizing, but should be assessed against competing claims, and against various levels of power relations within which such claims are made. In this conceptualization, post structural feminists recognize identity as partial, local, specific, and tied to power and normative interests (Usher & Edwards, 1994).

Suspicion of Social Structures

Like its name, post structural feminists claim to critique social structures. Most of them (Foucault, 1978; Butler 1990; 1999, and others) point to structures as a source of binary opposites such as white-black; heterosexual-homosexual, manhood-womanhood, and theory-practice. They suspect binaries for their categorization of people for political purpose. Orner (1997) argues that, binaries such as central/marginal; man/woman; day/night; voice/silence and the like are "dangerous for they have historically been accompanied by essentializing tendency, privileging of the first term over the second" (Ortner, 1992, p. 78).

Post structural feminists struggle to "...denaturalize and deconstruct [social structures in order] to find out what has been erased, silenced, and rejected" (p. 78). This means that unless social structures such as gender are unraveled and ruptured, it becomes impossible to theorize women's oppression and exploitation because of their normalizing and dominating characteristics. Social structures and relations such as gender, patriarchy, family, and others, it is

argued, construct *truth* and what *is not*; who to *exclude* and *include*; who *can* speak and who *cannot*, who can be understood and who cannot. In short, post-structural researchers claim to approach binaries with suspect.

The role of social structures in defining social identities

Alcoff (2001) defines social identities as follows: “By social identity I mean those social markers of identity that our culture employs, which are most importantly race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, class and religion” (Alcoff, 2001, p. 59). Like social structures, social identities are also taken as totalizing and essentializing entities - putting all phenomena under one explanatory concept (womanhood, manhood, white, black, etc). Alcoff (2001) suggests that social identities have homogenizing tendencies of essentializing people and in the process, discriminate against them in various ways including social and cultural positions of power. She further argues that, social identities tend to identify individuals as embodying inherent values that exist independent of, beneath or beyond, language and ideology. Such identities signify an individual as stable and unproblematic (see also Mohanty 1997; 2003). Women within post structural feminisms are identified as 'subjects,' who are constructed discursively, and who constantly are actively struggling to negotiate who they are and what they want to be on a daily basis of their lives.

The suspicious character of post structural feminisms has been to a large extent influenced by the above concepts and also by critical social theorists such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Emily Benveniste, Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault together with ideas of Julia Kristeva, also influence their distrust of structures and meta-theories.

Michael Foucault's *Power/Knowledge* (1972) for example argues that people in power use totalizing concepts as a strategy to limit and control people's behavior. His observation is that those with positions in society use their power to set terms for social control and to maintain their power. In his views, what people in society are and what they can do is strictly controlled within the parameters of the 'order of things.' Foucault argues that many social policies are developed within totalizing theories in order to put people in a situation of "abeyance, or at least curtailed." In such a situation, people become "divided, overthrown, [and] caricatured" (Foucault, (1972, p. 80).

In "*The History of Sexuality*" (1978) Foucault argues that one's sexual identity is constructed as natural while in fact the category of sex is constructed through historically specific modes of sexuality. Borrowing Althusser's term, "interpellation," Foucault argues that the body is not sexed until the baby is born and interpellated as a "boy" or a "girl," and this is effected in heterosexual discourse where patriarchal power relations want to maintain masculine/feminine sexuality as truth. The following are ways in which post structural feminists theorize identity and construction of identity, much of which is affected by the above theories and ideas.

Gender Identity: Poststructural Feminist Theory

The above are some of the key assumptions post structural feminists' make about how the issue of identity should be approached, in that, learning, knowing and construction of identity are shaped by the interlocking systems of power- race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.

Women's learning cannot occur outside their social position and gender relations within

particular socio-cultural and historical contexts. According to this view, women's learning, knowing and the way they construct their identity are grounded in material and power relations.

Foucault suggests that: "Truth [identity] (developed within culture) is linked in circular relation with systems of power, which produces and sustains [it], and to effects of power which [it induces] and which [extends it]" (p. 133).

Butler, (1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996) has interrogated ways in which women's gendered position is constructed. She identified language, power relations, and discourse as social constructs, which produce oppressive and exploitative practices. These, she argues, create a condition that imposes constrain on women's learning, knowing and defining for themselves what they want to do and become. In her *Gender Trouble*," (1999), Butler identifies women's social position as being an effect of social processes and practices.

Butler (1999) borrows Goffman's (1959) concept of performance to illustrate ways in which gender identity for women, in this case, womanhood is constructed. According to her, womanhood is formed/constructed through repetitions and emulation of ideas put forward about what a woman is. On this she argues that repetition and emulation is not simply a performance, but an internalization of oppressive and unequal treatment. A woman does that to appear to have a stable identity, but is expected to act womanly. According to Butler, this instability in women's identity creates in them an urge to always imitate what they are expected to be and do. Here Butler supplies examples of how women have to constantly deal with performing ideas that have been developed about them - inferior, emotional, interested in the welfare of the family and friends. Women thus are perceived as constantly negotiating their identity (learning and knowing) within a precarious social position.

Walkerdine (1990) claims that women embody multiple gender subjectivities created through their interacting with others in their gender relational dynamics. When a woman assumes the roles assigned to her – such as wifehood, motherhood and the like, she develops different subjectivities than men who assume different manhood roles. When interacting, for example in learning, their difference in subjectivity situates them in contradictory positions. Poststructural feminists argue that to understand women learning, we must analyze not only the structures of domination that express or govern the social relationships, but also the competing forms of communication and cultural practices.

To sum, learning, knowing and construction of identity within post structural feminism are understood as processes whereby people constantly negotiate intersectionalities (the complex interplay of line of difference and inequality). Women learning, knowing and constructing their identity are to a large extent shaped by their social position and agency.

Empirical Studies: Social Position and Female Agency in learning

Empirical studies focus on two major themes found in poststructural feminist perspective (a) the influence of social position in women learning, and (b) women's agency in learning. First, I will review the relevant literature associated with women's social position in learning. This is followed by studies that explore the influence of agency on women's learning. It concludes with a summary of these two themes found in the literature, followed by possible explanations of how women social position, agency and learning are interrelated. Each of these themes are reviewed independently and then in relationship with each other to uncover the limitations of the existing research and promising methodologies for investigating ways and reasons women learn, know

and construct their identity. I begin with a brief overview of how women social position and agency are defined.

What are Women Social Position and Agency?

Women Social Position

Chronologically, women social position is a more mature concept than that of agency in the feminist literature. The notion of social position can be traced from the idea of cultural reproduction developed by Bourdieu. Bourdieu defines cultural reproduction as the complex ideological and cultural processes that reproduce social forms such as racism, gender bias, authority structures, attitudes, values, and norms. Within these processes class control begins with the exercise of symbolic power where the ruling class imposes a definition of society and its institutions that is consistent with its interests.

The dominant culture is therefore transmitted and reproduced within the most fundamental social structures such as family, school, government, and business, under the guise of neutral and objective.

Radical feminists introduced the notion of women social position in feminist literature. These feminists refused to accept liberal perspective that social inequality between men and women is natural or inevitable due to inherent characteristics of men and women. Radical feminists came up with the famous slogan “The personal is political,” which entailed that oppression and exploitation of women were intrinsic and pervasive through every aspect of society. Radical feminists argued that the system of patriarchy has a profound influence on the construction of gender norms that work to oppress and exploit women. Norms are not necessarily part of oppression and exploitation, but rather ground rules upon which patriarchal society functions work against women’s needs and interests. Gender norms and relations are co-

constructing and co-constructed. Although radical feminists understand the dynamics of gender relations, they often address issues of women's social position by associating it with patriarchal practices and politics of gender system.

Post structural feminist perspective extended the notion of patriarchal social relation to a complex combination of cultural elements (i.e. race, ethnicity, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality). They argue that women's social position is forged and reproduced within asymmetrical relations of *power* that primarily constrain women's agency.

Women Agency

Agency is the ability to have understandings of relationships (between self and context, others in context, institutions, etc) and to act on them. The notion of agency is a more recent phenomenon in feminist literature, although the origins of the term have been traced back to the Kantian tradition in which agency was assumed to depend on one of two conditions of the self. First, self is potentially independent of the social world and its influence, and is thus capable of being the sole author of its own actions. Second, humans are deeply embedded or "situated" in social life, which conditions her and her actions and her agency springs from the remains of a prediscursive aspect of the self (Benhabib, 1992; Sandel, 1982; Taylor, 1989).

The concept of women agency, like women social position does not exist independent of or prior to the language, cultural forms, and practices that regulate women's behavior. Accordingly, human capacity, which Bourdieu calls predisposition, prevents them from succumbing entirely into the system of oppression in which they exist. Despite been surrounded by oppressive social structures, ideologies and norms, women agency developed within the same social and cultural dynamics (Sandel, 1982).

This section explores the literature that examines ways in which women's agency shapes what and how they learn, know and construct their identity. It first presents the review of literature that provides examples of the acts of agency women employ. It then examines studies that investigated how agency may shape learning.

In the literature, networking and negotiation are two concepts that are mostly use to explain women's agency. Watson (1994) suggests that the style of networking and negotiation may represent women's agency response to their structural and social barriers they encounter in learning. The concepts of networking and negotiation are based on the proposition that networks of relationships and negotiation are a resource that can facilitate access to other resources of value to individuals or groups for a specific purpose (Balat and Falk, 2002).

Women's Social Position in Learning

In the past decade, literature on ways in which women's social position shape their learning has gained popularity in research and adult education. This was influenced by a concern with the apparent dissipation of cohesion of women in learning institutions (e.g., Tisdell, 1995, 2001). Terminologies such as exclusion and marginalization have entered the discourse around women learning in an attempt to define and understand it.

This section explores the literature that considers the influence of women's social position in learning. Social Position here includes women's structural/social and situational contexts. Structural/social context include gender, race, class and other structures that differentiate women from others and from men. Situational context refers to settings in which women learn including classroom, home and other social settings. This section then examines

ways in which women's social position shapes what and how they learn, know and construct their identity.

Women's Structural/Social Context in Learning

The issue of women's structural and social context in poststructural feminist thought is borrowed from the ideas that learning and knowledge is power and that learning is negotiation of power and interests among the learners and various stakeholders in a learning context. Foucault (1982) observed that that power is immanent in all relations and that it operates to construct the possibilities of human action, including 'free' action such as learning. Thus, for Foucault, there is not any human action that is not tramelled by power. Other ideas come from Raven's (1999) discussion of the different bases and types of social power that are exhibited in learning settings, along with Bourdieu's (1986) conception of how individual's social and cultural position shape her negotiation of power and interests in the process of learning, knowing and constructing identity. Thus, the ideas of these authors (Foucault 1982, Bourdieu, 1986; Raven, 1999) provide insights for exploring how women's social position is negotiated in learning context. These writers challenge the ideals embodied in western cannon and have been doing this long before post structural theorizing became prominent in education.

Tisdell (1998) notes that women in adult education are reduced to generic adult educators and learners devoid of gender, race and class and yet assumed to be male and white. Women in this framework are excluded or identified as of special needs – illiterate, non-participants, and non-interested in learning. At the same time, the elision of women from the concept of learners gives scant attention to many male values inherent in formal learning setting.

Mohanty (1995) proposes that treating women as abstract category generate hierarchies of difference by reminding women that they are inadequate in learning institutions.

Crawford (1989) argues that women's learning differ from men because the difference in social positions and activities that they engage in and which are different from those men do. Social conception of masculinity and femininity produce socially and culturally determined belief systems, which in turn create norms and expectations for behavior. For example, while passivity is identified and condoned as ideal feminine, the same is condemned in learning institutions and assertiveness, which is ideal in masculinity, is condoned in learning institutions. These gender expectations and norms can set a stage for the development of different learning interests, concerns, and approaches among and between women and men, even though they may be learning the same materials and in the same setting. In a classroom setting for example, a woman may not only need to learn how to respond to the instructor in a formal way, but also how to respond to the expectations that she is not acting invitingly. Crawford (1989) concludes that women's structural/social position might provide one possible explanation for the variety in which women learn, know and construct their identity.

A number of scholars (Hayes and Flannery, 2000; Harding, 1996) suggested that socially and culturally determined belief systems about gender, race, class, ethnicity and other differences create different expectations and norms for behavior for individuals in similar situations. Additionally, socially and culturally determined relations of unequal power exist among these differences so that an individual assigned position of power within these structures of difference can vary from one context to another (Harding, 1996; Hurtado, 1996). For example, the increased intensity of the economic constraints encountered by a peasant female in literacy classroom may place her in a position of less power compared to a peasant female learning

amongst her peers in an informal setting such as in market place, even though they are both females in the same social position.

Harding (1996) identified ways in which the conceptions of gender shape women's learning, knowing and construction of their identity. She suggests that learning, the possibilities of knowing and achieving a goal are shaped not by the culturally prescribed roles enacted by women and men, but also by the positions they occupy in the process of learning and constructing knowledge. According to Harding, differences are combined with power to create conditions that produce local knowledge systems. These, according to her create a condition in which women and men develop unique interests and needs, which in turn shape their interests in learning and activities they engage in. Harding notes that women may have more opportunities to interact with babies, while men have more opportunities to interact with cars. These opportunities set the stage for developing larger bodies of knowledge in the arenas in which they most commonly interact. Additionally, within localized knowledge systems, women and men are enabled or limited in what they can know and the theories of knowledge they will likely to develop because of their social position, roles activities they perform.

Leathwood (2005) conducted a study of fifteen women administrators, lecturers and managers in two educational settings traditionally preserved for men. Her focus was on the ways in which they learn, know and construct their gendered, racialized and classed identities in their workplace setting. In both of these educational setting, Leathwood (2005) found that women, especially whites had made significant inroads into middle management posts, and in one college, into the senior management team. Leathwood (2005) also found that many of these women drew on the discourse of discourses, which influenced their managerial posts. Others reported on drawing on their experiences of mothering. While these women had managed to

reach that far, and their work was appreciated both by their colleagues and students, many reported that they faced discrimination. For example, in funding cuts and redundancies, women were first to be eliminated despite the discourse of equal opportunities. Leathwood, (2000) argues that being a woman, these managers were expected to be supportive rather than competitive. But in the case of competing for promotion, their supportive behavior was seen as their weakness.

Kamau (2004) examined the experiences of Kenyan women academics as they struggled within their gendered position to learn and develop their careers. All the women reported that they perceived themselves as fighters interested in genuine transformations of gender relations within their families, communities and higher education institutions. But majority of women reported that they experienced multiplicity of role conflicts and negative traditional culture, which defined them as social deviants or outsiders. Kamau argues that women in higher learning institutions are considered as “intruders, atypical and at best outsiders...Most of them were excluded from informal academic networks, lack academic mentors, suffer excessive workloads and are marginalized by a strong patriarchal culture. Their accomplishments are undervalued or discounted...” (p. 35). Kamau suggests while we may consider learning as important to women, society, and in this case patriarchal society perceive them as outsiders and inferior, which in turn impede not only their learning, but also from been promoted, as she points, “...lack of research funds continued to ensure that these women remain locked in junior lectureship positions” (36). Kamau’s (2004) study suggests that women’s structural and gendered position might provide an explanation for ways in which women learn, know and construct their identity.

Based on a review of a number of studies that examine the influence of social context in women’s learning (Crawford (1989), Harding, (1995, 1996), Hurtado, 1996, Tisdell (1998) and

Hayes and Flannery, 2000, Leathwood (2005), Kamau, (2004) suggest that women's social, cultural and economic positions shape their learning and impede them from achieving their goals. Based on her analysis, Kamau (2004) concluded that women experienced narrower range of academic, publishing, and managerial learning experience than men, have more difficult in been promoted, publishing, receive less helpful advice, receive ambiguous patterns of academic and professional behavior, and have a smaller sample of role model behavior from which to learn. Kamau argues that the condition in formal learning institutions is hostile to women, which affects their learning, knowing and achieving their personal and career goals.

In summary, the work of Crawford (1989), Harding, (1995, 1996), Hurtado, 1996, Tisdell (1998) and Hayes and Flannery, 2000 advance the understanding of how women's structural and social position influence their learning, knowing and constructing their identity. However, evidence exists that structural and social position in addition to learning context also shapes women's learning. The next section examines this issue.

Learning Context and Learning

The issue of context in learning has been theorized as particularly central in shaping women learning. The issue of context of learning in shaping women's learning in poststructural feminist thought is borrowed from the ideas of Habermas (1972) that learning and knowledge is socially constructed and Bourdieu's (1991) concept of habitus. According to Habermas, formal learning institutions are inscribed by institutional power, which serve to reproduce the social order. Bourdieu on the other hand uses his notion of habitus as institutional culture, which contains the 'genetic information', to allow and dispose successive generations to reproduce

hierarchical social structures. These two works allow post structural feminists to theorize about ways in which learning institutions may work to impede women's learning.

Hayes and Flannery (2000) argue, "Women's learning can not be understood if the social context in which it takes place are not taken into account" (p. 51). The importance of foregrounding context to understand women learning is that each context has its own expectations. For example, what a woman sets out to learn in a formal learning institution is quite different than what she learns at home, in the community or in other informal settings. This is because the content, the parameter and the goal of learning differ. Additionally, a woman's level of confidence towards learning in a formal setting may vary from when she engages in learning informally (Tarule, 1988). For example what women set out to learn and know and the goals that they set for themselves are quite different from those set by other people in formal settings.

The body of literature exploring the influence of context in women learning represents diverse racial, ethnic, class and other differences. Lykes (1985, 1989) has shown that women's learning is mediated by inequalities of power including race, ethnicity, class, and other dimensions. She argues that women learning is embedded in, and emerge from, a matrix of their gendered position and relation organized by differing and mobile dimensions of power. She did a research with White and Black US women and poor women in Guatemala, Chile, and Argentina. These women had formed social movements to protest against the state-sponsored violence that targets women and the poor. Lykes confirms the centrality of institutional power in shaping learning.

Chang (1996) did a study of culture rather than gender to study Chinese men and women studying in the United States to understand ways in which the culture of higher learning

institutions exclude and marginalize Chinese population. She found that learners' responses to their learning problems varied with the nature of the power relationship itself. Chang confirmed that women social situation respond to their relations of power.

Qin (2000) conducted a study of Chinese international women students' and found that differing constellations of race, nationality, class, and power relations resulted in different ways to perceive their 'selves'. Women in her study articulated their experiences of being targets of discrimination and being isolated by the dominant ethnic group. Being perceived as 'rare', 'alien', and 'poor' experienced a sense of *powerlessness*, which created anxiety and low confidence.

Kamau's (2004) study illustrates that the way higher learning institutions are organized, structured and operate work to the advantage of males. For example while the management propounded the discourse of merit for promotion, Kamau found that promotions were highly dependent on gender, ethnicity, and political patronage.

In summary, the work of Lykes (1985, 1989, Tarule, 1988, Chang (1996), Hayes and Flannery (2000), Qin (2000), Kamau (2004) and Leathwood (2005) advance the understanding of how formal learning institutions shape women's learning, knowing and constructing their identity. However, evidence exists that women's agency in addition to their social and learning context also shapes learning. This issue is examined in the next section.

Women's agency in Learning

Within feminist literature, networking and negotiation as strategies for agency have gained popularity due to a concern with the position of women in many social organizations and institutions. Terminology such as "bonding ties" (interactions between members of a group that

build and maintain cohesion and solidarity) and “bridging ties” (interactions external to the group) has entered the discourse around networking and negotiation in an attempt to define and understand them. Bourdieu (1986) suggests that networking and negotiation is key in exercising social power, particularly in organizations, to get things done.

Within adult education, key proponents of networking and negotiation are scholars such as Cervero & Wilson, (1996); Hendricks, (2001); Umble, (1998); Yang, Cervero, Valentine, & Benson, (1998) and others. These scholars have tried to explain how power is negotiated in formal institutions to challenge the canon of what counts as relevant knowledge, the form of what it looks like, the type of population that has been the center of analysis, and/or the type of learners that are served (Tisdell, and Watkins, 2006).

Ibarra reviewed a literature on ways in which women and minority negotiate their identity through networking and found that women tend to use more cooperative negotiation style than men. These findings coincide with those of Moore, 2000 and Watson, (1994) who have suggested that women are effective negotiators. Ibarra argues that women and minority groups tend to rely more on informal networks than men and the majority group. Ibarra however observes that the organizational context in which these networks are established “produce unique constraints on women and minorities, causing their networks to differ” (p. 56). Ibarra suggests that investigation of women’s negotiation and networking should be analyzed from a theoretical perspective that views them as active agents who make strategic choice among structurally limited alternatives. Raven (1999) discusses four dimensions in which individuals can draw their agency: social position, reciprocity, equity, and responsibility. Social position refers to one's higher position in society the organization.

Howell, Carter and Schied (2002) explored the experiences of women in the workplace and with workplace training as delivered through Human resource Development. The two locations provided a unique opportunity for in-depth study of workplace learning across many types of paid work and paid workers. Howell, Carter and Schied (2002) identified literacy training and classes that were used by the management to produce higher skilled, and 'better, educated workers within the discourse of efficiency, quality, and empowered. Women were expected to be cheerful, positive, and supportive. Those who did not express these attitudes were seen as deficient, not team players, uncooperative, and unwilling to accept decision-making responsibilities. Howell, Carter and Schied (2002) also observed, "a consistent theme of work intensification resulting from the flattening" (p. 117) without adjustments on job responsibilities. Despite these positive measures and discourses, Howell, Carter and Schied (2002) report that women were conscious of their exploitation and many pointed out the increased workload and added responsibility which did not change their subservient position or give them a chance to speak about what they thought was important to them. Others questioned the objectives of organizational changes and their impact on their day-to-day life. Howell, Carter and Shield's (2002) confirmed an idea that despite oppressive social structures and discourses, women understood their oppression and exploitation. This study however did not provide any evidence of how the agency of these women helped in transforming the oppressive management.

Kamau's (2004) study of women in higher learning institutions in Kenya provides insight on how women may use their agency to transform oppressive social structures. In her study she reports that women employed various strategies such as subverting, resisting, adapting and appropriating male behavior to make the academe work for them.

Fletcher (1999) examined ways in which women negotiated their power in workplace and how this negotiation shaped their learning. Her interview with six females, Fletcher identified skills of empathy, mutuality, reciprocity and sensitivity as strategies for negotiation. For example, Fletcher reports that during interviews, women's interactions "shifts from one party to another, not only over time but in the course of one interaction" (p. 4). Fletcher's study confirms that women exercise their agency through negotiation and networking to solve their perceived problems and achieve their goals.

Women's Social Position, Learning Context and Agency

There are studies that illustrate the combination of women's social structure, learning context and agency in shaping how women learn, know and construct their identity (Munro, Holly & Rainbird, 2000, Byfield, 2000; Lovett 2000).

Munro, Holly & Rainbird, (2000) examined the ways in which women negotiated their identity and learn in the context of oppressive workplace in United Kingdom. While the management acted as gatekeepers to learning and promotion, as well denial of information and mentoring services, women diverted these impediments through their agency. Munro, Holly & Rainbird, (2000) report that some women rejected opportunities for formal and informal learning because they believed learning would not increase their remuneration, but only job stress for the benefit of the organization. While Munro, Holly & Rainbird, (2000) do not point to the ways this agency transformed, they report how the women's behavior influenced the access to information and formal learning opportunities.

Byfield (2000) examined ways in which marriage institution was used to exploit women in Yorubaland Nigeria and how women used their agency to transform this institution. Byfield

(2000) reports that women identified the ways discourse of marriage worked to exploit women and used their agency to “regulate their marriage” (p. 38) by entering into socioeconomic, political and judicial spaces. Women who were employed were able to dissolve unwanted gender relationships.

Lovett (2000) looked into ways in which Ha women in Buha Tanzania exercised their agency to transform labor market (men’s migration into mines and plantations), which worked to increase their workloads and confined them into unpaid labor. Women in Lovett’s study used various contestations including employing other women and engaging in activities that did not take too much of their time. For example, many women abandoned millet production, which required intensive physical labor and which was used only for home consumption and engaged in cassava plantation, which they could sell for cash.

Cornwall (2000) explored ways in which customary laws were used to oppress women in Ado-Odo in Nigeria and how women struggled to to transform them. Using court records, Cornwall (2000) identifies the emergence of the discourse of “Wayward Women and Useless Men in as being used to shape women’s behavior. In her study, Cornwall used interviews and to understand how the images of good women and useful men as well as wayward women and useless men in Ado-Odo had constructed women and changed their behavior over time. Cornwall also looked into ways in which women struggled to repudiate those discourses. These included struggle for formalization of divorce in customary law, the learning of trade and other skills. These struggles were identified as women’s exercise of their agency.

The studies conducted by Munro, Holly & Rainbird, (2000), Byfield, (2000); Lovett (2000); and Cornwall (2000) provide examples of how agency, social position and context can

shape not only how women learn, know and construct their identity, but also what they learn, know and become.

Summary of Literature within Poststructural Perspective

This literature review examined research on women learning in relation to their social position and agency. These two themes were found to be key in poststructural feminist perspective. This literature reveals that the lens of social position and agency provide useful approach for capturing the complexities involved in learning, knowing and constructing identity. The literature suggests that women's social position enhance or impede their learning due to power structure embedded in learning institutions and the culture of knowledge creation. The literature further suggests that women's social position determine to some extent what women learn, shapes the strategies that women use to learn and ways in which they learn. The literature on women's agency reveals that women exercise their agency in response to oppressive situation they encounter that they perceives as impeding their learning and achieving their goals. Furthermore, the majority of these studies explored women's learning in formal learning contexts.

Weaknesses of Post-structural Feminism

The weakness in post structural feminist perspective is related to the understanding of agency. Post structural feminists identify agency as the ability to transform oppressive social structure but fail to explain the factor that enables individuals to repudiate those structures. While poststructural feminists acknowledges social structures as oppressive to women, it follows that the only capacity for women must stem from the very same social structures and discourses

that oppress women. By collapsing the separation between women agency and oppressive social structures and discourses that form her, this inadvertently eliminates the capacity necessary for women agency. Similar questions had previously been put to Michel Foucault who repeatedly urged resistance to constraining discourses and structures, but never indicated where the resources for such resistance could be obtained or utilized by a fully constructed self (Foucault, 1980; Fraser, 1989).

The second weakness that I can identify in post structural feminist theory is related to an assumption that all social structures are oppressive. This idea emanated from seeing social institutions as male dominated and therefore, reflecting masculine personality (see for example Harding, 1981). Harding points to social institutions as naturally created for domination because they "...are designed by men with images of masculine." (p. 36). To me this assertion is faulty because even in 'all women' organizations there may also be elements of discrimination and oppression.

In a sense, my work is grounded in my conviction that it is possible to link social structures (women's experiences as represented in their day-to-day life) in order to understand their agency within their social environment.

From a critical feminist perspective, I believe that research on learning, knowing and constructing identity needs to address such questions as, Who controls the learning, knowledge, who define the learners; whose goals and objectives of learning and knowledge and for what purposes? Where are the voices of women learning and in learning institutions? Why does the assumption that women's knowledge, ways of knowing and goals of learning should be in alignment with formal learning, employment continue to go unquestioned? Is adult education imposed on women for purposes of societal efficiency, productivity, and maximization of profit

ethical? Can the instrumental goals of literacy programs, the ongoing social hierarchies and the sustained balance of gender relations in the day-to-day interactions really be aligned with a feminist perspective that challenges the status quo? What about women's spatial location, especially those in rural areas in location such as rural Tanzania, how does their peripheral location shape their learning? These questions provide a starting point for including women's voices, especially in an attempt to create less oppressive social relations in the homes, community, societal and global at large.

Relevance of Post-structural Feminism to this Study

Though many Third World and African feminists have argued that the current interest in post structural feminism is unwarranted and has little relevance for Third World and African women's experience, I find the lens's interpretive philosophy as being very relevant to the current experience of women in Yuuri and Sufi. This is because through the interpretation of the current women's experiences, I will understand, the influence of women's social, spatial position in their learning. Likewise, post structural feminist lens also helps understanding power processes and practices that are used to legitimate modern knowledge and delegitimize women knowledge and how this shape women's learning. In appropriating concepts such as ideology, discourses and hegemony, the lens helps in interpreting ways in which power is used to construct women's roles in Yuuri and Sufi.

Identifying language or discourse as capable of producing cultural workings and practices, post structural feminist lens allows me to analyze political economy of women social position within the discourse of womanhood. In other words, how womanhood as a discourse was used to produce ideas in the day-to-day interactions, women's space in the homes, language

used work arrangement and in rituals. It helps in understanding how these created in women a certain type of subjectivity and shape their learning.

Another relevance of poststructural lens in this study is related to its stance on partiality of reality. I recognized each individual in the research including myself as having values and belief systems, and assumptions about the world, which may impede or distort perception and understanding. I considered each individual's experience as relevant and important in contributing to the knowledge that I created. The following section presents my second perspective that I used in this study.

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

This section explores the second framework guiding this study - Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). It is divided into three main sections: The first section presents an overview of development of the theory, looking into the works of early contributors of theory: Vygotsky (1978), Leont'ev (1978; 1981), and Engestrom (1987; 1990). In the second, I discuss the ways identity and construction of identity is theorized and, in the last section, I discuss the weakness and potential of cultural-historical activity theory to my study.

Development of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934)

Learning/Construction of Identity: Artifact Mediated Action

Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist developed his ideas in the period of intellectual ferment and social change that followed the Russian revolution. With Karl Marx's influence of

social development known as historical materialism, Vygotsky developed the notion of artifact-mediated action in his treatise, "*Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*" (1978). In this work, the central idea is how learning, and in our case, construction of identity is mediated through cultural tools and artifacts. In other words, Vygotsky tries to understand ways in which people appropriate cultural means to learn. He rejected Piaget's (1972) genetic epistemology view that individual makes meaning and understand reality through experience based on his or her ability. According to Piaget, human beings come to know by building up certain elements of their cognitive or emotional apparatus; that is, human beings construct knowledge and store it internally. At the heart of this strand in order to predict learning, knowing and construction of identity attempts to understand the knowledge that learners bring to a given learning situation.

Vygotsky seems to depart from this view and identify active participation in learning as key to learning and knowing - a key process of transforming elementary psychological into complex ones. Knowledge, Vygotsky observes, exists in a social and cultural contexts is initially shared with others instead of being represented solely in the mind of an individual. According to Vygotsky, participation in social and cultural activities is key to the development of culture.

Tools

Vygotsky identified the development of tools as a starting point towards human development from nature to culture. To do so he examines the ways in which people use tools and artifacts to perform various activities. Vygotsky defines tools as those things that people use to master and triumph over nature or change their environment. Things such as pen, tractors, computers, telephones and the like can be categorized into tools. These are used to change

human external environment (environment can be houses, economic activities, and the like). This environment can be termed as objects. According to Vygotsky, objects are cultural entities that people work to change and transform to achieve a perceived goal. In a learning context, an object may be a problem to be solved, and issue to be discussed. In the case of this study an object is identity or womanhood, and the use of tools to change or transform it may be termed as construction of identity. Material resources such as land and finances can also be identified as tool, for they facilitate acquisition of tools.

Signs

While Vygotsky defines tools as those things that people use to change external environment, he defines signs as things that are used to change individual internal environment, help to regulate our behavior. Signs include counting systems, language, scientific methods, education, and models. Others things such as values, duties, and ethics (Latour, 1992) can be added to the list.

Vygotsky's Framework: Human Mediated Activity

Vygotsky argued that tools serve to organize and reorganize human activities - setting standards or making new goals possible. Artifacts on the other hand serve to organize and reorganize human thinking, knowing and development of experience. Vygotsky (1978) identifies language in particular as key in the development of internal thinking and knowing, arguing, it is through language that people get to understand the meanings of words, which define what we are, and what our roles are. Without the knowledge of words and concepts it is impossible to know, to think appropriately, communicate experience, or understand what others expect of us.

Likewise, without resources such as computer, hoes, land and industries, it becomes impossible to work, change our lives and develop.

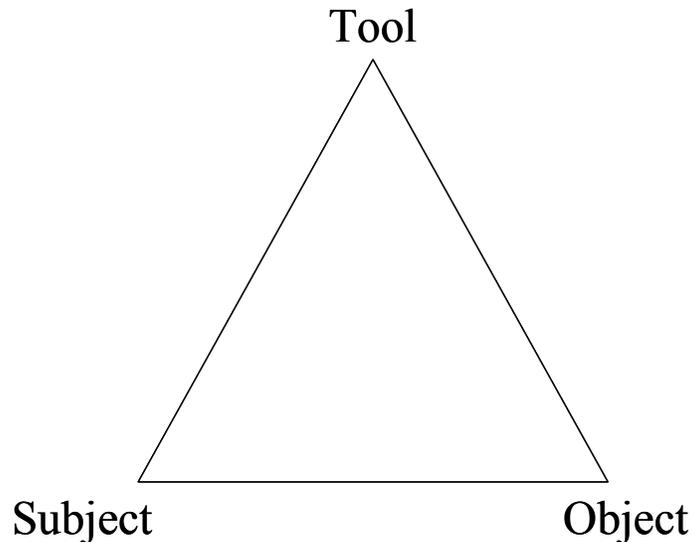


Figure 1. Vygotskian model of activity unit in tool-mediated action.

According to Vygotsky, human activity consists of a subject (or actor), an object (either an entity or a goal), and mediational tools and signs.

Subject:

A subject from the Vygotskian view is an active rather than passive human being. The activeness of the subject towards the object or activity connotes an idea that the processes of activity are under the individual's volition control, rather than under that of the task or the tool. To act, according to Vygotsky depends on the effort of the subject but this is not context free, historically, culturally and materially mediated. For an individual to participate in an activity, she

or he is driven by accomplishing a certain goal. These goals may be achieved through Hierarchy of actions, which he identifies as the tasks, actions, and operations.

Activity, (e.g., construction of identity, learning and knowing) is the performance of conscious actions and consists of chains of actions (such as paying attention to one's social environment, participating in various social activities etc.). Actions are chains of operations (e.g., getting married, getting a baby). All operations are actions when they are first performed because they require conscious effort to perform. With practice and internalization, activities collapse into actions and eventually into operations, as they become more automatic, requiring less conscious effort.

The activity system proposed by Vygotsky provides us with a notion of construction of identity as an activity that people perform with specific motive (I would add needs and interests) mediated by tools and artifact (these can be anything from economic stability to education and the like).

Alexei Leont'ev (1924 - 1979)

Collective Activity System

Unlike Vygotsky, Leont'ev was more concerned with external environment to understand the concept of labor and production of use values. Leont'ev's theory of activity is informed by many of the same Marxist ideas as Vygotsky's. His framework, like Vygotsky's is concerned with cognition and the development of consciousness. However, whereas Vygotsky took as his principal unit of analysis a task requiring the use of a goal-directed and mediated (and, hence, cultural) process, Leont'ev took activity, in general, as his unit of analysis. For Leont'ev, human activity comprises three levels – a motive, action and operation. Each of these can be analyzed separately. However, Leont'ev argues that the structure of activity (motive, action and operation)

is hierarchical. Leont'ev is premised in the idea that all human activity (here we can call learning, knowing, constructing identity) arises in response to some need, such as (such as for achieving a certain preconceived goal). This motivates human activity (e.g., enroll in literacy classes).

From that framework, Leont'ev developed a model of object-oriented activity as a key factor in human's behavior and the collective consciousness. In other words, engage in certain activity because of a pre-conceived individual or communal need to achieve a certain goal. According to him, human's activity is realized jointly and conditioned in this collectivity. In his famous example of "primeval collective hunt"(Leont'ev, 1981, p. 210-213), Leont'ev explicated the crucial difference between an individual action and a collective activity, suggesting that human activity is performed in conditions of joint, collective activity. On this he made a bridge from Vygotsky's model of activity as a process mediated solely by tools and artifacts to also being mediated through social interaction (Leont'ev, 1981, p. 208). In other words, Leont'ev extended Vygotsky's activity system from individual to collective, in that, people do not act only for themselves, but also because of what is expected of them by others.

Leont'ev activity System

Motive

According to Leont'ev, the first level in any human activity starts with a motive. What is the motive behind an activity that one is engaged in? Leont'ev (1978) identifies motives as being socially constructed objects, such as literacy, economic development, houses, clothes and the like. We can call these objectified motives because they have been legitimated and accepted as valid to be identified and realized. Individuals also construct motives, which can be termed, subjective.

Subjective motives are those which have not been accepted in society. These can be anything from repudiation of societal norms such as a decision not to marry in a heterosexual society. Subjective motives can coincide with objective ones, or can be contradictory. Contradictory motives are usually hard to sustain because they are not supported by society, either materially or psychologically.

However, in ordinary, life, people may be constrained by unique contextual conditions (e.g. as a result of living in a given historical epoch and environment), on the one hand, or by individual factors and forces (e.g. facts of birth such as sex or type of temperament), on the other. These forces, which produce certain psychological and material condition, may shape one's motive towards a certain action. Leont'ev (1975) suggests that to study and understand the dynamics of people's motives, we need also to pay attention to their unique contextual and individual forces that may trigger, bend or distort motives towards their participation in an activity.

Action

The second level in Leont'ev's activity model is action. What actions have been taken towards the object? Actions are goal-directed processes that must be undertaken to fulfill the object. They are conscious (because one holds a goal in mind), and different actions may be undertaken to meet the same goal. For example, an individual may have the object of achieving a certain goal (build a house for example), and to achieve this goal, she may be required to perform various and unrelated actions, which cannot be conceived as immediately directed towards building a house, including looking for employment to get money, finding a husband with a nice house and the like. These actions (seeking employment and getting married) might

not be connected to acquiring a house, but they can eventually lead her into acquiring one. In both cases (getting employment and finding someone with a nice house) become motives behind her actions.

Operation

The third level is operations. Operational aspect or level is the way the action is actually carried out in the activity system. This is routinized activities, may be carried out consciously and unconsciously. Operation is the ‘how’ of the action. From our example of acquiring a house, a woman who decides to find an employment may first equip herself with appropriate skills to qualify her for employment. Operation becomes the first component in the activity because it entails how to achieve the goal. When one starts to operationalize an action, it becomes difficult to always be conscious of the goal, but all the actions are performed consciously and unconsciously towards an explicit goal. According to Leont’ev, operations depend on the conditions under which the action is being carried out. If a goal remains the same while the conditions under which it is to be carried out change, then “only the operational structure of the action will be changed” (Leont'ev 1974, p. 34). According to Leont’ev (1978), operations are “the methods for accomplishing actions” (Leont'ev, 1978, p. 65).

In many cases, societies develop conducive environment for people with “legitimate motives” to operationalize actions. For example, the society tries to build and institutionalize educational institutions, health facilities, religious services as cultural tools and artifacts to mediate and raise people’s hopes of better life. Leont’ev argued that the meanings, tools, and artifacts (which he calls symbols) come to have importance only when people acknowledge and

use them. This implies that tools and symbols are meaningless unless people acknowledge and use them.

People do not operationalize their action randomly, but systematically. Leont'ev (1978) argues that, human action has hierarchic structure, which is situated in the context of historically developed collective practices. This he called 'an activity system,' which is identified as a condition in and under which people identify as mediating their actions, and which can be distinguished by its motive or goal. Accordingly, individual actions are always specific, each one pointing to a definite motive, directed toward achieving a goal. According to Leont'ev, a motive is extinguished as a result of achieving a goal.

Engeström (1987-present)

Learning as Socio-cultural and Historical Human Activity

Leont'ev did not graphically expand Vygotsky's original model of mediated action into a model of a collective activity system. Nor did he identify human agency in transforming activity system. Such a model is depicted in Engeström's, (1987) structure of a human activity system (See Figure 2).

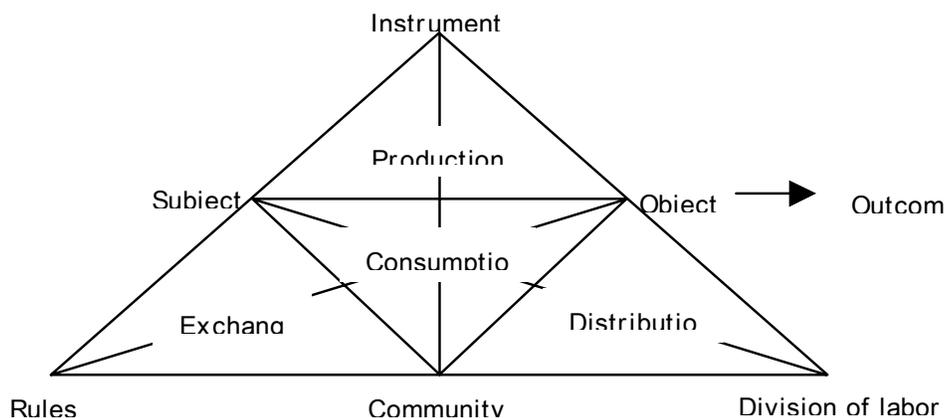


Figure : The structure of a human activity system (Engeström, 1987 p. 78).

According to Engeström, (1987), human activity cannot be analyzed separately from a larger system, but should be conceptualized as a part of systemic whole, where it is performed within a multitude of structures and relations. Here he implied that, any human activity should not be understood as occurring only within a communal relation but also within various networks and relations in which an individual is situated. This moves from an understand of activity as constrained only by social, economic, gender, age, educational status, to networks, multiple perspectives and voices. Engestrom argues, understanding an activity, we need to take account of differences in cognition across cultures, social groups and domains of practice (Engestrom, 1991).

Central ideas in Engestrom's framework

Activity system within a community of practice

According to Engestrom (2001), any human activity is performed within a community of practice, which comprises multiple individuals “dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks”

(p. 135). According to him, community of practice is not merely a community of people with the same kind of interest such as watching movies or fishing, but of people who share a repertoire of resources such as experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems (technology) etc. In short, it connotes a community of people who have interacted over time.

With respect to the ways individual become a member and act in the community; Wenger and Snyder (2000) illustrated in their concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (LPP) to show how people come to be members of community of practice. This involves moving from the periphery to the center, a novice to savvy, from non-member to full member of the group. This movement from the periphery to the center, according to Wenger and Snyder (2000) means becoming progressively more engaged and active in the community practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that "mastery resides not in the master but in the organization of the community of practice of which the master is a part" (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p. 95).

Shared Meaning within the Community of Practice

In his expansive model, Engeström (1991) describes the importance of shared meaning in activity system. On this he argues that people participate in an activity because of their shared objects of activity, which is effected by their social cognition. Social cognition here is concerned with how people make sense of other people and of themselves (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). According to this view, much of what people do is based from what they learn from the society and meaning they attach to that information. In other words, people participate in certain activity because it is accepted by society as valid and the individual see it as important to her. According to Engeström, ways people participate in an activity may vary due to their differences in cognition.

Contradictions

According to Engeström (1987) contradictions emerge and evolve within and between activity systems. The importance of contradiction in Engeström's framework, I believe is due to his acknowledgement of multi-voicedness of activity system.. Engeström believes possesses multiple points of view, traditions and interests. Because of this, contradictions are inevitable. Engeström sees contradictions in an activity system as a necessary condition for change and transformation (Engeström et al. 1999).

To sum, learning, knowing and constructing identity in cultural-historical activity perspective is understood as an activity system, which is formed through people's pre conception of a need and of achieving a personal and communal goal within contradictory environment that is mediated by social and cultural rules and norms.

The Concept of Learning

The concept of learning in cultural historical activity perspective is conceptualized in two ways - as a 'vertical' and 'horizontal' development. It is Vygotsky (1978) that developed the idea of vertical development from cognitive development theories. Vertical development is located in ideas about intellectual development, which consists of individual progress through a hierarchy of knowledge and skills and away from the specifics of human practice (Beach & Vyas, 1998). The vertical movement from specifics towards greater levels of abstraction and decontextualization constitutes the hallmark of human cognitive developmental progress. This cognitive development in learning makes a distinction from mere learning to true learning (Gick, 1995). Vertical learning normally occurs through formal learning institution such as literacy classes and universities.

By contrast, the concept of ‘horizontal’ development arises from more recent developments in socio-cultural theory. This refers to the process of change and development which occurs within an individual as learn in an informal context such as in the family, community, in the church and the like. Thus, at one level, it could refer to the changes in an individual’s sense of identity as a result of the experience in day-to-day interactions. At another level, it could refer to the capacity to understand the environment and develop skills appropriate for better interaction (Engeström *et al.*, 1995).

Empirical Studies

Empirical studies focus on three major themes found in cultural-historical activity perspective (a) the influence of community need and culture in learning (b) the influence of history in learning (c) the influence of contradictions and a possibility to achieve a goal in learning. I begin with a brief overview of how these themes are defined. Then I present the review of literature associated with the above themes. I conclude with a summary of these themes followed by possible explanations of how women in their communal context shape their learning.

The community and culture are understood as key in activity system. Vygotsky reconceptualized learning as a ‘complex mediated act’, a triad involving the subject (the individual), the object (the task or learning) and mediating artifacts (e.g. culture, rules, norms, technologies, books). By placing the idea of *mediation* and culturer at the center of the learning process, was deeply significant, emphasizing that individuals could not be understood in isolation from their context and its enabling ‘means’ and that society could not be understood without taking into account the agency of individuals who use and produce those means (Engeström, 1996b).

The influence of history in learning

Learning, knowing and construction of identity occur over lengthy periods of time. Women learning can only be understood against their own history. To understand women in history, we need to study history itself in relation to learning. For example, education needs to be analyzed against the history of its local organization and against the more global history of learning concepts, procedures and resources used to effect learning.

Contradictions and a Possibility to achieve a Goal

Learning is perceived as a process towards a change. Thus, contradictions are perceived as sources of change and development. Contradictions are not the same as problems or conflicts, but tensions that have historically accumulated. The primary contradiction in a learning endeavor is that between the individual and societal need.

Learning in Cultural-Historical Activity Perspective

Yrjo Engestrom's (2001) study of "Expansive Learning at Work: toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization," looked into ways learning occurs as people participate in certain activities in organizational context. Using children health care in Helsinki as a case study, he explored ways in which parents and practitioners from various caregiver organizations worked together due to a need for taking a joint responsibility for the overall progress of their health care organization. Engestrom traced a history of the provision of health care as been practiced within monopoly of medical practice rather than encouraging patients to use primary care health center services. Engestrom also identifies historical changes and changes in economic, which resulted

into rising costs in health care services. The rising costs created a need for responding to the pressures by initiating a collaborative redesigning of health care services in favor of increased use of primary care services.

Engestrom suggests that learning needs occurred “ in a changing mosaic of *interconnected activity systems* which are energized by their own inner contradictions” (p. 140). A contradiction emerges between the patients moving from the hospital care to primary care due to costs and the conflictual *questioning* of the existing standard practice.

In his study, Engestrom identified health practitioners (physicians, nurses, other staff, and management) and patients’ families and patients as people in community of practice. He identified an object of activity (the problem) as emerging from a need to identify multiple or unclear diagnoses in children with asthma and severe allergies. The activity goal was to initiate and host a collaborative redesign effort, using a method called *Boundary Crossing Laboratory*. Engestrom identified contradictions in several levels. At one level he sees the contradiction between the hospital and the primary health center, and between the families and health providers. Engestrom identified these contradictions as key to bring about a need for change and transformation.

Although Engestrom identifies transformation through contradictions, which produced a need for learning and changing the pattern of providing health care, his study does not show how differences in social relations and expertise impacted on decision making, not does he show how contradictory views were essential input in the transformation of the activity. There remain questions about how these people’s (health practitioners, patients’ families patients) differences were reconciled, and how their difference shaped their interactions and ways they solved problems or set new goals? Although Engestrom does not believe people as possessing the same

capacity to understand issues surrounding their lives, he is unable to illustrate how their differing capacities shape their participation in discussion and in solving the perceived problem, and hence learning

Foot (2001) used Engestrom's expansive learning framework to study change and transformations in the Network for Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning (AEWARN) project in the Soviet Union. She identified sociopolitical and economic concerns as a primary driving force to the formation of this organization (EAWARN). In her method, Foot used participant observation, field notes, oral reports, annual meeting, archived materials, electronic messages and texts written by the directors and members of the project to understand ways in which AEWARN employees participated in activities of their organization. The formation of AEWARN was identified as a goal through which Russian-speaking social scientists could reduce or eliminate a sense of isolation in scholarship.

Although Foot identifies various differences among participants, "Many of the Network participants and two of the five Network directors spoke Russian as their first language. The others spoke Russian fluently as a second language, although with discernible accents...all of the discussions at the annual meetings and on the teleconference...were in Russian." (p. 73). Furthermore, Foot did not attempt to find out reasons why members continued in membership regardless of obvious conflicts, "Network member equated the directors' attempts to standardize the reports and the model with a lack of trust in the Network members" (p. 21). Foot's conclusions presume that the network will continue to survive due to its continuous conflict resolution. This view is debatable because some genuine problems among members especially the minorities may be marginalized and therefore, their view may not be counted as important in making important decision for the organization.

Päivi Talonpoika-Ukkonen (1989) produced a dissertation in 1989 entitled “Learning Across Levels: Challenges of Collaboration in a Small-Firm Network” to study the formation of networks spaces for learning. She used Engestrom’s (1987) expansive model to analyze ways people in organizations learn through networking. She collected data through videotapes, and audio-recorded, participated in network meetings, and conducted interviews with six members of a group called *The Club*. She also used archival documents and her field notes to identify different levels in which individual; groups and the whole organization learn.

Talonpoika-Ukkonen used four learning questions developed by Engestrom (1997) - who, why, what and how of the learning process. On the ‘who question,’ Talonpoika-Ukkonen identified two types of learners: the individual and the firm (organization learning). Learning - the why question, was identified as triggered by attempts at solving the firm-network tension as well as by historical processes that forced the emerging of the concept of collaboration. The object of learning, Talonpoika-Ukkonen identified models, rules and practices that were developed with a goal to achieve collaboration within the organizations and within the network. The outcome - the goal was the creation of the middle-plane model for the project activity of the Club.

On the ‘what question,’ Talonpoika-Ukkonen identified production-level trust as one of the aspects of learning objects. Talonpoika-Ukkonen argues that, though production-level trust was not so much the motivation for or the goal for learning, it was an important factor contributing to individual and the organization learning. And on the question of ‘how learning took place,’ Talonpoika-Ukkonen identified developmental intervention as an important way in which individuals and the firm created boundary objects (such as the team project) that enhanced levels of collaboration and learning.

Like studies by Engestrom and Foot, Talonpoika-Ukkonen does not indicate how differences in social relations might have impacted on the way people, participated in the whole process in the organization activities.

All the studies – Engestrom’s and Foot’s Talonpoika-Ukkonen’s are informative in illustrating ways in which of activity is formed and how people participate in attaining their communal goals. The problem with these studies, however, is inability to illustrate ways in which organization norms, values, beliefs, meanings, understanding, sense making are shared and/or contested. Furthermore, they have failed to identify how different cultural means embodied by various community members may shape one’s perception and behavior and how this may shape the development of activity system.

Weakness of Cultural-Historical Perspective in Learning

The perspective is silent on what happens to those people with ‘illegitimate motives’ towards activity system, in that, what are the explanations of the negative actions towards the shared cultural means? In other words, what counts as knowledge for marginalized groups like women in Yuuri and Sufi? These questions are important especially in the current global context, where polarization of people and knowledge has become the order of the day.

In the same train of thought, this perspective is silent on what happens when there are oppressive norms, values practices that may appear to be necessary and fundamental in the activity system. Such norms and values that people are ‘supposed’ to emulate to identify or be identified by others as particular ‘people’ may work to keep people in their oppressive condition.

Furthermore, the concept of participation as a way to learn, know and construct identity does not explain anything about the effects of unequal social, economic, cultural and political

relations. This model, cannot explain what Nardi (1996) commented on as “the messy intractable world beyond the laboratory, beyond the human machine dyad” (p. 3), which is typical of women’s day-to-day social interactions in Yuuri and Sufi.

Kaptelinin’s problem with cultural-historical activity theory is the changes in the concept of object of activity. While Leont’ev identified object as individual motive toward an activity, Engestrom conceptualized it as “the raw materials or problem space at which the activity is directed and which is molded and transformed into outcome” (Kaptelinin, 2005, p. 10). This, Kaptelinin argues creates problems because one would not know what to be identified as a motive, an objective or a goal in activity system.

Davydov (1999) spends time in his chapter on “The Content and Unsolved Problems of activity Theory” exploring the weakness of the theory. He categorized these ‘unsolved’ problems into eight. I will describe five of them that I consider useful in this study. The first problem that Davydov identifies is related to the conceptualization of transformation. He critiques CHAT’s understanding of transformation as a changing the object. Davydov argues that not all changes are transformation. Transformation, he argues, is a complete change of an object – externally and internally – it is altering its essence. Davydov defines essence as “a genetic initial or universal relation of a system of object that gives birth to its specific and individual features.... [It] is a law of development of the system itself” (p. 42). Davydov offers two types of transformation. One is the change of existing external order of the object, and the second is the change of its inner potential and its integral system.

The second problem identified by Davydov is related to the concepts of ‘collective’ and ‘individual.’ On these he argues that while CHAT theorists acknowledge the two forms in the activity system, very little attention is paid on their differences. For example, while CHAT admit

the process of internalization important for individual activity on the basis of collective activity, some researchers dismiss the internalization of collective activity.

Davydov suggests that in studying activity system, researchers need to engage in more extensive research looking into issues such as “If the collective subject is external to particular individual can it be imagine in the form some totality of group of persons, and in what exact sense does it exist outside the particular individual who form this group? What must be the essential feature of a group of persons who carry out the joint activity so that this group may be defined as a collective subject? What characteristics can help to distinguish collective and individual subjects? What are the particular characteristics of the individual subject, and in what ways does it differ from personality? What can be defined as the personal level of realizing individual activity?” (p 44-45).

The third ‘problem’ that Davydov identifies in CHAT is the problem in the definition of general structure of activity. In CHAT, the general structure of activity system is made up of elements such as needs, motives, goals, actions and operations. This, according to Davydov, lacks the means of achieving a goal. Davydov suggests the inclusion of a mean in the activity system.

The concept of activity itself is the fourth problem that Davydov identifies in the theory. The problem that he identifies in the conceptualization of activity is its inclusivity and broadness. According to Davydov, activity in the English language is too broad to the extent that there is no demarcation between meaningless and meaningful human activity. Davydov suggests that researchers need to classify human activity within its historical form of its development in order to situate activity within meaningful forms of people’s social life.

The fifth problem that Davydov identifies in activity theory is related to the interrelationship between activity and interaction. On this he argues that it is important to separate the two. Davydov defines the two concepts in this way. Activity is a mode of human historical and social existence and development, and is realized through in the form of material and spiritual social relationship. Interaction on the other hand is a process of realizing an activity. While activity is a mode of existence, interaction exists only in the process of realizing different modes of existence.

Relevance of CHAT to this Study

The theory is highly relevant in understanding reasons women participate in constructing their womanhood identity because to be able to understand a role, an individual has to participate in social and cultural activities. That is, to be able to understand what is expected, one has to be an active member of a group (e.g., have enough time to participate, knowledge and skills, etc.). Vygotsky's ideas about actions mediated by cultural tools help in understanding how womanhood ideology might be used to shape women's behavior.

Leont'ev's framework of communal in activity system helps in understanding that one's action does not occur solely from one's inner perception, but within the constraint of various conditions and relations, which may be mediated by one's historical context.

Idea of Engestrom on contradictions as unavoidable in activity system is important in looking into contradictions or failure as positive indicator for change and growth.

Post structural Feminism and Cultural-historical Activity: Comparison

Poststructural feminism and cultural-historical activity perspectives, both theorize construction of identity. The two have many similarities. Both identify society as source information where people make sense of themselves and what others expect from them. Both conceptualize identity as independent of and existing prior to individual and current society. Both regard individuals as different from each other and with multiple identities that are formed through interpreting social and cultural norms and values differently. In many cases, theorists of both perspectives use similar words and language but with quite different meanings. For example, when theorizing ways identity is constructed, post structural feminists speak of construction of identity as subverting ascribed roles and position, cultural-historical activity theorists speak of participation in social and cultural activities in order to learn the roles and position one is supposed to assume.

In this case, both theories identify formation of identity as a multifaceted social construct that come to being from people's role in society; variation in identities is due to the different roles or activities that people perform. Despite their difference in emphasis, both emphasize on multifaceted and dynamism in self, pointing to individual as active in processing messages from the environment.

Remarkably, the two perspectives are different in many ways with virtually no cross-referencing. Poststructural feminism can be identified with sociology. Within sociology, all knowledge and reality is socially constructed. All social structures, relations and processes including construction of identity emanate from an idea formed within society. Post structural feminists (Butler 1990, 1993, 1999; Klein 1984; Morris 1992; Goffman 1974 and others) explain formation of one's identity in terms of reciprocal relation one has towards his or her assigned

roles. McFadden, (1997) for example argues that social roles assigned to women have a lot of effect on their thinking and behavior (also see Lewis, 2002).

Cultural-historical activity theorists on the other hand, place their emphasis on human psychology, looking into interpersonal interactions as a foundation of the development of one's identity. Identity is formed as a result of individual or groups' participation in social and cultural activity. In other words, identity emerges as a result of people and group collaboration with aim to achieve a perceived goal. From cultural-historical activity perspective, identity is considered a product of social and cultural interactions where people come to know what is required of them as members of society. Their emphasis is on social relations rather than role relation.

Academic void

Within post structural feminism, identity and construction of identity are identified as a process. A process is simply a series of actions, changes, or functions performed to bring about a change. Formation of identity in this perspective privileges a Western, individualistic understanding of society and humans.

Cultural-historical activity helps us to look into historically and culturally produced ideas about identity, and processes and practices that maintain those ideas. It goes without saying that formation of identity is effected through internalization of socially accepted norms and values, which the individual is expected to conform to fit in society.

With this in mind I'd like to get a sense of the reasons women in Yuuri and Sufi participate in constructing their womanhood identity. While I try to understand women's motives for constructing their womanhood identity, I try not to focus on individual's ideas per se, but traced their experiences from their family, as they were growing up, in their married life

educational background, as wives and mothers, as well as resources accessible to them. I argue that the three perspectives – poststructural feminism, cultural-historical activity theory and Bourdieu’s notion of habitus cannot explain identity in isolation but reinforcing and modifying day-to-day people’s interactions and work together systematically in forming womanhood identity.

To do this, the following questions guided the study

1. What are socio-cultural and historical conditions in and under which the women in my study operate?
2. In what ways are ideas about womanhood represented in day-to-day interactions of residents of Yuuri and Sufi?
3. In what ways have selected women participated in constructing their womanhood identity?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Overview of the Chapter

The chapter describes the design of the study in two parts. Part one includes research purpose and methods, my stance as a researcher and the strategies I used in this study. The second part discusses the strategies used in this study, which include sampling techniques, data collection, and data analysis plan. In each case, I provide the rationale for selecting the various procedures and how I used them to obtain, analyze and present the data.

In this study, I aim to investigate the ways and reasons women in Yuuri and Sufi in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania participate in constructing their womanhood identities. My framework for this study is developed from post structural feminist and cultural-historical activity perspectives. I draw from the works of Butler (1990); Foucault (1970) Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Beurdieu (1988) as well as from the theory of knowing exemplified by Bateson (1972); Vygotsky (1978); Leont'ev (1978); and Engestrom, (1996) to interrogate ways in which women have constructed their identity.

The concept of womanhood in this study is understood as cultural representation of women, where cultural meanings are used to mark and maintain differences between men and women. Under this interpretation, gender differences and their meanings are used to assign women different roles and positions in society. Womanhood is therefore, a cultural artifact mediating both women and men's thinking and actions. In other words, womanhood as a concept shapes the ways in which people (men and women) perceive women's roles and position in family and larger society. As a mode of intelligibility, womanhood ideas are projected in society to describe what women are and what they can do. Participation of women in women's roles and

positions is understood in this study as constructing their womanhood identity, and this may be done intentionally or un-intentionally, and both are taken to be a learning activity or process. To understand how women come to participate in re-constructing womanhood identity, this study looks into the processes that help them recognize and make sense of themselves and their environment, how those processes are maintained in their day-to-day interactions.

My research questions are:

1. What are the socio-cultural and historical conditions under which the women in my study operate?
2. What are socio-cultural and historical conditions in and under which the women in my study operate?
3. In what ways are ideas about womanhood represented in day-to-day interactions of residents of Yuuri and Sufi?
4. In what ways have selected women participated in constructing their womanhood identity?

The process of constructing identity, which is tantamount to making meaning or knowing in this study is understood as a mediated system of participation in cultural activities where people use their experiences, dispositions and aspirations to do what Michael Foucault called screening off certain aspects of nature in order to accomplish a goal in life. In other words, people make decisions through screening off messages they get to understand their roles and position in a particular environment.

Reasons why people learn cannot be separated from human's existence. In other words, to learn is to exist and to exist is to understand your role and position in the world. If this is true,

it follows that learning of one's role and position is part and parcel of one's identity.

Accordingly, women cannot be separated from their roles and positions, because these are what identify them as women. Therefore, women's learning, which can also be understood as women constructing their identity, refers to participating in constructing womanhood, a cultural identity that has been developed through socio-cultural processes and maintained in their day-to-day interactions to produce subjectivity. This subjectivity mediates women's thinking and actions.

Similarly, Vygotsky's idea of human beings as subjects rather than objects provides an idea of human self-identification in culture. According to Vygotsky, the subject does not exist apart from an action. A subject is an agent of a particular activity. Being a subject means participating in cultural activities. Cultural activities in this sense means the activities that 'particular people' are assigned to perform in their social, historical and material space (Sawchuck, 2003). How and why women participate in constructing their womanhood identity is a meaningful question in adult education and in women studies because it gives an explanation of ways one's identity or learning is made possible, not only by looking into socialization and participating in social and cultural activities. It also explains the ways in which individuals process messages and make decision to participate in those activities, learn and come to know

The study uses the concept of womanhood as a devise to explore how it mediates people's thinking and actions. These are then related to socio-cultural and historical processes and practices, people's day-to-day interactions and women's thinking and actions. To explore the above, I generate three types of data:

1. Socio-cultural and historical contexts of Sufi and Yuuri.
2. Representations of womanhood ideas in day-to-day interactions of the residents of Yuuri and Sufi.

3. Women's perceptions and behaviors.

Data on socio-cultural and historical context are traced back to the larger social-historical processes of rural Tanzania. The main question is: what are the specific socio-historical processes and practices under which the participants of my study operate? Here I identify the politics, the economic, the cultural and social artifacts that may have produced rules and norms to shape the lives of residents of Yuuri and Sufi and create gender imbalance. I also identify geographic space, natural forces and resources to point to the location and resources or lack thereof, which may contribute to shaping what people do and prevent them from doing other activities, and therefore, mediate their thinking and actions.

The second type of data is the day-to-day interactions of the residents of Yuuri and Sufi. I identify people's interactions as well as rules and norms that shape those interactions, and which may have created certain patterns of behavior. The question leading this type of data is: what discourse about womanhood and social and cultural artifacts that maintain womanhood identity? I observed peoples' day-to-day interactions in marketplace and in community, women's specific activities, and people's use of words that represent ideas about womanhood. I also identify cultural artifacts – shelter, clothing and marriage institution. All these are treated as mediating factors that shape women's thinking and actions.

The third data comes from four particular women. I focus closely on their perceptions about their roles and position as women, their resources, behaviors, their life objectives and goals. These women's perceptions shed light on the meanings they attach to womanhood, and how they came to make meaning of those roles. Their resources shed light on the reasons for the decisions they make, and the objectives and the goals they set for their lives. Their behaviors both in the family and community shed light on the extent to which social norms and values

about womanhood as well as what is legitimated and available to them have shaped their thinking and actions.

Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography was chosen because it seems to fit most closely with the quest of this study and the conceptual frameworks that I am using. Maanen (1988) describes critical ethnography as a research method that is "...strategically situated to shed light on larger social, political, symbolic or economic issues" (p. 127). It is a study that is "basically anthropological, qualitative, participant-observer methodology but which rely for their theoretical formulation on a body of theory deriving from critical sociology and philosophy" (Masemann, 1982, p. 1). It is also rooted in the concept of culture, in that, it can help in elucidating webs of cultural, social and political processes and practices that are significant to people and which may in one way or another shape their thinking and behaviors (Christiansen, 1996).

I am drawn to critical ethnography because I am interested in exploring the development of ideas about womanhood, how they are maintained and how they produce subjectivity that shapes women's thinking and actions. Therefore, critical ethnography helps not only to produce knowledge about the condition that produced social norms, rules and values about women's roles and positions, but also to ask moral questions about desirable forms of social relations and ways of living for political purposes (Thomas, 1993).

Critical ethnography has close links with post structural feminist approach to research. Reinharz (1992a) identifies feminist researchers as people who document people's lives and activities through interviewing, participating and observing. Others, (Harding, 1986; Tisdell, 1988; Maguire, 1987, Goldberger and others 1996) have identified feminist approach to research

as that which places people at the center of analysis rather than recipients of research results. In other word, the research that acknowledges people as subjects of research rather than objects. In this study, I explored and questioned the origin of ideas about womanhood, mechanisms in place to maintain those ideas, and women's perceptions and attitudes towards their roles and position in society.

This study therefore, combines critical ethnographic and feminist methods. These methods allow both my research participants and I to use our multiple identities, roles and experiences to identify, describe, question and analyze our resources, reflections and actions for self-understanding and self-direction. Using these three units as foci of this study allows for analysis of macro, meso and micro levels of ways in which womanhood ideas are transformed into cultural means to mediate people's thinking about roles and position of women in Yuuri and Sufi.

My Position as a Researcher

My stance in this research emanates from my own conviction that asymmetric power relations and dialectical construction of meaning constitute society. These relations in turn systematically generate inequalities between and among people. From my own experience as a woman, a wife, and a teacher, it has become increasingly clear to me that asymmetrical power relation is a key factor in constructing oppressive social structures and asymmetrical relations. These structures and relations assign people contradictory identities embedded with meanings to assign them specific roles and positions for political purposes.

As a daughter I was expected to perform specific roles different from those performed by my brothers, and which that prevented me from do other things that I considered important to

me. As a wife I was perceived as inferior, always to be told what to do, where and when to go, and the like. Taking care of home was assumed to be my responsibility. As a teacher, I was expected to act as a mother to my students. It was not uncommon to hear such remarks as “how can a woman treat students like that, doesn’t she have children of her own?” At the same time, I was expected to follow the rules and regulations assigned to me as an instructor. When my job required working outside the workstations, such as recruiting new students, attending workshops or seminars, or even working overtime, it was natural to be excluded and the concept of marriage was made clearer. From these experiences I have come to realize that, to a large extent, ideas about womanhood produce social practices and situation that radically and culturally isolate women from resources and therefore, impede to some degree realization of their goals in life.

This study assumes that limited resources available to women limit their exposure to the wider world apart from domestic spaces such as the home and caring for the family. The intersection of this creates into women insensitivity to social, economic, political, and cultural processes that may have contributed to the production of their situation in the first place. Shujaa (1997) argues that worldviews and systems of knowledge are symbiotic - that is, how one views the world is influenced by what knowledge one possess, and what knowledge one is capable of possessing is influenced deeply by one’s worldview. The limited knowledge allowed to women, which I term construction of womanhood, regulates women’s behaviors and shape how they perceive themselves and the world around them.

In this research therefore, I was not neutral. My critical stance, my individual agency and knowledge about society and how power works to shape people’s behavior, influenced this research. This is because I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). In the exploration of life events of women in Yuuri and Sufi, I engaged my own

(encultured) subjectivity, both at the time of data collection and in retrospect. Though the women whose subjectivity I was concerned with were different from me, I could claim to be an insider for I was also a woman and was born and grew up in Yuuri and Sufi, and a married woman, just like many of my research participants. In this respect, I constantly engaged my subjectivities in the whole research process.

In reflection, I was conscious of my positional status and inadequacies in this study. These came about for two reasons. First, I had been outside my research context for more than 15 years. Though I was born and raised in this location and grew up among the participants, I had spent most of my adult life in boarding school and workplace, and also I am educated in the United States. This developed a sense of double consciousness (DuBois, 1994), which made me feel uncomfortable, vulnerable and cautious in my attempt to fit in my research participants' worldview.

The second source of my inadequate feeling came about due to the fact that my research topic was among the subjects that were labeled 'Western' and 'educated women's issue' (Meena, 2002). This realization warned me and influenced the ways I wandered about dealing with participants and how I interpreted their ideas. I thus found myself faced with the scary task of "working the Hyphen" Hall (1991), between my research participants and I while at the same time trying to understand the ways they made meaning of their womanhood and reasons they participated in re-constructing womanhood in their lives.

Nonetheless, I reaped some benefits of an insider during my study because I was familiar with all my research participants, their language as well as cultural etiquette. For example, my familiarity with cultural etiquette facilitated the choices of dress, hairstyle, appropriate metaphors and gestures. These made it possible to extend good rapport and a bonded relationship

between my research participants and me. My appropriate presentation to my research participants also helped me to establish a personal relationship by acting in appropriate manner. For example, during encounters with women of my mother's age, I presented myself as a daughter and silenced my marriage, education, and teacher identities. I was also able to exchange greetings in appropriate language and manner, and inquire about past issues, events and people that we both knew and talk about issues that were appropriate in our ages and relations.

Playing politics of representation (Mbilinyi, 1992) added another advantage to me. I was able to visit women in their homes freely and participated in various gatherings and meetings such as in the marketplace, attending church services, and women organized groups' meetings without much of raising eyebrows. Presenting myself in this way helped counter feelings of vulnerability associated with the concepts such as 'wa mjini' (of the city) and 'msomi' (educated), concepts that were attached to educated women and women who were not permanently living in the community, and which identified them as 'not one of us' or as outsiders.

I achieved their trust by volunteering to talk about my own life experience and involving myself in their lives by living among them and participating in various community activities. In this way, I was able to minimize the gaps and distance that might have existed between us. As I embedded myself in their midst, they started to invite me to more private functions and rituals such as wedding rituals¹, naming of children, baptisms, marriage ceremonies and kitchen

¹ Wedding ritual that is performed as a preparation of a new bride before her wedding. It is normally carried out by women, to teach the brides to be about what to expect in the marriage life, what to do and how to go about maintaining good relationship with husband.

initiation parties.² Being invited in those private spaces was an indication that I was regarded as an insider, as a fellow woman and one of them. The fact that I was familiar with the environment made it possible for me to come away with more information than would have likely in different circumstances. Given the easiness of understanding the nuances, however, I was careful not to impose my meanings to the data, but to ask what a particular action or an utterance meant.

In this research therefore, I mediated in my own neutrality by being instrumental in data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). However, my own desire to tell the truth is complicated by the research framework of this study. While post-structural feminism advocates for multiple truths to an issue, CHAT identifies contradictions and impediments not as negative, but positive indicators in fostering growth and transformation.

Sampling

Units of Analysis

In this study, there are three units of analysis: the local context, day-to-day interactions of residents within the local context, and individual women within the local context.

Selecting the Local Context

There are multiple reasons for choosing the two communities – Yuuri and Sufi for my field study. The first one is related to accessibility. I was born in Yuuri and grew up in the two communities. This fact allowed my familiarity with the language and culture. I was therefore not

² Kitchen initiation party (Iniingwa iriko) is a ritual performed after the wedding, which consist of cultural activities that a new bride is to perform including cooking and acknowledging and showing respect to women in the clan. This ritual is basically a forum in which women of the clan accept or reject the new bride.

required to learn another language or culture to understand the nuances and cultural meanings. This was the main reason, which helped my decision to choose Yuuri and Sufi for this study.

The second reason is related to the two communities' position in feminist and adult education literature. In the last two decades of theorizing 'women issues,' adult learning, the work of prominent scholars who have done research in Tanzania (Mbilinyi, 1996; Meena, 2002; Mlama, 1998; and others) have focused on urban areas. Susan Geiger (1997) for example, did a study to understand how political processes and practices constructed women's roles and positioned Tanzania women in subservient roles. While her conclusions indicate the inclusion and representation of experiences of women in Tanzania (see Geiger, 1997), ideas and views of women in rural areas, which comprise the majority of women in Tanzania were not included. I know people's perceptions and experiences in these two rural communities would be very different from those of urban context, and this in part, attracted me. Equally, adult educators who have studied women learning in Tanzania (Meena, Malecela, 1995; and others) have focused on formal learning institutions such as literacy classed. Like their feminists counterparts, their conclusions indicate the representation of experiences of women in learning in general without considering learning that occur informally in people's day-to-day interactions. The ways women make meaning of their roles and position in day-to-day interactions and reasons for the decisions they make are excluded in these studies. This study aims to fill this gap.

Selecting the day-to-day interactions of residents

In this study, I chose to observe people's interactions. Here I observed people in three different types of interactions: general interactions; specific women's activities; and symbols such as shelter, marriage institution and dress.

Three criteria guided my choice of interactions I selected: first I was interested to observe places where I could find women (and men) in a large number at the same time. The second criterion was related to my interest in observing people in their inter-generationality. This helped me to see interactions of people not only of a certain age but also of all age groups together. The third criterion was related to observing how people of various class, gender, age and occupation behaved in these interactions. Based on these criteria I observed people in the marketplace, in the church and in community meetings.

In the specific women's activities I chose to observe cooking and wedding ceremonies. The criterion for the choice of those two activities was based on a need to identify activities that were identified as 'women's roles' in my research area. In these roles, I selected cooking activity as a common activity performed by women in the homes and wedding ceremony as a public activity done mostly by women.

Criteria used for selecting social and cultural symbols was led by a need to analyze cultural artifacts that generated strong feelings among people and which could draw a clear demarcation between men and women. Shelter in Yuuri and Sufi was among the most conspicuous artifacts that mediated people's perceptions about others due to the house in which they dwelt. Since men were the ones who were able to afford to have nice houses, shelter was seen as a mechanism for social stratification. Equally important was dress. The types of dresses that women could afford and wear were used to illustrate power and powerlessness among women. Also women clothing had generated a lot of discourse that pointed to the ideas about womanhood. Marriage was also another cultural artifact that strongly shaped women's thinking about their lives as human beings. Marriage was considered as a tool to perfect women's lives.

Selecting Research Informers (women)

The strategy I used for selecting women informers is what Merriam (2001) referred to as snowball, chain, or network sampling. Using this sampling, I initially contacted women I knew personally, and whom I felt would be receptive to the purpose of this study. Several other factors were kept in mind when choosing women to interview. Since I had a limited time in the field, voluntary participation was an important factor in the selection process. On this basis, I decided to interview women who volunteered and who had been in the communities for more than a decade. I wanted these women's experiences and reflections of what was happening in their community and how they made sense of those social issues and practices. This timeframe, I hoped, would reflect their familiarity with the communities' cultural view about what it means to be a woman. As the interview progressed, participants suggested names of other women they believed would enrich the data with their experience. Since many were eager to participate, I started to consider diversity and heterogeneity (Mbilinyi, 1992) and selected women based on geography, age, children (based on children's gender), social, and economic. Thus, while the sample may not be representative it is diverse and a broad cross-section of women in the two communities. I interviewed fifteen women, and their ideas are included in this study. From these I selected four particular women who were able to participate in all three interviews that I had planned to undertake. These four women are termed as research participants.

Selecting Research Informers (Males)

I used stratification strategy to sample the men who participated in this study. The criteria used were: married men with children and influential men in the community. I chose five men – a primary school teacher, the chairman of Yuuri community, a medical doctor in the community

dispensary; an old man whose family was the first to migrate to Yuuri and one ordinary member in the Sufi community.

The male informers were selected to shed light on the history of the two communities, the politics, social and cultural problems that were facing the community. They were also an important source of information on how men in Yuuri and Sufi perceived roles and position of women in the community.

Selecting Research Participants (four women)

Four criteria were used to select the participants for this study: willingness to participate in three separate interviews; diversity in socio-economic status; geographic dispersion (i.e., women from both communities) and my own time limitation—I could only afford to spend two summers in the field. Based on those criteria I chose four women to observe.

Research Consent

To conduct this research, I sought and obtained consent form from the human subjects review board of the Pennsylvania State University. I also obtained permission from the district development officer in Hai district where my two communities are located. Finally I requested permission from the executive officer, of Masama division, who introduced me to the chairman of Yuuri and Sufi

I asked for voluntary participation in the research study. This was done verbally and in writing. I read to the participants the consent form, which stipulated the protection of their rights, research procedure and the possible risks involved in the research process. I also reminded them that they were free to ask questions, and withdraw from the study any time they wanted. After

each had said she or he understood and agreed, I asked them to sign the consent form and remain with a copy. I also asked each participant to choose a place and time they would like to be interviewed.

From the start, I explained the nature of my study. I told them that I was a student at Pennsylvania State University in the US conducting a study of women in and their roles in the family and community. Then I outlined the general themes of my research questions and asked their permission to audiotape their responses (This was done verbally and in writing). I then put it very clearly that, my study was purely an academic research, and therefore, had no direct implications to social, political or economic policy or other interventionist implications. In this regard, I did not raise their hopes that their problems would be solved through their participation in the study. However, in the focus group discussion, women raised their goals as attaining electricity in community to help them in various social and economic activities. On this we assigned four women to make a follow up in the district office where they attained permission for this service. I made contributions toward this service, and there is now electric power in the two communities.

Data Collection

The primary data for this research study come from three sources: observation, shadowing, interviews, archives and written texts.

Participant observation

As a critical ethnographer, I observed people's (both men and women) interactions with an aim to understand their behaviors, interpret their language (both verbal and non-verbal) and

actions. I observed the people of Yuuri and Sufi at the market place, in the church, at community meetings as well as in various social gatherings. I went to Lawate market two times a week between the months of July – August 2004 & 2005. I was able to observe people's interactions in various contexts as they were selling and buying different kinds of farm produces and home utilities. I also observed how they dressed, the words in their *khangas*, and how market management treated men and women, their behaviors, and their moods. In these observations, I did informal interviews with women and men.

I attended church services in two Lutheran churches in Yuuri and Sufi. I did this in alternating Sundays in the months of July and August 2004 and 2005. Here I captured the churches' arrangements, church leaders, sitting arrangements, how women dressed and how they interacted with each other, with men and with the church leaders. I was also interested in listening to women's voices in the church choir and the bible messages that directly touched issues related to women's roles and positions in various sites in society. I decided to observe these churches because I am Lutheran and also they were the only religious institution in these communities.

I also had a chance to attend two weddings, one in Yuuri and another in Sufi. Here I was particularly interested in exploring the whole process of wedding ceremony – what was involved in taking the girl from her parents, wedding sermon, and women's specific activities in the wedding preparations and the general wedding atmosphere. I also participated in several community meetings where I listened to the meetings' mood, and the language used. In these meetings my focus was on people's behaviors that could point to the ideas about womanhood, the way they dressed, body language and postures and the flow of conversation, statements made and how each was received and treated vis-à-vis one's gender and marital status.

My last sites were in my research participants' homes. I had planned to interview women in their own homes in order to observe their private lives in their own familiar environments so as to link their stories with their public and private experiences or behavior (Riessman, 1993). I had a chance to visit most of the research participants' homes. While in their homes I observed the ways the houses were built and arranged. I also observed furnishings, pictures on the walls, their spaces in the home and in the house, the tools they used in cooking, farming, cutting fodder, and the like. The goal of this observation was to generate a set of intensive notes on these sites (Carspecken, 1996) and a basis for generating insights on questions to ask in the interview sessions as well as describing private activities and settings. This direct and personal contact and observation of women's interactions in various sites helped me to understand the context within which women's perceptions were developed and reasons for their participation in their roles and positions. It also gave me a chance to see things that may routinely escape women's awareness or things that they would not want to talk about in the interviews.

Shadowing

Apart from observation to capture the general activities around me, I utilized shadowing method to closely follow some research participants. This method was used in two places. In one place I shadowed one women, who I closely followed in the cooking process in her home. In the second place, I shadowed the activities of women in wedding arrangements. I shadowed these two activities from the time they started those activities, always asking questions behind an action to capture their reflections on different actions they did towards accomplishing these activities. The reason for selecting those two activities was led by my need to observe an activity that I could see in their entirety.

Journal Writing

Concurrent with my observations and shadowing, I kept a journal in which I wrote details of my surroundings, my movements, including the people I interacted with, their comments, the natural environment, their attitudes and utterances. I used the journal to reflect my thoughts, and interpret events and actions. I recorded day-to-day conversations and events in my journal. I wrote all the observations of women's interactions among themselves, with men, children and in various places. I wrote other people's comments, community events, and my reflections of my surroundings. I also recorded the ongoing activities, events that filled my days in the field. My journal contained my daily notes, full of details and moments of my inquiry in the field. I also used the notes to identify gaps in the interviews and made follow-ups whenever necessary. In this way, I used journal to capture and to reflect on what was happening in the field to help me to capture the context for detailed description and analysis.

Written Documents

Written documents were useful source of data in this study. I used primary and secondary sources of data. Selection of written document was purposefully done, following the research goal and specific questions that led this study. This study aimed at exploring ways and reasons women in Yuuri and Sufi participated in constructing their womanhood identity. Therefore, I sampled only texts that exhibited the origins of ideas about womanhood in land and education policies. The primary data came from the documents that I obtained from the research context. These were from three places: First, from the community, from Hai district and from Kilimanjaro region. The documents from the community had information about the history, geographical location, people's activities and achievements, meetings and resolutions. From Hai district I

obtained written documents on educational and agricultural activities in Yuuri and Sufi. And at the regional level in the office of regional planning and agricultural office I obtained documents that contained information about land policy on Kilimanjaro region and Hai district.

Secondary source of data came from reviewing the literature from the textbooks and journals. These, I obtained from the Dar-Es-Salaam and Penn State Universities. I consulted data base from a broad range of Internet search sites including JOSTOP, ProQuest, Women's studies international, ERIC, Dissertation Abstracts, and MUSE.

Interviews

With a critical ethnographic lens, I considered in-depth interview as the most appropriate technique to capture participants' thoughts, beliefs and experiences (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Since I was interested in understanding how women made meaning of their experience as women, how they interpreted those experiences and what decisions they made towards those experiences, I developed a set of questions that served as a guideline and provide a framework for discovering the meaning these women attributed to their experiences (see Appendix 1). As they narrated their stories, I asked additional and follow up questions in details. At other times, I requested that they tell me the story behind what they were narrating. In this way, I was able to better understand their resource both material and value and how those shaped their perceptions of themselves and their actions.

I began most of the sessions by asking my research participants to provide a brief life history, including where they were born, if and where they went to school, a little bit of information about their families and their beliefs about their roles and position in the family. I prepared a series of open-ended sub questions to ensure coverage of topic areas that would

guarantee maximum returns on my research interest. I started by a conversation that was led by a question: “Tell me about yourself, start from when you were very young at your parents’ home”. Sub questions came from participants’ stories. These kinds of questions aimed at establishing the context of the participant’s experience as a woman.

The second interview questions depended on the answers from the first interview. In this I began with a question: When such and such happened to you, why did you, what did you... how did you. These kinds of questions prompted them to explain specific events and choices they made. Throughout their stories, I also asked them to describe challenges they experienced and their approaches to meeting those challenges. Whenever appropriate I encouraged participants to elaborate on their meanings, rather than making assumptions about what they meant.

In particular, from the second interview session I was looking for ways in which my research participants received and screened womanhood messages, their interpretations (including their actions) of those messages. I occasionally chimed in with questions like, when, where, how, for what, for whom (Cleary 1993). After exhausting all the possible questions, I asked, “Describe what a typical woman is for you”, “and are there any proverbs, sayings, songs, stories that depict a typical Lukani woman?” Here I wanted to know if they had a sense of other sources such as home and house arrangements, ideas about marriage or way of dressing.

In the third interview I encouraged the participants to reflect on the meanings they attached to their experience and how those meanings had influenced their life choices (these include marriage, having children, ways they teach their children, etc.). On this I asked, “What is your strength as a woman, a mother, a grandmother, a wife? What are your weaknesses? On weaknesses I also asked them to point out problems that they face, and which hinder their fully

realizing their being their 'best woman.' Such data aimed at collecting information on how both ideas about their roles and position, together with cultural-historical processes had shaped their perceptions and actions. I had scheduled to interview people for 45 minutes for each interview, but many interviews took more than an hour. This was because many participants talked freely about their lives, their relatives and what was happening their families and community. In many occasions I was forced lead the discussions by interview questions, which also forced my participants to stick to my framework and objective of this study.

Focus Group Discussion

Apart from observations, and individual interviews, I also conducted focus group discussion. This involved 20 women and it took about three hours. This intended to elicit more information about women's perceptions as a group about their womanhood ideas and their experiences at their families and in the community. In this session, I asked women to give their views freely about how they came to be good/bad women, their feelings about their lives and their families and community. I also asked them to point to the goals they individually and as a group wanted to accomplish for their lives and what their plans were in reaching those goals. In this discussion, women were also asked to point to the impediments they faced in reaching their goals. This focused group discussion aimed at raising women's awareness of their position in the community and to take action (see appendix).

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative studies is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Data collected in this study include interviews, observational field notes and written documents.

Following the framework of this study, the following data were analyzed: socio-cultural condition; day-to-day people's interactions and particular women's perceptions and actions.

By approaching my data, the first step was to try to remove or at least become aware of my viewpoint or assumptions regarding situation of women in Yuuri and Sufi (Douglas and Moustakas, 1984). I constantly tried to remind myself to understand each data separately and in the contexts. Kosso, (1991) argues that " [texts] can be understood only when viewed in the context of the ideas and norms during their manufacture and use" (p. 622). Despite trying to minimize my subjectivity, I also avoided interpreting data as objective reality, but as a cultural symbol with meanings (hidden or otherwise). Field notes together with familiarity of research site and culture became at handy when interpreting my data.

Socio-cultural and historical Condition

In analyzing socio-cultural condition of Yuuri and Sufi, I followed the lead of historian and anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler, to apply "the *general principles* of a Foucauldian frame to specific ethnographic time and place" (Stoler, 1995, p. 2). I made a decision to look into primary documents on education and land separately in rural Tanzania. In education I used three groups of codes in the early analysis of these documents. The first was an emergent of set of low-inference descriptive themes. This looked into the role of education for development in Tanzania. The second theme was on the role of education for women. The second set tracked an

extensive amount of material on education policy in colonial and postcolonial Tanzania. This also included the provision of education to women in colonial Tanzania and the analysis Nyerere's writings about education and land for Tanzanians and development. Third, I analyzed empirical research on education for women in rural Tanzania.

For data on land, I used three groups of codes. I first analyzed information on colonial land reforms in Tanzania. Second I analyzed data on land reform in Kilimanjaro and third; I looked into empirical studies on woman and land in Tanzania. In both analyses, I employed a set of codes designed to collect material for later analysis of representations of women such as 'women as poor,' 'women as illiterate,' and the like.

I used extensive coding to accomplish the early tasks in this analysis. I examined data in different configurations and orders so as to generate relevant themes and categories. From this I generated themes, statements, ideas and ideologies presented in the texts. The generation of themes was guided by a goal to link social-cultural and historical processes and practices that produced policies on education and land in rural Tanzania.

Data from secondary source on education and land in rural Tanzania was assessed by analyzing content validity and the credibility of the author, following these criteria: the attitudes (between hegemony and liberation) on the provision of education and land; social position of the author (academician, politician or traveler anthropologist); the institutions with which the author was affiliated; the inclusions and possible omissions from the text; and the audience for which the text was intended (Brettell, 1998). In doing this, I did an extensive cross-referencing of sources to determine their density and referential power. I also made use of cultural knowledge of rural Tanzania and issues related to land and education. My own experience as a resident, and an adult educator in rural Kilimanjaro and extensive cross-referencing of literature on rural

Tanzania allowed me to determine whether claims about social conditions and representation of power relations were reasonable for a given historical period (Hall, 1992).

After the initial process of identifying the data to use, I identified key concepts, issues, situations, policies, practices, behaviors, actions, in the provision of land and education in rural Tanzania. As this process of analysis continued, broad themes emerged from the data that reflected the purpose of this study. From the data broad theme emerged including marginalization and criminalizing of local knowledges and language, trivialization and marginalization of women's activities and women's denial of knowledge that would help perform their various activities.

Day-to-Day Interactions

In analyzing data for interactions through shelter, marriage ritual and women's activities, I treated these as cultural symbols with meanings that constructed ideas about womanhood. In analyzing these cultural symbols, I used critical ethnographic views to interpret meanings attached to those cultural symbols – the way home landscapes were arranged, or ways women used of Kiswahili rather than the mother tongue - Kimachame. I place these symbols into their historical trajectories and analyzed their evolving characters. This allowed me to link the local interactions to the social and economic condition that gave rise to those conditions. For example, I was able to link the obsession of women in modern houses to their denial of cultural and material resources because as Moore (1986) suggests in her study of space,

In order to analyze the organization of space as a cultural representation which produces meanings, it is necessary to link those meanings to the material condition which give them authority and force. As a result, space may be

understood as neither the reflection of cultural codes and meanings nor the reflection of practical activities and functional requirements... [but]... as the product of both (p. 191).

With this understanding, I analyzed people's interactions not as fixed characteristics or in functionality, but discursively constructed with embedded classfactory system of meanings that structured social structure (Bourdieu 1988) and relations.

Narrative Analysis

The analysis of narrative, I listened to the audiotapes, reviewed my notes and my reflective journal. This highlighted information that was not in either in my notes, or in my reflective journal or in the narratives. I repeated this process many times in order to immerse myself in each participant's narrative before making decision to transcribe it. Immersing myself to the narratives as well as my close consultation of notes and my reflections allowed me to make comparisons with notes that were jotted down during interview sessions. I listed ideas and issues that were repeated and which also coincided with the notes from the field. I analyzed the data manually and with computer using content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique for systematically examining the content of communications—in this instance, the interview data. I read and put together the participants' responses to interview guide questions and the related issues that arose during the interview process. I analyzed their responses were analyzed thematically. Each narrative of the four-research` participant was coded under the potential labels. In this process I identified commonalities in the four narratives. Emergent themes were ranked by their frequency of mention and were ultimately categorized. Essentially, I used a qualitative approach to analyze the responses. Frequencies of utterance

supported the data. This process enabled me to explore ways and reasons women in Yuur and Sufi participated in constructing their identity because of its descriptive nature to understand the whole of an event through insight and discovery (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Transcribing the tape-recorded data seemed laborious task, not only extracting data from sound into written text, but also relating what was said to the respondent, the context in which the conversation took place and the relationship between the respondent to the ideas presented in the text. This process involved rewinding over and over again to listen repeatedly to the words, and consulting my journal and field notes so as to capture them correctly.

I did not take any utterance an action or event at face value. I focused on each as unique and important within itself, relate to each other to make sense of the meanings implied in the narratives. Each narrative was contextually analyzed, looking into who said what, when, and to what effect. This allowed me to identify contradictions in the data and a need for further analysis.

Ethical Consideration

In researching people's lives, scholars have forced us to reconsider ways we represent our research participants, in what they have come to term 'crisis of representation' (Gonick and Hladki, 2005) or 'politics of identification (Chow, 2003). Their concern is more on how researchers engage in ethical relations with research participants, how the data is presented to readers, and whose interests are addressed by the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide as suggestion on the issues to be considered in order to ethically engage in qualitative research these include: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

The credibility of this study was accomplished through instrument sensitivity and triangulation of data. Patton (1990) identifies a researcher as the primary research instrument and the level of knowledge and skill of the researcher determines, in part, the degree of credibility of the study. I completed coursework in qualitative methodology, which provided me with expertise in following interview protocols, listening and interpreting meanings attached to words and actions, and data analysis. Additionally, my knowledge of culture of my participants and the history of the two communities offered a further level of understanding of the context of my field.

Living in the community and participating in various community activities to minimize Hawthorn effect was another strategy to make my research informers and participants accustomed to me, and hence act naturally (Carspecken, 1996). These multiple methods enabled me to fully validate and cross check women's narratives.

Triangulation connotes an idea that any bias in particular data source, investigator, and method would be neutralized when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigator and methods (Creswell, 1998, p. 174). Credibility in triangulation of data through the use of multiple research methods is well established in case study research methodology (Yin, 2003).). In this study, I combined various data collection methods including an analysis of socio-cultural and historical context; analysis of social and cultural symbols, interviews, field notes, and reflective journaling to describe ways and reasons women in Yuuri and Sufi participated in constructing womanhood identity.

In interviews, I posed questions in different ways or the same question on different encounter to determine the degree of credibility of the stories. I also used focused group

discussion to verify stories that I had obtained from the history of the community, had observed from their interactions and those obtained from women individually.

Transferability

The concept of transferability is based on the idea of sufficiency in the provision of evidence on: what criteria were used in the sampling, data collection procedure and analysis and the like. This is deemed important to make it possible for a potential researcher to use with new phenomenon or different group (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, I have provided a detailed account of sampling criteria, data collection method and data analysis together with thick description of my field notes and journal, as well as women's stories.

Dependability

Dependability refers to whether the design and the findings of the study make sense to other researchers including the degree to which findings are supported by data collected and the demonstration of the process of collecting and analyzing data. My thesis advisor reviewed my journal and field notes to determine if my analysis was believable.

Confirmability

This refers to whether the findings can be confirmed as seen through the research design. Confirmability connotes an idea that research findings should reflect the framework used in the study, together with the questions that led the study. Confirmability of this study was achieved by sticking to the research questions, my own reflections and interpretations of the

events in the field, and my honest appraisal of my beliefs and biases that might have influenced my whole process of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Limitations of the Study

Barret (1993) has viewed a major limitation of qualitative study as the sacrifice of the quantity of participants for the information that can be developed only through extensive interviews or long period of participant observations. This study is limited to 20 residents of Yuuri and Sufi in rural Kilimanjaro Tanzania. Although these are two different communities, they are in one geographic location. Conclusions drawn from this small sample size might not be generalizable to a larger population. A comparative study in different communities of different geographic area, countries, and even continents would generate more inclusive results. However, this does not thwart this study having value in other settings.

In conducting this study, it was imperative for me to exercise some power by controlling the pace because of limited time (summer 2004 & summer 2005) and the resources available to me. It was therefore essential for me to take full control of the whole process. This, nevertheless, has made it difficult for me to describe or estimate the influence of my control on the nature of data that I obtained. Similarly it is difficult to determine whether the occasional absence or failure to keep appointments on the part of my research participants and/or withdrawal behavior and feelings were a direct result of my control activities or other different factors. However, since I inescapably had to control the conduct of the study in some ways, in order to answer my research questions, I found myself creating a relationship of an oppressor and the oppressed, by defining the research problem, dictating the nature of research, and to some extent the quality of interaction (Ladner, 1971).

In analyzing my data I found that there were many leads that I did not probe in the interactions with my research informers as well as research participants. For example in women's specific activities and interactions in marketplace I could probe further on the reasons they sold and bought what they did rather than interpreting it only in economic terms. I also feel that my data would have been much richer had I used siblings and other close relatives and friends of my four selected women to shed light on how they perceive them. This would allow me to better understand why they interpreted their world and make decisions the way they did.

I found using post-structural feminism in this study to be at odds to what was actually happening. For example, while post structural feminism identify gender as a key impediment to women all over the world, this was true only in relation to its hegemonic culture, which has been appropriated throughout history, but the realities of women in Yuuri and Sufi, other forces such as race and class, the church and the media shape to a great degree how women perceived their world and themselves in it.

The last weakness is related to my analysis and interpretation of data. In analyzing my data, there were many issues that cropped up, and which I had to make a decision to include or not to include in my final text in order to produce a coherent story. In such a process, I was in a certain degree controlling what I wanted to be known and discard what I thought was not important. While I acknowledge the limits of my own epistemologies, I see this process as a weakness because I was using my weakness to present the view of my participants in my weakness position. To address this weakness, I tried to systematically document all the data sources and the procedures I used to analyze them.

Conclusion

This chapter provides the description of the design of this study. It then offered a description of and the rationale for the selection of critical ethnographical approach. It also provides the position of the researcher in this study, sampling, consent, data collection and analysis and credibility of the study. The data for this study are in three categories: the first one includes the data that present the socio-cultural and historical condition of Yuuri and Sufi; the data that illustrate the day-to-day interactions of people in Yuuri and Sufi; and the data that represent four selected women's narratives. The conclusions and implications are drawn based on the close inspection of the data. The following presents the findings of data from historical condition of rural Tanzania.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIO-CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the current condition of women in two communities that this study is based – Yuuri and Sufi. The main question asked is: What are the socio-cultural and historical conditions under which the women in my study operate? My examination is illustrative, not exhaustive. I confine my study to the processes and practices of only two pertinent institutions, land and education and argue that unequal allocation of land and provision of education contribute to the current condition of women in Yuuri and Sufi

As pointed out in chapter three, land and education were chosen specifically because they are of immense economic and cultural value in Tanzania. Yuuri and Sufi being agrarian communities, farming is the major activity of the people. Education was also chosen for this study because it is considered key in the development of human cognition and has been propounded as a key for the nation's development (Nyerere, 1968; 1969, 1970). Both land and education are treated as resources, which were used to contribute to the production of goods and services with a goal to achieve multiple goal including creating wealth, better health, employment, better environment in the modern economy. Denial or unequal provision of these resources is considered an exercise of power.

I would like to point out from the outset that socio-cultural and historical processes and practices did not oppress or marginalize women per se, but influenced public policies that stipulated who should get what, when and under what condition. Moreover, with the emergence of colonial and later postcolonial administration, land and education became key artifacts to the development of capitalist economy rather than of the people. As Vygotsky (1978); Leontiev

(1978), 1983; and Engeström (1987) have argued (see chapter 2) artifacts are key to mediating human thinking and behavior. Moreover, how artifacts are developed and used is dependent on the object of the activity. In this case the construction modern land tenure and modern education became mediators of who should own property and who should not in the capitalist economy in Tanzania.

To set the stage, I begin with locating Tanzania in a world map. Then I locate Yuuri and Sufi in rural Tanzania. Lastly I present the findings of political economy of rural Tanzania within colonial and postcolonial contexts and how it has shaped the lives of women in Yuuri and Sufi.

Tanzania: Location and Context

Tanzania is one of 54 countries in Africa. It is situated in the Eastern part of the continent. It occupies an area of 945,000 km² 26. Tanzania consists of 21 administrative regions on the mainland and 5 in Zanzibar (islands to the East), with 130 administrative districts – 120 on the mainland and 10 in Zanzibar, each with their own language and culture. Tanzania borders the following countries: Kenya and Uganda on the North, Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo on the West, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique on the South, and Indian Ocean on the East. She provides access to 5 land locked countries of Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi, and DRC. Her population is estimated to be 34,569,232 persons counted in the census held in August 2002 (2002 Population and Housing Census; see also <http://www.tanzania.go.tz/census/reports.htm>) with about 51% women and about 46% under age 15.



Map1: The Tanzanian Context (Geographical Location)

Pre-Colonial Life in Yuuri and Sufi

The following section presents the historical re-organization of land and labor. I particularly look into how the re-organization of land and labor thwarted women's freedom of mobility, social position and status. I also illustrate the way women negotiated their identity within those processes. Much of this history is an account of land reforms in Kilimanjaro, a region where Yuuri and Sufi communities are located. I was unable to obtain documents about land reform specific to Yuuri and Sufi. Supplemental information on the effects of land reforms

to the lives of people in Yuuri and Sufi comes from interviews with residents of Yuuri and Sufi and my own observation. The information for this section therefore comes from three sources - my field observation, interviews with residents of Yuuri and Sufi, and from information on land reform in Kilimanjaro.

Before colonial powers, people in Yuuri and Sufi lived for many generations on farming, trading, doing handicraft, hunting and taming animals. They cultivated food crops including finger millet, variety beans, with an assortment of green vegetables, banana beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), cowpea sweet potato, and a variety of yams, potatoes. They also herded cattle, goats, sheep and chicken (Stahl, 1964). People had intimate knowledge of the various crops and plants and their ecological requirements, which they had refined and tested over the ages and handed down from one generation to the next. Because people understood and respected ecosystem, they were able to preserve land fertility, which helped them to realize enough food for the families and surplus. For example, oral tradition has it that people used various techniques in farming including crop rotation, mixed farming or intercropping, irrigation, terracing and manuring (see also Lema, 1999).

Although men and women performed different tasks in the economy, each activity was regarded as important in the development of family livelihood (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003). For example, when men were engaged in jobs such as digging furrows, raising livestock, building houses, hunting, clearing the forest for farming and paths, women maintained the homestead, cultivated the fields and prepared food. They also saw to it that the cropping was properly followed in terms of application of manure in the soil. They also maintained plant species for future planting (see Iliffe, 1979). Within traditional social structure of Sufi and Yuuri, each task was recognized as important in the welfare of all.

Apart from agricultural activities, both men and women used their handcraft to make various tools and utensils. Men treated the skins of the animals they killed for sale. Women on the other hand, weaved baskets, mats. They also made cloths from barks and banana plant skins. With their farm and animal produces together with handcraft, both men and women in Yuuri and Sufi maintained extensive trading networks with most of their neighbors. Illife (1979) reports that many Chagga people have often journeyed to Pare, Sambaa cultural areas and Taita in Kenya (see Iliffe, 1979; Stahl 1964 and personal interview with Melek July, 26 2004).

Oral history confirms that while women traveled to Pare to obtain earthen pots and beads where they sold handcrafts such as baskets. Men on the other hand traveled up to Sambaa in Tanga to exchange their produces for iron hoes, knives and spears (see also Illife, 1979). Oral history also shows that women in Yuuri and Sufi traveled to Magadini in West Kilimanjaro where they collected soda ash for cooking purposes and for feeding animal.

Traditional Land Allocation in Yuuri and Sufi

Traditional land tenure in Yuuri and Sufi revolved around informal transactions in which people could possess land through a loan, lease, sharecropping contract, or exchanges and pledges. All these were done without formal registered deed (Bosworth 1995). In such a transaction, traditional right to land was for cultivating, for farming, building houses, herding animals and burying the deads and was not in any way used for monetary purposes. People acquired land freely from their chiefs, and fathers passed it on to their male children.. Due to these many activities, people considered land a sacred and intimately tied to one's membership in the group as Bourdillon's (1976) observation.

Land links past and present, the dead and the living, the chief and his people, and it binds the people together. It is thus no small thing for a people to be moved off their land by white people: such a move can result in the disintegration of a tribe (p. 89).

During the Colonial Period

The political history of rural Tanzania with policy reform processes and practices have been often related to the construction of land as abstract space. The first land reform policy was during the invasion of the Germans on Kilimanjaro in 1889. The Germans came to Tanganyika with a goal to extract resources for their industries in Europe. The Germans became the overall overseer of all land and acquired absolute authority over its allocation and use. While people had acquired and used land within a mixture of customary rights (land management and allocation by traditional authorities such as village chiefs and village councils) where non-landowners such as women and visitors could access land through a variety of arrangements (e.g. sharecropping and the like), the new land administration excluded women from direct access to land.

Apart from that, the introduction of cash crop economy led to the transformation of land use from food crop to cash crop production. The use of land for cash crop production rather than for food transformed land from being a part and parcel of people's survival into 'empty space,' and an artifact tied to the production of things that were not of immediate need for people.

Land within colonial mentality ceased to be part and parcel of people's survival and became 'empty space,' a commodity to be formally acquired and exploited for 'development' purposes. The commodification of land and the process of constructing it as 'vacant space' that should be sold and exploited for

monetary purposes affected not only women livelihoods, but also men. In this study I therefore, analyze the effects of tenure system in Tanzania on both men and women in Yuuri and Sufi.

The analysis of land tenure and use shows that space and place on rural community like Yuuri and Sufi can be presented as cultural artifacts with complex power relations. The rights to land and resources were one of the ways to construct social relation.

Women were not allocated land in traditional land transaction, but were allowed to use it to plant food crops. Since most of traditional farming was done in a crop rotation system (Beusekom, 2000) women got land from their male relatives, neighbors and friends. Therefore, traditional land tenure in Yuuri and Sufi depended on community members' needs, was properly utilized for people's needs and was considered an important link between the living and the dead. This conceptualization among the Chagga led into a saying, "*A Chagga without a kihamba is not a social being.*" One's identity as a Chagga man was based on the ownership of land. This highly ranked item to Chagga people made the people to identify land as life itself.

Land as Cultural Artifact

Land can be seen as an artifact and, at the same time, an object of struggle in the strategies of struggle for identity (Escobar 2001). Land as an artifact refers to conceptualization of land as *abstract* space, which is tied to the relations of production. Generally, professionals and technocrats, such as land planners and developers, as well as geographers construct this space through their power and knowledge. In the modern times, conceptualization of land as abstract space comprises the varied codifications (signs and codes) and objectified identity (maps, plans, title deeds, etc.).

The understanding of land as an abstract space and therefore, 'empty space' produced discourse that all land was 'vacant' (especially because it was not own 'officially') and therefore, 'public' property for the development of the community. The notion of land as a public good required a fundamental reorganization of land and allocate it formally for people to "appropriate" it for cash crop production (see for example Lugard, 1922; Atwood, 1990; Bruce & Migot-Adholla, 1994; Platteau, 1996; Deininger & Binswanger, 1999; Toulmin & Quan, 2000). In the Government Circular No. 4 of 1953 (Tanganyika Government 1953 para 12) stated,

It is the intention that in a township all the land should be 'alienated' from tribal tenure and that Africans should obey the same laws of the territory with regard to their occupation as members of any other race.

Here, the colonialists and later postcolonial elites followed a widely rehearsed logic concerning modernization and the inability of "traditional" systems to follow the steps towards modern and development (Williams, 1994). Under the discourse of development, land was identified as a scarce resource and traditional land ownership and use was no longer a reliable system to improve efficiency in cash crop production for capitalist economy. This new policy remained intact even after the political independence in 1961 and allowed political elites to appropriate land and allocate it to people as they wished.

The discourse of land tenure in rural Tanzania and in Kilimanjaro in particular did not mean to create landlord men, but as historians tell us, with the development of capitalism, in which production moved outside the home, this created an opportunity for men to seek activities outside the homes. Land as a tool for economic production created opportunity for men to own property. Tsikata, (2003) observes that any job outside the home was "...regarded as masculine" (p. 456), while those inside the home were feminine. This conceptualization of land and activity

(job) created gender division of labor where men were identified as economic producers and women as wives and daughters, whose activities in the home was not considered important in the capitalist economy. Due to the transformation of land as an artifact along with elements of women's activities as unimportant now the meaning of life means something different than before. In Yuuri and Sufi title deeds, community map, land as a commodity and men as sole landowners can be considered as good examples of this transformation.

During Post Colonial Period

During political independence in 1961, Tanzania adopted two policies: the Ujamaa land reform and the liberalization of land policies in the 1980s. The Ujamaa land reforms which comprised of various development programs such as the Ujamaa villagization program (1974–76) and the *Rural Lands Act* of 1973 can be blamed for creating a condition for constructing land as abstract space. In Yuuri and Sufi for example, the liberalization of land is said to have increased land insecurity in village lands and weakened local people's control over land (Havnevik et al 2000). The District and village authorities enacted the change of land ownership. These state authorities imposed on the people the law of having title deed, land map and a letter of ownership. This resulted in widespread confusion over land matters and evidence in land disputes.

Generally, title deed, land map and property ownership are neither static nor permanent. Therefore, they can often contribute to land disputes, struggles and unequal power relations. As Blomley (2003) on the issue of land as a space argues, land as a space is “*as always and ever recursively related to social relations – rather than as spaces in the abstract*”. Land as a space

signifies and legitimize the existing spatial order. Thus, land in Yuuri and Sufi was part of the discursive landscape of social power, control and governance.

Within the policy of economic liberalization in the 1980's, the value of land went up and fierce competition for land ensued (LTWG 1992). Economic liberalization policy emphasized a market-oriented economy with a rethinking of the communal land tenure policy (Bruce 1989). At the same time, in 1986, Tanzania also became incorporated in a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) formed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These political reforms increased the uncertainty concerning traditional land rights. The program also increased the allocation of land to state enterprises and external investors.

At the same time, the State's land development policy streamlined the land allocation system, which was developed in the new National Agricultural Policy (Agripol). The policy reform set a goal of individualized property and commercial large-scale farming was intensified throughout Tanzania. Furthermore, the State Agripol policy provided defined boundaries and land titles to each village in Tanzania. This spatial land survey and demarcation of village boundaries increased number of boundary disputes in Yuuri and Sufi. During the time of this research, I noticed an alarming land use situation with a rising many previously unseen land disputes and increased marginalization of women.

Many of the land disputes in Yuuri and Sufi were between sisters and brothers and neighbors. Sister/brother land disputes were based on who has more right to father's small lands. One incident occurred between one woman and her brother. She had been taking care of the material needs of her old parents. Her brother wanted to inherit the parent's land (after he had sold his farm) due the fact he was a male. This brought up a major dispute between the woman and her brother. Land disputes between neighbors were connected to issues of changed

boundaries. Due to scarcity of land, land disputes were common. Many disputes were resolved at village, ward, district and regional land management boards.

Women as Landless and Insecure

While the discourse of land tenure and land policy cannot be held accountable for constructing women as landless, dependent and poor, it can be identified as a powerful medium for social reproduction. The concept of social reproduction is important here to understand ways in which land tenure policy created a condition for denial of land to women. In the following pages, I explore the process by which land, an important economic tool in Yuuri and Sufi became a symbol for social order. To explore this process, I use the analytic metaphor of cultural capital and habitus developed by Bourdieu (1992) and developed in chapter 2 of this study. As Bourdieu argues, the linkage between cultural capital and habitus is what effected the development of land policy that excluded women from accessing land with equal foot with men. The meanings ascribed to *women's roles (that of taking care of family and home)* within colonial and postcolonial Tanzania contain elements of women as dependent and men independent and owner of land.

Tsikata, (2003) further argues that in a case where women negotiated and acquired land, the name to be registered in the title was that of a husband or a son. In such a situation a woman could not be thought of as the owner of land or could not sell or allocate land to anybody else than to her sons or male relatives if she happened to own one. The key point here is not that women were completely denied land, but they were not acknowledged as land owners, but as land workers as Schone in 1913 observes in coffee farming in Kilimanjaro:

There are really industrious cultivators in the area, who lay out small coffee plots for themselves and would enlarge this if they had more land and workers. At present, they are almost entirely dependent on the help of their wives, who have quite sufficient to do without this (Illife, 1964, p. 155).

According to Schone men were considered landowners and industrious, while women who were seen in it were worker and helpers. However, Kjekshus has challenged this view, arguing that men who owned land did not work and only women and children farmed (Kjekshus 1996, 38–9). Because women were not considered as farmers, their labor in the family farms was not acknowledged or remunerated. Women became helpers of their male partners and free labor in the capitalist economy. Interesting examples of this process are illustrated in chapter five, where women in Yuuri and Sufi are still being exploited by landlords and their own families when they try to access land in order to feed their families.

Land transformation in Yuuri and Sufi led into another interesting working arrangement. Since good land for coffee is along the mountain slopes - where people dwelled, plots for food crops for people's survival had to be found outside the two communities. Most of the people were allocated land on the Southern part along Moshi-Lawate road, in areas known as Lawate and Donyomuroo. This coincides with Kitching's (1980) observation that,

...the consequent land shortage led many to look for land to cultivate elsewhere, such as the better-watered locations in neighboring dry lands, including the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro (p. 771).

The allocation of fertile land to men and for coffee production forced women to travel far to their restricted and smaller tracts of land (Lawate and Donyomuroa areas), places which are not suitable for the growth of certain crops such as traditional yams and other varieties of

potatoes. This condition forced women to plant only certain kinds of food crops (only corn and beans). Moreover, continuous cultivation of these areas of land with no appropriate technology to conserve environment or enrich the soil with nutrients led to soil exhaustion which ultimately adversely affected crop yields. These two factors had negative consequences in food security, which is one of the main problem in Kilimanjaro and Yuuri and Sufi in particular (see http://www.fews.net/centers/files/Tanzania_200105en.pdf)

The most important change in women's role in Yuuri and Sufi was not so much what specific tasks they occupied, rather, it was change in social and cultural meaning of women and their activities. Women activities, be they at homes or in the farms were perceived within a framework of industrial society within the ideology of "cult of domesticity."

The Current Condition of Women and Land in Yuuri and Sufi

Women in Yuuri and Sufi have persisted in farming activities despite the formidable odds they face. During the time this study was conducted, they had mobilized themselves in a group known as Tumanini Women Group to work cooperatively (*kyaando*) in their farms or in other people's farms for pay. They had bought modern cows for milk and grass cutter for cutting fodder for their animals. They also had formed collective actions doing activities such as tie and die, cooking and dress making. These women had also devised other alternative strategies to meet their family responsibilities. Within Tumaini group, 12 women had formed small groups known as kibati. Kibati is a concept of pooling money on a monthly basis. This money is awarded to one member of the group at a time to enable her to gain access to a lump sum of money to do things that she would not be able to do on her own.

There are several explanations for this trend of activity. First, women could pay school fees for their children, renovated and decorated their houses and other activities that each thought was important to her. Therefore, to affirm themselves in the precarious situation, women in Yuuri and Sufi devised means to achieve their goals, including working cooperatively in their own farms and in other farms, engaging themselves in various activities and pooling their resources together. In other words, women in Yuuri and Sufi have devised alternative to fill-in economic gap. Their action towards their condition, while may be considered as acquiescing, it is understood in this study as agency, an act of constructing their identity as women.

Indigenous Knowledge in Yuuri and Sufi

At 4 A.M. one morning, Mama Mona was awakened by a knock on her window and insistent calls of *hodi hodi mama Mona*. Upon opening her door, she saw her two neighbors (Mama Nsee and Baba Nsee, translated: the mother and father to Nsee) standing outside and their baby son (Nsee). The adults were anxious and faces showed fear and bewilderment. Mama Mona had assisted in the delivery process of baby Nsee one year earlier. The baby was not feeling well. The adults had not completed exchanging greetings when the baby started to vomit. In haste Mama Mona took the baby from where her mother had securely strapped him in her back, tied in a khanga. While she held Nsee in her hands while determining his body temperature, she asked for more details. She asked what he had eaten, when, and when the condition did started. She also asked if he was still been breast-fed and what was his reacting to breastfeeding. All these happened within a few seconds. Mama Mona examined the boy closely, all the time pricking on his

body with her fingers and watching closely for body reaction. Then she announced to her visitors that whereas she had diagnosed the possible cause of his illness, she did not have the required medicine for Nsee's ailment, and needed to go to the bush to find some. She told the parents not to worry too much for the problem was not uncommon or alarming for small children like Nsee

The above resembles common interactions of rural neighbors in Yuuri and Sufi before the introduction of Western capitalist economy. I position my analysis within the framework of this study – poststructural feminist and cultural historical activity perspectives--to critically analyze specific historical, economic and social processes and practices in rural Tanzania. To achieve this, I first look for sources that discuss indigenous knowledge in African and Tanzania in particular. Second, I examine three themes, which I argue are a part and parcel of marginalization of indigenous knowledge in Yuuri and Sufi. The themes are: 1) An urge to construct literates and Christians for modernization purposes; 2) the emergence of corporate governance and a need for providing education to the people for effective participation in economically productive activities; and 3) the construction of Kiswahili as the national language, which led into the loss of importance of mother tongue languages. Embedded within these themes are the ongoing struggle over whose knowledge, whose language and whose activities are valid in Yuuri and Sufi.

Indigenous Knowledge in Kilimanjaro

Before the colonialists set their foot on Kilimanjaro, people of Kilimanjaro had their own knowledge system and education known as indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is conceptualized as “unofficial knowledge, essentially anecdotal memories of customary law,

inheritance rights, and beliefs about witchcraft, taboos, and rituals” (Semali 1999 p. 309).

Indigenous knowledge in Yuuri and Sufi reflected local culture and was usually communicated through Kichagga – the local languages of people residing in Kilimanjaro. This knowledge was unique from say that of Maasai in the neighboring region because it is the result of people’s day – day interactions with each other and with their environment.

A renowned indigenous knowledge among men in Yuuri and Sufi their sophisticated skills in farming on steep slopes, which they had learnt from their interaction with the mountainous environment. This does not imply that people in Yuuri adapted their physical environment, but struggled through forming terrace and growing tall trees under them to prevent soil erosion in order to get water for use and irrigate their farms. People (males specifically) had developed refined knowledge in digging and utilizing a network of canals for irrigation due in part of the cultural and technological heritage of their mountainous area. They managed this task through a long period of working in the farm and assessing the soil, the environment and the weather, which helped them to understand what to use, how to dig trenches, and when to do these activities as Masinde, one old man in Yuuri recalls:

Those times there were no tractor, teachers or weather casters. We watched the mountain (Mt. Kilimanjaro) and knew when to go up to bring the water. We all (adult males) participate in bringing the water from the mountain. Each stream leader (mmiku wa nfongo) knew when his people were to go up and the horn blower would assemble people for this activity. Those who could not join the group in one reason or another were supposed to get permission for absence, but unless one was sick or his wife was having a new baby, everybody had to participate in digging the trenches. This is how many people came to acquire

skills in trench digging and prevented their farms from soil erosion during the rains.

Indigenous knowledge in Yuuri and Sufi was therefore unique intellect and distinctive creativity that acted like a stamp on their view of their world and behavior. For example, before the colonial powers, Sir Harry Johnson, who led an expedition to Kilimanjaro in the early 1880's marveled at the irrigation system skills that people of Kilimanjaro possessed and reported that there was scarcely a ridge in Kilimanjaro region without its own irrigation system (Johnston 1886 as quoted by Grove, 1993, p. 443).

Women on their part were known for their skills in pottery, healing and teaching the young the ways of the Chagga. Older women taught younger ones, and mother taught their daughters. Makirembe, a 79 years old woman in Yuuri, reflected back on her days of learning to be a woman by working with her mother and grandmother. Makirembe remarked that:

It was a great satisfaction to me that my mother and grandmother possessed healing skills. I learnt from them different types of shrubs and trees. They taught me to keenly look at a plant its roots, and flowers. Some parts of plants are useful in different times of the year and different times of the day. It took sometime to know appropriate plant and appropriate time for their harvest because some plants are only useful when they are harvested at a particular time.

Apart from healing (a skill that was confined into a small group of women) women in Yuuri and Sufi had power to socialize their children into Chagga culture prior to colonial imposition. In other words, among their many responsibilities was to socialize younger generation to a view of the world around them. Women accomplished this through daily routines of their being mothers, aunts, grandmothers and/or neighbors. A Chagga daughter for example

learnt from their mothers and relatives things that helped them to perform the tasks that were required of them - such as those related to taking care of their siblings, animals, farming and the like. This knowledge was therefore, not some exotic traits that people intrinsically learnt, but a particular knowledge to facilitate their day-to-day activities. Women instructed their young ones on the physical, emotional and religious practices of the Chagga.

A woman was therefore, a figure of social cohesion and the very ideal support, authority, and they assumed a high social status because their socialization practice directly affected social system and practices. Because of their role in socializing society, and because the knowledge for socialization was only discussed among women, indigenous knowledge helped women to develop and maintain a bond among themselves and network. Bonding and networks provide a means of social solidarity and a mechanism for self-determination and for self-organizing, between and among their transgenerational and culture. I am using the notion of culture here to refer to inclusivity of life evolved by people in Yuuri and Sufi in their attempt to fashion a harmonious coexistence between themselves and their environment, a totality of life, which gave order and meaning to their life and world (including their way of doing things, knowing, behave, artifacts, etc.).

For centuries, the division of labor in Yuuri and Sufi has been defined around women's capacity to bear and rear children. Therefore, women had three primary roles: mothering, which included raising children, attending to their food and general well being and treating illness within the family, including the animals. This means that in Yuuri and Sufi, men and women performed separate but parallel activities to allow each to control activities and address issues in ways that were beneficial to their lives and entire community. Nzegwu (2001) also observes the same trend in Nigeria and argue, "Women and men are equivalent, namely equal, in terms of

what they do in the maintenance and survival of the community" (2001: 19). The activities that women and men performed in traditional Yuuri and Sufi imply that no activity was regarded trivial or unimportant; each was regarded as important because they all contributed to the development of the people and the community within the terms accepted by the people themselves.

Construction of Literates and Christians in Kilimanjaro

The advent of the conquest colonial state and the imposition of colonial rule in Tanzania came with it the introduction of modern institutions such as education, hospitals, courts and the like, Tanzania, like many other modern states realized the need for skilled and educated people to manage the modern institutions. In Kilimanjaro, the earliest schools started as early as 1872 (Stahl, 1964). These schools varied in structural and content and they provided education in everything from agriculture, technical skills to language to religion (Mushi, 1995). Influenced by human resource theories, schools in Kilimanjaro became a means to produce people who could participate in formal activities such as teaching, preaching, juries and foremen in the colonial and later postcolonial state. The secular and religious education directly challenged indigenous epistemological (Ng-ug-i wa Thiongo 1986, Cobern 1998, Tsuma 1998, Bunyi 1999, Mosha 2000) and metaphysical beliefs (Mbiti, p'Bitek 1971).

Rather than building on students' knowledge and beliefs, modern education and religion were legitimized as appropriate knowledge in modernization process as the syllabus for high schools issued in 1952 illustrates:

The purpose of this organization is that those who leave school after finishing each stage or cycle should have received a balanced course of education which

will enable them to play a more intelligent and efficient part in the development of the territory...and in brief to be better citizens...while at the same time each stage or cycle should form a sound basis from which to proceed to the next above it or to the professional or vocational courses which are available after the second and third stages (George, 1960; see also Resnick, 1968).

This implicitly identified indigenous people as unintelligent, inefficient and uncivilized, the behavior, which was in contradiction to modernization and civilization process and practices. These perceived contradictions invited various interpretations, most of which attempted to contain, conflate and reduce people into illiterate and backward rather than possessing complex needs and interests (Youngman, 2000).

Modern education in Africa has frequently been perceived to be a cultural product of the West and thus of limited relevance to Africa and people's experiences (Jacob, 1981). It has been identified as a tool to producing passive recipients whose contribution to societal issues is minimal (Bledsoe, 1992; Teffo, 2000). The curricula and the texts used were densely foreign in particular in their latent worldview and the lavish use of illustrations and applications from the West. Stories of Vasco Da Gama, Christopher Columbus and the burning of London city obviously were far-removed from the lived reality and sensibilities of Chagga youths, whose cultural parameters, values, their ecology and life-world were so different from British youths. In Yuuri and Sufi for example while reading, writing and counting could be important in communication purposes, these skills were not useful in people real life – pottery, healing, the ways of the Chagga, farming, terracing, and the like.

Ma Kilee notes this mismatch of modern education and her experience and illustrates this dynamics in her recollection:

Each morning before classes start we were made to sing songs to praise and bless the queen of England and her country. I remember this song...Landas banin Landas banin, luku yonda (London is burning, look yonder), but we did not know what it meant. But we enjoyed singing it and teachers made us memorize all the words and we would sing in turns, each row starting a stanza and completing the song differently from another...It sounded very good but none us cared about the meanings of the words...Now that I think of it, I think much of education that we learnt in school helped us to forget about our problems because after completing class seven, we continued to do what our parents were doing. Although in school we did farming, the skills for farming were not taught in the class. We used skills we learnt at home to farm. And after school, I continued with the same skills. ...I mean, our parents and grandparents taught us the way of life, and school...I think taught us to read and write.

During colonialism, and their missionary attendants, colonial administration needed trained personnel to work in their modern institutions. Most of these personnel were clerks, house servants, catechists, and factory and farm workers. Majority of these personnel were males, who later came to be the elites during Tanzania independence. Hence, a class of learned/unlearned and employable/unemployable people evolved among the people. Several postcolonial scholars (Jacob, 1981; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; and Youngman 2000) identify modern education in African societies as for "...perpetuat[ing] an unjust social order under the guise of equality of opportunities" (Jacob, 1981, 42). In Kilimanjaro, two events played a crucial role in the provision of modern education to women. One was during colonial period, when education was identified as a

mechanism for raising fertility and for reducing infant mortality and another was after independence to achieve egalitarianism as discussed below.

While initial purpose of opening schools was to provide education to boys, education came to be extended to girls and women after 1924 when Charles Dundas, a District Officer for Kilimanjaro did a study, “Kilimanjaro and its People” (Dundas, 1924) and made recommendations that women needed modern education to raise their fertility. His study, which sought to understand Chagga social life, especially on the issue of low fertility rate among women indicated that the key problem among the Chagga was low fertility among the women, a condition which he associated with their lack of education. From this study, Charles argued that lack of education among Chagga women into practicing “backward activities and rituals.” Based on these findings, in 1927 Dundas wrote a letter to the Acting Director of Education with the following message:

I would say that by education of the women alone could solve many of our foremost problems. It is the ignorance of the woman which keeps the African back, it is largely due to their ignorance that hygiene in the African home is so deplorable and it is above all due to their unenlightened ways that the birthrate is greatly below what it could be and that infant mortality deprives the country of a good portion of the population it so sorely needs (Dundas, 1927, 34).

In Charles’ view, whatever the knowledge that Chagga women possessed was inaccurate and inappropriate in the then modern society. According to him, lack of modern education led into their participating in activities that led into lack of fertility, and therefore, education for Chagga women was constructed around helping them to conceive in order to bear children (supposedly male children) who would contribute to colonial project of exploitation.

With Charles' recommendation, many schools were opened in Kilimanjaro, which were organized by missionaries of Lutheran and the Catholic denominations (Colwell: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/takemi/rp174.pdf>) and largely supported by colonial government. In fact, while colonial administration and missionaries sought to establish schools and enroll many Chagga youths, both girls and boys, there was no participation of parents the local chiefs in the decisions about the content or the methods of teaching.

While individual people went underground with their traditional activities, Chagga leaders (*mangi*) opposed them openly Moore, (1977) observes,

“...*Mangi* welcomed secular education and permitted some religious services, but otherwise they effectively contained the missionary influence, cutting off the missionaries' water supply, boycotting their churches and schools, and even evicting them when they threatened the *Mangi*'s authority or challenged certain revered cultural practices (p.14).

There were other documented resistances of modern education in Kilimanjaro. Iliffe, (1989) reports for instance that *Mmangi* resisted missionary activities when school and church interference in secular life exceeded boundaries acceptable to them. For example, in February 1891 Sina led the fiercest battle that the German commander, Hermann Wissmann, ever experienced in Africa, while in August of 1893 the *Meli* temporarily forced German troops off the mountain entirely (Iliffe, 1979, p. 100-101).

Despite oppositions of modern education by the people and their *mangi* however, there were other people who supported this new education as missionary Charles New captures well this dynamics in a conversation between Rindi, the the *Mangi* of Moshi and himself in 1874:

I want you very much to return to [Moshi], particularly if you can bring some artisans with you. I shall be glad to have my young people taught to read and write I want paints and dyes of all colours; I want tools—saws, planes, a brace and bits, a screw-making machine, etc, etc (New, 1874, p. 433).

The activities of missionaries to provide education and Christianize the Chagga people and the people's actions illustrate the complexities in the introduction of modern education in Kilimajaro and the controversies surrounding this activity. This suggests that modern education in Kilimanjaro was not totally an imposition from the missionaries and colonialists or the Chagga were passive recipients of colonial and missionary domination, but this occurred in the context of contradictions between missionaries and colonialists' and Chagga people, who, as Engeström (1987) would argue, possessed multiple points of view, traditions and interests. Furthermore, each part (missionaries and the people) used various strategies to achieve their goal. While missionaries used threats such as excommunicating people from the church or sanctions by evacuating people from the community, people passively and actively resisted missionary activities.

It can be argued that people of Kilimanjaro did not passively participated in colonial education; they challenged its rationality and objective by highlighting that there were other knowledges and values as well as different ways of knowing.

However, despite such challenges and contradictions, Eurocentric epistemologies with their dislocation and irrelevance to people's experiences went on to dominate Tanzanian education systems and have remained hegemonic to date. This dominance despite indigenous resistance reveals that unequal power relation was at work in that interaction.

Creation of Socialist Society in Tanzania

When Tanzania acquired political independence in 1961, the country inherited the poorest social and economy. For example, 80% of the population was illiterate and primary education, which was only four years catered for less than 50% of all the children. Only about 5% of those who completed primary education entered secondary school. Economically, the country had a severe foreign debt burden, declining international aid and falling prices of its major commodity exports, such as coffee, cotton, pyrethrum, tea and sisal. 80 percent of her population was rural, with involvement in agricultural production in peasantry economy (Kassam 1983). This condition led into an urge to build the nation through the development of human resource. Indeed as several studies have noted, the very idea of national building and development in Tanzania was effected through educating the masses (Kassam, 1983, Mushi, 1995, Bhalalusesa, 2004).

However, the demise of physical colonial regime did not significantly change educational policies in Tanzania. In fact, provision of modern education was progressed even faster. More schools were built, rigid centralized, monolithic and federally controlled curriculum was promoted, and education was extended to adults who had missed out in schools in a form of literacy programs. All these were done within the context of socialist ideology. Despite the discourse of equality, little room was left for individual pedagogical initiatives. Education continued to stress on the capacity to reason, individualism, self-interest, and necessary skills for predetermined and prescribed programs.

While modern education in traditional society like Tanzania was like a new wine in an old guard, after political independence n 1961, Tanzania became among the pioneers of education in Africa, formulating education policy which was developed with the discourse of

equality. Politicians regarded education as a solution to what they saw as democracy problems, as evidenced by decreasing participation in party politics. For example Education was supposed to foster active and democratic citizenship, and a means for personal growth and development and for the building of the good society (Gustavsson 2002). As Mulenga (2003) observes of Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania: “Nyerere saw education as means of bringing about human liberation and equality in society, and the education of the individual was seen mainly as a means of advancing the collective good of society” (p. 466).

In the five-year development plans of 1964-1969 and 1969-1972 adult education became a national priority as a means of producing economic results quickly as Nyerere stated in the campaigning for literacy in 1964:

First we must educate adults. Our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten, or even twenty years. The attitudes of the adults... on the other hand, have an impact now. The people must understand the plans for development of this country; they must be able to participate in changes, which are necessary. Only if they are willing and able to do this will this plan succeed (Nyerere 1964, quoted in Bhola: 1984, p. 138).

After the Arusha declaration, Tanzania’s education policy was guided by the policy of *Education for Self Reliance* (Nyerere 1967), which acknowledged as focusing on poor people, and for including the marginalized people into accessing primary education. Education after Arusha Declaration intended to equip Tanzanians with knowledge, skills and attitude for self reliant and or rural livelihoods rather than for preparing them for further academic knowledge or formal employment. While post-primary education was intended to produce only enough graduates to supply the projected skilled manpower needs of the country, adult education, and

literacy programs specifically aimed at inculcating into adults knowledge, skills and attitudes towards rural development (Kassam, 1983).

Education in postcolonial Tanzania therefore was limited to primary and literacy education to the majority of Tanzanians with a goal to equipping them with knowledge, skills and attitude needed to participate in social, economic and political activities. Secondary and tertiary education was provided to a tiny minority, with a view that only a small fraction of the population was needed in modern sector jobs. Whilst the idea of further education was never openly translated into the primary curriculum, the shape of the educational pyramid has reflected this throughout Tanzania's history, with a broad primary base, that almost reached universality in the early eighties, and very narrow post primary tiers.

In more general terms, this meant that fewer women went to school. Those who did were of the wealthier classes and most were concentrated in urban areas. Furthermore women who chanced to get education, attained knowledge that enabled them to better assume their traditional roles rather than bringing about changes in their lives.

The construction of Kiswahili as the national language in Tanzania

Like education, language in Tanzania became another political-ideological project, which the government exploited in order to mobilize the masses for national development. As discussed in Chapter 2, language is an important link to the development of thought (see Vygotsky, 1962). Vygotsky argues that it is through language that thoughts and mental constructs are formed. Both colonial and postcolonial political elites in Tanzania identified language as a tool that could play an important role in mobilizing the people to participate in the societal's development activities. Language is not only a linguistic issue, but has much more to do with power, prejudice,

(unequal) and competition and, in many cases, overt discrimination and subordination. As mediating tool for communication, it should come as no surprise that marginalization of one's language is social and political practice with an aim to dispossess and disempower.

Moreover, linguistic dislocation for a particular group of people seldom, if ever, occurs in isolation from socio-cultural and socioeconomic dislocation as well (Fishman, 1995a). Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist and social anthropologist, has commented on this isolation, arguing:

. . . bracketing out the social . . . allows language or any other symbolic object to be treated like an end in itself, [this] contributed considerably to the success of structural linguistics, for it endowed the 'pure' exercises that characterize a purely internal and formal analysis with the charm of a game devoid of consequences (1991: 34).

The coming of colonialists in Tanzania in the years of 1880s precipitated linguistic change, creating one language (Kiswahili) where previously there were many languages. This process highlights the centrality of colonial powers and later postcolonial to the processes of 'officially recognizing' Kiswahili language while other languages were identified as informal and unaccepted in a formal setting. Both colonial and postcolonial Tanzanian elites rarely allowed space for individual diversity within the Chagga culture or for complexity or contradiction between them. Rarely did they see indigenous people as they really were: crossing boundaries, having overlapping cultures, and juggling multiple cultures, perspectives, and epistemologies. The pivotal role of the colonial and nation-state here in determining what is and what is not a language might also help to explain the present condition of women in Yuuri and Sufi discussed in Chapter 6.

Although much of the literature on the process of marginalizing ethnic languages in Tanzania has been linked with an urge for nation-building, national unity, identity and development, this cannot be separated from the country's historical, political and ideological contexts.

The evolution of Kiswahili as a national language in Tanzania began in 1930 when the British colonial administrators established a policy of Inter-territorial language committee, which came to be known as East African Swahili Committee. This committee had members from the four East Africa territories of Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar (Mulokozi, 1975). Its main aim was to promote Zanzibar dialect for territorial adoption. During that time, Kiswahili was limited to coastal regions and towns such as Tanga, Pwani, Dar-Es-Salaam and Zanzibar and Pemba and coastal regions of Mombasa, Malindi and Lamu, Kilifi, Pate in Kenya. Therefore, during colonial period, Kiswahili was used as the language of trade and was the mother tongue language to a relatively small population of people in Tanzania.

It can be recalled that the requirement of speaking a common language was unique to Tanzania before the coming of colonialists because previous forms of political organization did not require linguistic uniformity. For example, Chagga mangis were quite happy for the most part to leave unmolested the plethora of Chagga dialects subsumed within them, and this is evident in the plethora of dialects among the Chagga, where one could find a variety of Kikyuu, Kilukani, Kisiha, Kinsongoro, Kilemira, Kimasama in the two small communities.

Kiswahili had barely been known in Kilimanjaro until the colonial period, when the Germans set their feet in Kilimanjaro for the purpose of extracting material resources to feed their industries. The first thing the colonial powers did was to find a means to communicate to people, and language was key to that effect. The universalism of language was considered a

‘triumph’ when a large number of language varieties spoken within Tanzania were replaced with one ‘common’ national language as a mean to achieve cultural and linguistic homogeneity. To legitimize and institutionalize Kiswahili was effected by increasing pressure on people to speak Kiswahili in all the social, economic, political and cultural spheres. At the same time, Kiswahili came to be associated with modernity and progress, while Kichagga and other indigenous languages become associated with tradition and obsolescence (Kincheloe and Semali, 2000).

While the adoption of Kiswahili as a national language enable more Tanzanians to access formal education, in government and business positions (Pratt, 1976) the majority of population were left to struggle with the complexities of communicating in a foreign tongue as illustrated by women of Yuuri and Sufi in Chapter 6.

During nationalist struggles, Kiswahili appeared to be the language to communicate to the diverse (not majority) of ethnic groups. In the early 1950s for example, the period when nationalist party – TANU (Tanganyika National Union Party) was formed in 1954, to capture the members of diverse ethnic groups, Kiswahili was adopted within the egalitarian concept as a neutral language for the majority of the members. While Kiswahili could be said as was used for unification and egalitarianism, it was also used as a resistance against colonial language – English.

From the 1950s up to a period of Ujamaa (family-hood) and Socialism in 1967, Kiswahili came to be identified as an important language of communication. Ujamaa revolved around domestic policy, and in particular mobilizing the population of approximately 120 ethnic groups in Kiswahili. Therefore, in 1967, the Tanzanian nationalists called for major changes in all social, economic and political spheres to promote Kiswahili as a national language. Kiswahili

was then used in daily commercial, political, cultural, and social life of the region at every level of society. in government offices, the courts, schools and mass media. In schools for example, “Education for Self Reliance, the major education policy in Tanzania called for major changes in the educational curriculum, to promote Kiswahili to make it the language of instruction in primary schools, in adult education programs and in some subjects in high school.

Furthermore, the government promoted Kiswahili by making it the sole language of communication to the masses. It opened up political education classes, paramilitary training as well as TANU Youth League in primary schools, all of which were to propagate and inculcate into the people socialist values and attitudes through Kiswahili.

Thus, more than four decades of Kiswahili as a national language, other languages have become marginalized and at best obsolete. In Yuuri and Sufi for example Kiswahili continued to be spoken in schools, churches and in other public places, while Kichagga remained the sole language of communication at homes (Kincheloe and Semali 2000) and mostly among the older people. The legitimation of Kiswahili in public places automatically delegitimated Kichagga. A need for people to speak in Kiswahili was not necessarily by force or that Kichagga was not strong enough to mediate people’s interactions, but people were urged to speak in Kiswahili because they thought it was a good thing to do for the society if not for their own.

However, primary popular discourse about national language is a concern about growing gap between those who could speak the language fluently and those who could not and the repercussion of this gap in the participation in social and cultural activities. Ability to participate effectively in social and cultural activities is deeply intertwined with being able to articulate your

needs and understanding. The collapsing authority over language brought not only cognitive stagnation but also inability to self-assertion.

Understanding the importance of language and the impact of its denial is important in understanding how marginalization of Kichagga impacted on the lives of the majority of women in Yuuri and Sufi.

National building and unity took a new face during the 1960s. Rather than focusing on just business and instructing the masses in schools and in political rallies, Kiswahili succeeded in gaining almost total control over the state apparatus. People became to be identified as competent, sophisticated and knowledgeable from their ability to speak Kiswahili fluently. This new speakers fit well in the newly emerged modern nation. With Kiswahili non-speakers removed from formal positions, the government was faced with the task of employing people from the coast as akidas to manage and control the people. Kiswahili speaking became an important vehicle for finding mechanisms to control all the social and political activities in the country.

The equation of alien language with positive connotations such as self confidence and patriotism is derived from colonial influences on Tanzanian nation-building, and a corresponding anthropological tradition only recently challenged by scholars such as Hobabawm, (1992), Young, (1993) and (Street, 1993). These scholars have urged us to identify nationalisms (plural), rather than nationalism (singular) with respect to diversity and multiculturalism.

For Tanzanian culture, identity and therefore, Kiswahili was both a unifying language, and a language of instruction in schools and in all social and political business. By marginalizing ethnic languages, Kiswahili became cultural artifact to shaping people's behavior in order to achieve a collective identity.

The Current Condition of Women and Education in Yuuri and Sufi

What are the contributions of a study of the history of education policy in rural Tanzania for our understanding of current condition of women in Yuuri and Sufi today? As discussed in this chapter, while the broad objectives of education in Tanzania included the construction of literates, Christians and the creation of employment opportunities, education for women was provided within the discourse that it would serve as resources to enable women a greater voice in participating into womanhood position in social, culture and politics. Although there have been a steady increase of number of women in school enrolment due to economic progress and changes in Tanzanian society, as well as better educational facilities and the quality of teachers, there has been no well-established schools in many rural districts. For example most of secondary schools in Tanzania are based in towns and city. While secondary education has been the main vehicle for social mobility, as it makes possible the acquisition of employment, this becomes a pipe dream to the majority of women in rural areas like Yuuri and Sufi. The study by the Ministry of Education in Tanzania (2005) between 1995-2005 on the percentage of boys and girls in public secondary found that girls' access to secondary education ranges between 38% and 42% and majority of them come from urban areas.

See Table 1.

Government	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
Secondary Education	Boys	Girls								
Form I	66	34	62	38	57	43	53	47	51	49
Form IV	69	31	67	33	60	40.	57	43	58	42

Table 1: Tanzania Basic Statistics in Secondary Education: Distribution by Gender (2001-2005).

Apart from not having a secondary school, in Yuuri and Sufi there is only one primary school (Sufi primary school), which was built in the 1990s. This is expected to cater for the two communities of about 25 sq. miles with an approximate of 2,500 residents. Lack of school facilities has a great impact on the equalizing process that the policy of education in Tanzania advocates, leading into constructing the majority of women in rural Tanzania as uneducated and unemployable.

Women as Silent

This study strongly confirms the proposition that denial of women's knowledge in modern Tanzania and lack of education among women contribute positively to constructing women as silent in that, their way of thinking, communicating, knowing and behaving have been marginalized. Compared to men, the majority of women in Yuuri and Sufi suffered from limited bargaining power - a condition that exploits their humanity physically and psychologically.

Summary

There is no doubt that socio-historical processes of rural Tanzania have transformed not only women, but also their knowledge and activities through the imposition of Western framework in land and education reforms. The modernization process in which women's activities and knowledge were described denied their autonomy and confidence. Modern reforms in land and education had the indelible effect of rendering men the privilege of an elite group, while women became dependent of men. Specifically, the idea that men are providers of family and therefore, should access land and be provided with education for employment, while women

were identified as dependent to men for reproduction purposes was particularly effective in transforming women into poor and silent.

In this chapter I analyzed various social and cultural processes that effected the current condition of women in Yuuri and Sufi. With land reforms, I identified three processes Land tenure process during colonial and postcolonial periods. In this process land was transformed into cultural artifacts with complex power relations, where women were rendered landless and men landlords. During post colonial period, I identified two land policies: the Ujamaa land reform and the liberalization of land policies, which increased land insecurity among women as they became double marginalized when their male relatives lost control over land.

With education reforms, I identified the process of constructing literates and Christians, the emergence of corporate governance and a need for people's effective participation in modernization processes; and the construction of Kiswahili as the national language. By inculcating into women knowledge and attitude deemed necessary for effective participation in colonial and postcolonial economy rather for their own, by forcing them to use Kiswahili rather than Kichagga in their public interaction, and by providing women inappropriate and inadequate education that would enable them to participate on equal foot with men in their day-to-day interactions, I argue that social and cultural processes in rural Tanzania created a condition to limit women from participating in social, economic, cultural and political activities.

Ironically, despite their precarious position, women in Yuuri and Sufi were arguably more important contributors to the Western capitalist economy than men. Their involvement in food production to feed the men and their direct involvement in the production of cash crops illustrates their agency.

This chapter raises concerns for construction of womanhood identity and knowing within socio-cultural processes of rural Tanzania. I concur with others who have found many current underlying concepts of African womanhood and indigenous epistemologies as inherently being transformed by modernization and Eurocentric ideas (e.g., Mama, 1996; Oyewumi, 1997). Missing from my framework (post structural feminist and cultural-historical activity literature) is women's actual experiences, needs and aspirations, as well as attention to women's precarious position in their participation in day-to-day activities. These have to high degree into shaping how one come to participate in constructing her identity. In particular, not only women's experiences but also the gendered nature of society has not yet been given adequate consideration in these two perspectives.

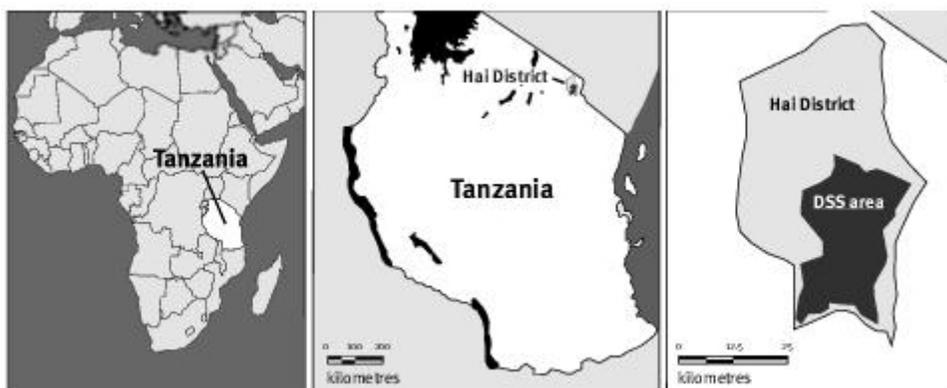
CHAPTER 5

YUURI AND SUFI: THE CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter provides a general picture of the characteristics and main features of Yuuri and Sufi communities. I describe my access to the physical and economic, social, cultural and political organizations of these communities. The chapter demonstrates how people in Yuuri and Sufi have been impacted by internal and external factors. In this chapter, I want to give the reader a brief guide into Yuuri and Sufi communities, and a peep at Lawate market place where I observed people's interactions. The second part of the chapter presents architecture and home arrangement in Yuuri and Sufi and how these are used as artifacts to construct and maintain ideas about womanhood. This chapter therefore, answers part of my second question: How are womanhood ideas represented in people's day-to-day interactions? In this chapter, I confine my observation into ways in which womanhood ideas are portrayed in the homes.

Yuuri and Sufi: Geographical Location



Map 2: These are maps showing the location of Yuuri and Sufi Communities in Hai District of Kilimanjaro Region in Tanzania and on the Map of Africa.



Figure 3: Mount Kilimanjaro, the dominant physical feature that influences physical conditions and economic activities in Yuuri and Sufi Communities in Kilimanjaro. Yuuri and Suufi are on the windward side of the Mountain, which receives rainfall throughout the year, with fertile soils that support many types of crops and lush green vegetation.

The Hai District, of which Yuuri and Sufi are a part, is situated in the Kilimanjaro region in Northern Tanzania. Yuuri and Sufi cover an area of about 200 square kilometers. According to a local census undertaken by village and ward level officials, Yuuri had 1,500 inhabitants, while Sufi had 2,350. According to the district history, the first time Yuuri was inhabited was in 1892, before people spread to Sufi. These people came from the neighboring communities, both on the West – Suumu and East – Kyuu and other neighboring communities such as Lemira, Ng’uni and Masama Bwany. So, though there were some few people from different ethnic groups in

Tanzania, the majority of the people who live in Yuuri and Sufi are Chagga of Machame origin, with Kimachame as their mother tongue language.

Yuuri and Sufi border Suumu on the Western side, while on the Eastern, was Kyuu. In the South is Donyomuruo where their long time ethnic archrivals – the Maasai - the pastoralists live. The average family size was about 4.5 persons who live mostly in family compounds. Data from the CCM branch in the community shows that there is an increase of population density, ranging 400 in the national census of 1988 to 600, in 2002 when the local government took the district census persons per square km. This data also shows that the population growth was forcing people to spread to the lower part of the hillside towards West Kilimanjaro and Arusha Chini. The people in Yuuri and Sufi are patrilineal descendants with wives joining their husband's households. The families are composed of a male lineage elder.

Climatic Condition

Like the rest of northern Tanzania, Yuuri and Sufi have two rainy seasons: the long rains from March to June (known locally as kisye), and short rains from October to December (known as mateeri). The time I was conducting my study (summer 2004 and 2005) there had been variations of climate and rainfall with a long scarce of long rains for three years consecutively. This had made it difficult for farmers to maintain a fixed cropping calendar, especially for the annual crops such as corn and beans. Many people had risked time and their meager resources without any harvest, which had brought a lot of strife and misery among the majority of people. One farmer was reported to have shot himself to death for failure in beans project, which he had taken a loan from the bank.

Lack of rains was blamed to the new settlers at Kibo Kikafu, who had recently been invited by the government to invest in coffee farming. These new settlers have cut down many of the traditional trees planted during the colonial period and which has been a good attraction of rains in the Western and Central part of Kilimanjaro (interview with the chairman of Yuuri in July 2004).

Economic Condition

Compared to the southern part of the two communities, Yuuri and Sufi communities have been underdeveloped by consecutive governments, and exploited primarily as a source of coffee production. The area is rural, with over eighty per cent of the population depending on agriculture for their livelihood. There is little industrialization and a low level of urbanization, a reality reflected in the seasonal, agricultural work of the people. Things like carpentry, shops, bars, tailoring and milling could be seen at people's residential areas. As I looked at the farms along the road, I could see in many plots, corn had replaced the traditional cultivation of coffee. Here and there I could see potatoes, beans, tomatoes, and a variety of green vegetables.

Upon arrival in Hai in June 2004, I obtained permission from the district development officer, who provided me with a letter of introduction to the executive officer, of Masama division. In order to understand how this protocol went, it is necessary to provide a brief account of governance structure of Tanzania. There is a single channel of authority from the very top level - the national, which stretches down to the region, district, division, ward and village. A district may consist of several divisions. For example, Hai, which is the district where my research sites are located consists of 4 administrative divisions (Lyamungo, Masama, Machame and Siha), which each is also divided into sub-divisions. For example, Masama sub-division is

divided into five wards (Masama East, Masama West, Rundugai, Masama South and Central Hai). Yuuri and Sufi are among the 20 communities in Masama West ward.

Therefore, from the district executive director, I obtained a letter of permission, introducing me to the Masama West ward executive officer that in turn introduced me to Yuuri and Sufi community chairman before I selected participants and conducted this study.

Before reaching my research area, I stayed briefly in my relative's home in Hai. Hai is the last town before one reaches Lawate, the entry point to Yuuri and Sufi. Hai and Lawate are two hour's drive apart, and about fifty miles away from each other. As I explained to them that I intended to go and live in the communities for the entire duration of my fieldwork, my decision was greeted with skepticism. "You can't live in Yuuri; you can't fit there any more" I was told. My brother in-law offered me his vehicle to drive to the research location in the morning and go back to his place (Hai) in the evening. But I insisted that part of my research was to live with the people I was going to interview and participate in their daily lives.

I boarded a bus from Hai to Lawate. The trip from Hai to Lawate was approximately two hours, and the road is narrower with a lot of potholes. This is in contrast to the highway between Moshi and Arusha, which is paved/tarred. The bus which I boarded was overcrowded and in poor condition. Despite this, the driver made frequent stops along the road to pick up and drop passengers. This increased the amount of time on the road. There is no government operated or regulated transportation system in these rural areas, but only private operated ones.

When I arrived at Lawate, I boarded another vehicle to my research area. This was a pick up track, common transport in this area. But before I describe my trip to Yuuri and Sufi, it is important to illustrate a picture of Lawate, where I did most of the observation of interactions of people in Yuuri and Sufi.

This section I introduce the physical appearance of the place. Lawate is a semi-urban marketplace situated along the main road from Hai-West Kilimanjaro. It is five miles from Sufi, and seven from Yuuri.

Like many marketplaces in Kilimanjaro, Lawate is situated along the main road, from Hai to West Kilimanjaro. This is a center to many communities. From the North there are the Chagga from Yuuri and Sufi and other nearby places. From the east, is the Pare ethnic group and from the South West, the Maasai. These three ethnic groups –Chagga, Pare and Maasai – have converged here for generations to engage in trade—exchanging goods and agricultural produces. From Yuuri and Sufi people brought bananas, and a variety of vegetables such as onions, tomatoes and green peas. Some brought with them yams, and a variety of fruits such as avocados and mangoes.

From Pare, people brought utensils such as earthen pots and variety of fish from Nyumba ya Mungu and sugar canes. Maasai brought mostly milk and other dairy products. Some other items which did not originate from the three communities such as cloth, shoes, rice, oil were brought from Kenya or imported from various places such as Arab, Asia and European countries. So, Lawate was a strategic place where people met twice (Monday and Thursday) a week to exchange those goods.

Lawate is a small semi-urban commercial center, with an approximately 2,000 people. In such a market day, there was not much to see other than the mass of people coming and going. Some were selling and others were buying, but the number of buyers and sellers did not vary much, because most of the people coming to the market carried with them something to sell in order to get money to buy something else.

One could see people coming and going in cars, mostly pick-ups or land rovers, while majority were walking, carrying baskets, sacks or tins containing goods for sale on their heads. Most Maasai women were bringing their produces on donkeys.

The marketplace was built in a circle-like shape surrounded by shops, leaving three outlets for people and cars. On the Northern side of the marketplace, there were two milling machines (used for grinding corn or millet into flour). On the Eastern side, there was a police station. On the Western side and across from the shops, there were three small restaurants; within which liquor and soft drinks were sold. Across the main road there was a petrol (gas) station, two churches, one of Lutheran denomination and another Catholic. On that side of the market I could also see a dispensary near the police station. Looking around my surroundings, I could not see any new buildings other than those built in the early 1970s. The paint on their walls had long peeled off and their roofs were mostly rusty. Two days in a week are set-aside as market days - Mondays and Thursdays.

When I was conducting this research between June/August 2004 and 2005 this market place had undergone a lot of changes compared to the early years of seventies up to eighties. For example, I could notice an increase in the number of automobiles serving this rural marketplace. Although the roads were not as good, there were pick-up trucks and land rovers that operated as taxis and provided unscheduled shuttle services to-and-from Lawate. In the early times also, it was hard to see men in this local market. Lawate used to be known as women's market (singira ya vaka) and only few men could be seen in the marketplace. And those were not from the communities, but from Arusha or Tanga. These were nomadic people who moved from one market to another with their businesses. People used to call them *washihiri*, a name that represented 'men traders in the marketplace.' One is mshihiri and many are known as washihiri.

I had not known any *mshihiri* from Yuuri and Sufi, nor from Kilimanjaro. But at the time I was doing this study, the number of men equaled that of women, and I could see men from Yuuri and Sufi.

Another visible change that I could see was the type of things to be sold and their arrangement in the market place. In the past, things like soap, sugar, shoe, cloths, etc, used to be sold in the shops. Only food crops used to be sold in an open space. But during my research visit, people were selling everything in an open space - from food produces to shoes, cloth, kerosene and what have you. Though there were still some shops, most of the things were being sold outside these shops. Some people, mostly men and boys were selling cloth on their hands, walking around the market, looking for buyers. This contributed to more noise apart from that produced by cars and occasional car hoots. It was a bit hard to pass from one spot to another, and it was common to hear a shrill - "*you woman, watch where you are going,*" after accidentally bumping into someone or stepping on someone's business.



Figure 4: Women at Lawate Open-air Market selling corn flour in an open space in front of a shop verandah.

The road from Lawate to Yuuri and Sufi communities proceeds in the general northern direction, seven miles away. It crossed a stretch of countryside. Despite its ruralness, the countryside has its own attractions; here and there one would see an open plain, stretching as far as the eye could see, and further north one could also see large clusters of trees which protected coffee and banana farms from direct tropical sun. I got a glimpse of snow on top of Mount Kilimanjaro, and creeks (small streams) that had being formed from glaciers from the top of it.

By the roadside I could see lonely public water pumps, installed in early 1970s, now broken down, without water. I later learned that recently a non-governmental organization (NGO) had started installing water pipes, but these had only catered for few rich individuals who were able to pay for their installation and for water bills. These were well maintained but very

few people had installed water taps in their homes. There were only two public water points, one in Yuuri and one in Sufi where people drew water for domestic and for animal purposes. A cue could be seen from far, but most people had no other means, but to wait patiently for time to arrive. Some people got water from their neighbors who had managed to install water in their compounds. Some few people relied on unsafe water from the streams and furrows.

As I looked around I could see some women carrying buckets of water; others were carrying loads of grass or firewood on their heads. A few had babies on their backs. Given the steepness of the land, automobiles and human heads were the main modes of transportation. The road was unpaved and the pick-up truck in which we were riding was generating clouds of dust, which formed a long stretch of red cloud following the car as we moved along. I realized the reason why every woman except me was wearing a headgear. Each woman was also wearing a wrap cloth in a form of *khanga* or *kitenge*. One could pick me out as a stranger, for I was in a pair of jeans and a tea shirt, an outfit that was rare for a woman in my research area. I vowed to remember not dress like that again while in the field, in order to blend in.

As we were approaching the hill, the first thing one could see was a church on the right hand and a primary school on the left side of the road. The school was two sets of long, one-classroom buildings, each one room wide, which I estimated housed about 200 school children of primary grades 1-7. Its walls looked red from the red soil. The classes had neither windows nor doors. The school was probably built in the 1970s following the policy of self-help project introduced in rural areas of Tanzania as a way to achieve local level development with a promise of being helped by the government. So, Sufi primary school was built within that framework. When the people finished building the walls, the government's promise to furnish it with windows, doors and desks was not fulfilled. These erected walls in the name of a school had

been catering for children of Yuuri and Sufi for more than thirty years because Yuuri has no primary school of its own.

I was hesitant to write such a seemingly classical story about my journey to my field site. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, I wanted my readers to get the picture of general feature of my research site and how this context may contribute to shaping people's thinking and actions.

Buildings and Homestead

The aim of this section is twofold. It is, first of all, an attempt to analyze the hegemonic and oppressive dynamics of buildings and homes in Yuuri and Sufi. Second, through a discussion of the various architectural designs, it seeks to throw light on the subsequent methods of control, naming and oppression particularly the modern architecture, which are mostly owned by men and the rich.

Buildings and Homes: Hegemony through Buildings

Buildings and homes are more than residential spaces where people in families cooperate in activities of production, consumption, or childrearing. While researcher have identified buildings and homes as residential and kinship units, this identification assume that people dwelling in the buildings and homes possess the same genealogical configuration, without looking into how they negotiate their identity in dynamic and culturally-meaningful relations.

Architecture and home arrangement can act as strong cultural artifacts. In Yuuri and Sufi, the way houses are designed, built and planted around homesteads speaks clearly and loud enough for all to see and hear. Homes and buildings were identified as ideal venues in which to

investigate ways in which ideas about womanhood were maintained, specifically in regard to the place of women in the possession of house and their position in the home. People's thinking about the role and position of women are formed in relation to women's capacity to own a house and their position they occupy in the homes. Lack of capacity to own a house and women's space in a home was powerful artifact mediating people's thinking and beliefs about women's roles and position in the home and society at large.

Homes and housing specifically have been among the most politicized sites in Tanzania's development history. Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania for example was very clear in his nationalist messages in pointing out to people to have a modern house. Nyerere encouraged people to move away from traditional houses to modern ones. This implied that, people should shun away from homes and houses that were not modern, or did not portray modernity. School buildings, the church, government offices were considered modern, for they were constructed with bricks and cement and their roofs made with corrugated iron sheets and there were demarcations within the building and outside it. The discourse of house and home evoke a sense of continuity between past and present.

In Yuuri and Sufi, people are very proud of their homes. As one passes through villages each home is identified by the owner of the house. For example *kwa Yona*, *kwa Juma*, *kwa Halfani*, meaning the home of Yona, Juma and Halfani respectively. If the owner of the home is a woman, it will be identified as *kwa mama Mona* (mother of Mona). A woman's home is identified by the name of her son. If she happens to have no sons, her home may be identified with her youngest daughter, or by her maiden name. But if she was married, the name of the home remains that of the husband.

Thus, many people in Yuuri and Sufi were able to read and even understand the language encoded in people's houses and homes, as they were familiar with the coded hegemonic messages. In Yuuri and Sufi, people consider houses and homes as sources of personal identity and status and/or a source of personal and familial security. Others identify them as spaces for providing a sense of place and belonging, a private space outside the public sphere where they sometimes associate with insecurity (*nkambony*).

Types of houses in Yuuri and Sufi

In the past three decades people in Yuuri and Sufi acquired land, built their houses and arranged their homes to suit local building materials, climates, and social practices (Prussin, 1974; Blier, 1983). Prussin observes that traditional African architecture was not from abstract aesthetic notions but from the basic need and image the buildings had to serve. For example physical environment, climatic condition and availability of building materials dictated ways and how built their houses. In the whole region of Kilimanjaro for example traditional houses were built with straight strong, but flexible sticks, which were expertly selected from special trees. These were joined together in the strong woods in a round-shape. The woods and the sticks were then covered by banana grass, which were used to thatch the whole house. These kind of houses were called 'full suit' or in Kichagga *mbii*, not because they are covered all round, but because they were able to shield both human beings and animals from the elements (cold weather and wind blowing to and from the mountain top).

The period when this research was conducted, between 2004 and 2005, houses in Yuuri and Sufi came in three versions – the traditional ones (*mbii*), the semi-modern ones (*itengo*) and modern (*nshalu*). Most of the community members owned their houses. It was a common

tradition that a grown up male has to have his own house. In this tradition boys of 18 and above struggled to have their own houses. Failure to own a house was considered a letdown and one could be caricatured or ridiculed. Girls and women did not feature in this discourse and they could live in their parents' house till they got married. Those who failed to get married (who were few) could remain in their parents' home for the rest of their lives. While the repercussion of this arrangement is outside this study, it was interesting to note that those who remained in their parents' home created a lot of tension and strife in many families.

The way houses are designed is also symbolic and metaphorical, and sometimes hegemonic. The most central house is often that of the head of household. The position of doors and the way roofs are completed can speak volumes to the visitor. For example in most homes the largest and the most modern house in a homestead is often identified as 'father's or grandfather's house,' while the shabbiest was identified as either 'animal house,' or 'mother's or 'grandmother's' house. These are often at the center of the home and all activities in the home can therefore be read in reference to it. The kitchen house is usually built behind all houses in the home compound, together with houses of all animals. Thus, buildings have forms of power and can reveal such intricate issues as hierarchies in the family.

Traditionally the building activity used to be a communal process, which did not involve only the owner, but member of the family and friends. For example, while men cut wood and sticks and joined them together, women brought banana grass and thatched the whole house. So, with the help from family and friend, it was easy for one to own a house.

Mbii

Mbii were those built in banana grass (mbii). (See figure 5)



Figure 5: Mbii: Traditional Chagga house

As seen in the picture mbii houses are built with no windows, only one small door, through which one has to bend to enter. Most mbiis had an upper storage space (kai), where things like firewood, bananas, milk and other farm produces could be stored.

Traditionally, mbii were used as a house for everybody, but as time passed, they were turned into kitchen houses as well as storage for food, utensils, and farm equipments. In many homes, I found mbii were used as kitchens and houses for animals. Most families used it to store farming and food utensils, food produces such as corn and beans. Due to the warmth from fire and insulation from outside harsh and cold weather, mbii were also used as the best place to store bananas to ripe faster for sale in the market.

It was interesting to find that while men entertained their friends in a modern house in the home, women used mbii for this purpose. Men entered mbii only when they were conducting rituals or if they had urgent message to communicate to their wives, and which they thought

should be discussed with secrecy. In this arrangement, one could see that type of house revealed the relationship between men and women (wives), defining one's space and responsibility.

Other people believed mbii as ideal house for the home to conduct rituals and receive ancestors as one participant commented:

Mbii is a traditional house, just like rituals are traditional things. One cannot perform traditional things in modern houses. This will be against the tradition. It is in mbii where the ancestors visit, they do not know modern houses.

Itengo

As time went by, specifically during colonial period which brought with it an awareness of other cultures, technological advances and different way of arrangement of space, mbii, as a house was rendered indecent, for it was considered as of inferior quality given the fact that its building materials were of local and low quality – rough wood, sticks, grass and with no windows and large doors for circulation of air. With the new materials such as corrugated iron sheets, iron saws for cutting and smoothening wood, and the policy of modernization that was translated architecturally as an extension of the so-called “International Style”, people adopted different house style and home arrangement. They started to build houses known as itengo. Itengo were types of houses with walls made of straight strong sticks joined together and plastered by mud from clay soil. These houses were built with windows and larger doors and were considered more modern than mbii. Some builders mixed the soil with cow dung or ashes (mafu), which made the house to look more attractive. Many tried to plaster their itengo houses by cement and whitewash to create the illusion of stone blocks and thatched either by banana leaves or corrugated iron sheets.

Some itengo houses were built just on the ground, and their floor would be the ground soil. Others were built on four stones, which support the house, and their floors would be of wood (mmba ya mbau). Still others were built on stone foundations and their houses would be of cement. The change in the building also provided a space for housing things in different houses in the home. Mbii in many families became houses for animals and kitchen, while the new building, itengo was used as sitting room and bedrooms. This made for a home milieu that was broadly (if incompletely) structured by a series of ideological and material contrasts: modern/traditional, corrugated/grass, mud/cement, and rich/poor.

In the push to build modern houses, mbii received little maintenance and were left to women to make any necessary renovations. As one community member in Yuuri observed:

No man builds a mbii nowadays, those have been left to women, even the very poor man tries to have at least an itengo in which to raise his family. Without itengo it will be very hard to get a wife (interview with a chairman of Yuuri community, August, 2005).

(See figure 6).



Figure 6: Itengo: Semi-Traditional Chagga house

Itengo were considered not of very high quality and many youths tried not to build mbii, but itengo before they manage to build the real modern houses.

Nshalu

Since at least the late 1970's and early 1980's messages about decent houses and homes have been aired in the radio, television, newspapers and in literacy programs. To corroborate this, the last few years have seen a deluge books, some quite alarming, published on the importance of building modern houses and modern home arrangement. With the current globalization and social changes with transnational flows of people, commodities, capital, and images people used concrete, steel and glass. This was known as nshalu. Nshalu was built with stones or cement blocks and very few people afforded to build such houses and many dreamt of living in such houses. (See figure 5.4

Figure 7

*Figure 7: Nshalu: Modern Chagga House*

Nshalu may be identified as Nyerere's dream of ideal houses to Tanzanian people. Buildings in Yuuri and Sufi have evolved within series of significant transformations. Originally shaped by the traditional local environment, and later by the colonial milieu. More recently, the functionality of housing has been abandoned, as policies of privatization and liberalization have opened up the country and the rural communities once more have to a large extent have shaped the ways to build their houses not focusing on their functionality but on quality and attractiveness.

In many homes (both traditional and modern houses) there are items that bear witness to traditional roots. For example, in all the homes that I visited kitchen was separated from the main house. Food in all the homes visited is prepared on the traditional fireplace, which is built by three stones and use of firewood. Many homes also have their latrines built outside the main house despite the fact that there could be one built with the house. Few homes have tap water. But in all the homes that I observed I could see drums – water containers, which could hold approximately 100-200 gallons of water. These drums were for capturing rain as it runs off the roof, or to be filled by water from the stream or from the public water taps.

The layout of most of the dwelling complexes in Yuuri and Sufi was three houses built in one compound - the main house, the kitchen and the animal house. In most homes, kitchen house was also used to house livestock (farm animals). But even where animals had a separate house, it was near kitchen houses. This was true regardless of modification and variation in the arrangement of houses. Viewed from the road, a passer-by could not see the two houses – kitchen and animal house. They were in most cases shielded from the gaze of strangers by the main house or by coffee and banana trees. The main houses were commonly built to face the home entrance. This arrangement of houses could be linked to the concept of the Victorian home which produced an atmosphere of domestic and public spheres. Victorian home was associated with women's roles as wives and mother enclosed in the interior (Adams, 1996; Gordon, 1996; Garber, 2000).

Womanhood, Buildings and Homestead

In this section, I present the findings of the role of housing and home arrangement in representing and maintaining ideas about womanhood. Thus, I illustrate the ways in which

houses and homes redefine the position and role of women in Yuuri and Sufi. My argument is that many of the previous studies about women identity have not used house and home arrangement as significant sites in defining and maintaining ideas about womanhood. The dynamics of power and hegemony in buildings and homes in Yuuri and Sufi were real, and even if they have not been thoroughly interrogated their effects can still be felt. There are no studies that have addressed this theme as a way of understanding the oppression, violence and authority that buildings and homes infused into women. There has not been much interest in the area due to the fact that buildings were for a long time regarded as innocent and very passive. In that sense therefore, public sphere in social structures such as towns and cities and social institutions such as school, the church and workplace tend to be privileged and attract immense scholarly attention.

In Yuuri and Sufi, buildings and homes as sites of hegemony were left in the realm of art history, and even questions of family violence through architecture rarely surface. Also, the emphasis on the history of architecture and home arrangement in Tanzania has tended to focus on towns and cities, where buildings and city ruins, such as slave markets have attracted the attention of scholars due to their historical and economic appeal, *meaning* that they attracted economy. Even these, they have only attracted the attention of anthropologists and archaeologists who are interested in unraveling how life was rather than hegemonic patterns that one can deduce from these social, cultural and historical monuments and artifacts.

Thus, the aim of this section is twofold. It is, first of all, an attempt to analyze the hegemonic and oppressive dynamics of buildings and homes in Yuuri and Sufi. Second, through a discussion of the various architectural designs, it seeks to throw light on the subsequent

methods of control, naming and oppression particularly the modern architecture, which are mostly owned by men and the rich.

Two overarching themes that emerged from this inquiry are (a) women and tradition; and (b) clear boundaries of the position of men and women in the homes.

Women and Tradition

At both sites, I observed that women were strongly linked to negative societal traits, practices and traditions. Many women in Yuuri and Sufi were experiencing the consequences of identifying them with these negative traditions, including witchcraft. While the term witchcraft can have positive or negative connotations, in Yuuri and Sufi, it depicts negative connotation due in part from Western modernization that associated tradition and its attendants such as traditional healing, worship as benevolent and harmful.

Women and tradition was vivid in the minds of residents of Yuuri and Sufi. I observed one incidence that was of interest to this research and which attracted a lot of attention. This incidence occurred on July 22, 2004 in Yuuri. The incidence was about *kidedea*. *Kidedea* was a witch hunter who had been brought to the community to expose and exorcise the witches. This man came from among the Sambia people who inhabit the coastal area in Tanga region and was believed to have very powerful magical powers that enabled him to see the witches and their tools of trade. He was also reported to have powers to command the bad guys, the witches, out of the area, without fail. This was a complex issue.

The day came and the identified witches were four women, one was an old woman, two were of middle age and one was of her prime age. The identified witches were accused of having orchestrated many bad things to occur in the community. They were accused to having

dangerous charms that were directly connected to bad omen befalling the communities and causing illnesses among the people and livestock. These charms were allegedly concealed, and buried either in front of the witches' houses, or under their cooking stones in their kitchens.

Having been identified, the witches were told to undergo rituals of exorcism and oathing that would prove *Kidedea* right or wrong. It was believed that if one underwent this exorcism and yet they were guilty of being witches, they would die. So, although there were doubts about *kidedea*'s powers, no one dared to undergo this ritual or contradicted him, once they were identified as witches.

It was evident from this incident that those women identified as witches were widowed women in late-middle age. One, her husband had recently died and from gossip in a small community like Yuuri I learnt that her in-laws were plotting to force her to move back to her natal home. Because of scarce of land widowers became targets of ill will. Another woman was businesswoman, who was going to Taveta to bring things for sell in Lawate market. This one was acting as a head of family. The other two were old women who were living alone in their old mbiis.

This incidence illustrates how people are thinking about women. They identified them with witchcraft and evil, both of which were understood as been associated with tradition, the past, to be shunned away.

At I continued to reflect on this incidence and discuss its aftermath with several people in the two communities, it was clear that people related women with tradition and traditional houses. In a conversation with one community member about houses in Yuuri and Sufi and who own what, this is what was commented:

Women can build mbii, but not nshalu. No woman in this community has ever built nshalu, women are still in the past.

This informant immediately latched onto this phrase and turned to me, maybe after realizing that I was also a woman and pointed,

Women in this area are not like you, you have already seen the light and I am sure you will not like to cook your food in a *mbii*. But many women like to prepare food in a mbii. It is a common practice for women here.

Women and tradition in my observations, reflections, and interviews, was consistent theme of ideas about women and tradition. The following statement from a chair of one community meeting illustrates this as he lamented, "...men of this area have *gone back to the fireplace (mbalembuya mbariko)*." In this statement he meant men had ceased to occupy their space (public space) and were occupying fireplace (domestic space meant for women). I later asked this leader what he meant by that statement, and he had this to say:

Many people in these communities have lost sense of their manhood (*mmbakikee womi fo*); you cannot find them in the in their homes and they no longer perform men's tasks. Last week we had *utawala* (a community work, which involved digging trenches/furrows to allow easy passage of water from its source) only ten out of more than fifty men came. Others sent their wives and children, what can a woman do in the *mfongo* furrow? (Interview, August, 4, 2005).

I further asked him what he meant by 'men's place. After a long laughter he said, "Have you become ignorant after going to America? *Men meet at bars; there is where they meet other people.*" I then asked him why he thought women could not perform the tasks that men do. He

said, *“Digging furrows is men’s jobs. Men bring water near the home. Women’s job is to bring it in the house. You cannot mix the two.”*

While I could not decipher the meaning behind that parable, the conversation diverged onto a different path, but the image stuck with me because it offered a relative simple picture of ideas that people hold about women’s place in their day-to-day interactions.

Of course, I considered about who was speaking and in what context the statement was made. The chairman was a man, married and with children both boys and girls. One would think these ideas reflected his experiences with women’s space in the house. Although women, as well as girls in Yuuri and Sufi involved themselves in farm work just like the men did, shouldered important responsibilities in organizing and preparing for large events like weddings and funerals and in caring and visiting sick family and friends, still people thought of them as confined primarily to a single point in and around the home on an everyday basis. Kitchen as a place where women live might or might not have been the best image for people in Yuuri and Sufi. Such thinking and discourse around it, tend to mask or ignore women’s everyday activities.

Tendency to ignore and marginalize women and their activities was not a new phenomenon. Feminists have theorized marginalization of women and their activities extensively and it has been found to limit our understanding of contribution of women in society. The tendency is powerful, and is theorized in all socio-cultural and political spheres in such a fundamental way, that it becomes hard to think about women’s role in society as been equal or as important as those performed by men.

Interestingly, similar facile set of conception and discourse about women and tradition, or as domestic servants was depicted in women’s conversations. The following is part of a conversation in women’s group I attended, the chair person started with this statement:

“This year we want this group to *take us from inside the kitchen* (mbariko) to the front (outside).” This sentence means that women considered themselves as occupying the kitchen and assumed that through hard work in their (women’s) group they will manage to get out of their cocoon to a place where men occupy (public). Public according to this conversation was considered to be in *the front* and *outside* and in the light. Inside the house was considered in the dark and a place where traditional people lived.

In the same meeting the women kept referring their lives as going down (isoka/yooloka), and sitting down (ikaa rembo) to refer to failure in their day-to-day struggles. The women’s acceptance and enacting their position as mbariko and their lives going to down *yooloka* were emulating ideas the women’s place is in the kitchen and participating in re-creating those ideas by accepting them. Even when women may have achieved more than many men, (for example by feeding the family, paying school fees for children and taking care of the home) this reality was hidden through the discourse of womanhood in which women and their activities were marginalized and trivialized.

Participation of women in reconstructing their womanhood in statements like the one above is a hint to the extent to which women in Yuuri and Sufi participate in constructing ideas about womanhood. Thus although scholars in the past have focused on how womanhood is constructed, women themselves have to some extent, participated in reconstructing that identity by accepting and enacting it.

Boundaries of the position of men and women in the homes

In Yuuri and Sufi, there was a clear boundary of position of women and men in the homes despite the fact that one of the highest aspirations of people in Yuuri and Sufi including

women was to have a home with a modern house. For example one of the popular questions a father would ask her daughter about her husband to be was “does he have a cement house?” (atiri mmba ya bloku?). If ‘no’ was the answer, then he would agree half hearted to give away her daughter to a man who has no importance in community.

Being married by a husband with a modern house (nshalu) was one of the steps that signaled a woman’s status among her peers. It was a symbol to announce to everyone that she had married well and declared herself a woman of substance. Likewise, possession of nshalu was men’s assurance of acquiring and maintaining an obedient woman in his home. In conversations with people in my research area I came to realize that many women were very attracted to nshalu, and they remained in their marriage not for love, but for the house. One woman felt comfortable enough to stick to her abusive marriage because of the house she was living in - nshalu as she lamented, “Where will I go without this house?” In this conversation she meant no matter what she was not going to leave her husband because he had an nshalu. It was interesting to find that types of houses were related to men and women and this relation created certain practices that produce regulatory environment in which women were oppressed and exploited.

An example of how women see their place in their homes is how they could portray their womanhood as Mary Beth noted that

A good woman is a word that always comes up when one sacrifices a lot. Taking care of your home and your husband’s children for instance is acknowledged as being a good woman even if he got them after marriage. Being married and living in your husband’s house you have to take care of him and of his children and relatives. It is sad because I have not heard of a good mother to an outside child,

there are always problems. No matter how hard you try... it is very difficult for one to be identified as a good woman.

Consistent in the responses from the interviews, my observation and reflections was the theme that women's position in their homes was very different from that of their husbands. Husbands seemed to have more say in the home and in my view, most were able to have an upper hand of the things because they were the owners of the house.

The feminist concept of voice becomes important at this point. The context in which my research participants existed was the subtle message that their only acceptable role was being submissive, hardworking, positive, and supportive. Those who did not pose as ideal women were seen as bad women and unfit to be married.

Summary

In summary, houses and home arrangement in Yuuri and Sufi have changed from mbii, itengo to nshalu and from being built in a round landscape to specific space created a space for the development of certain beliefs about the role and position of woman. This has also connection to women's less 'legitimate' power in owning a house or a say in home arrangement. In other words, denial of women's knowledge, skills and say in the building of houses and home arrangement locate them in subservient position to men, a process that in turn served as an active medium to reinforce ideas about womanhood.

CHAPTER 6

REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMANHOOD

Every culture is characterized by a set of discourses which concerns gender, and which position people to behave and interact in certain gender-appropriate ways. People can accept some aspects of these discourses as containing ‘truths’ or common-sense statements, about gender, and can act consciously in accordance with them. Other aspects of these gender discourse people may only accept tacitly, without consciously articulating their implications for gender, while still however, acting in the basis of those implications (Cherland, 1994, p. 32).

Introduction

This chapter addresses the question: How is womanhood discourse represented in the day-to-day interactions and activities of residents of Yuuri and Sufi? This question aims at generating answers that link day-to-day interactions of residents of Yuuri and Sufi with women’s socio-cultural and political roles and position in their homes and community. The ways people interact reflect their ideas about women’s place and role in those interactions. This chapter defines my interest in understanding the reason my mother and I participated in reiterating norms that contribute into our oppression. It helps me to understand the relationship between our behavior and our identity (womanhood). In this chapter, I present my observation and reflections of people’s interactions in marketplace, women’s activities in cooking and wedding rituals, which reflected ideas about womanhood and shaped women’s emotions, needs, intentions, attitudes, and thoughts. The reflections of womanhood may seem unimportant in shaping women’s behavior, but were effective in communicating, situating and conditioning, not only the

way people interpreted women and their role and position, but also they women themselves interpreted themselves and behaved.

In my observation, interview, reflection and interactions with people in Yuuri and Sufi in various places, women were experiencing the consequences of womanhood ideology—an ideology that prescribed and monitor their behavior. Through womanhood ideology social values and norms control women's behavior within the context of what women are and what is expected of them. To be identified an ideal woman in Yuuri and Sufi; womanhood ideology demands women to act as 'women.'

Through the investigation of these interactions and activities, I focus on central theme: any element of ideas about womanhood; ways in which womanhood ideology is maintained and ways women participated in reinforcing or reconstructing womanhood ideology.

Women Interactions: Marketplace

In chapter 4 I analyzed social cultural and historical processes of rural Tanzania and identified education as among the cultural artifacts that created a condition for the majority women in Yuuri and Sufi to be regarded and regard themselves as illiterate. Two overarching themes that emerged from this interactions (a) women as silent; and (b) women as poor.

Women as Silent

In the marketplace, I observed, as was the case in many other social and cultural interactions, such as in the church and community meetings, significant silence among the women. Women in these interactions were experiencing the consequences of being forced to speak in Kiswahili. As discussed earlier in chapter 4, the making of Kiswahili a language of

communication was a practice that Kiswahili was assumed to create homogeneity among and between the people as well as illustration of nationalism (Blommart, 1996). This homogenizing practice demands that people in Yuuri and Sufi regardless of their level of education, occupation or social position learn the common language. Being able to speak in Kiswahili was understood as a positive thing.

Kiswahili was therefore the language of interaction at Lawate during market days. As I observed people's interactions and listening to their conversations and how they attracted customers, like in the West, people invited passerby's to buy from them. I could hear, "*karibu mteja,*" meaning 'welcome customer.' At first it was hard for me to perceive myself as a customer to someone I considered a relative or my aunt. It was also harder and confusing to communicate with a relative in Kiswahili rather than in Kimachame, our mother tongue language. Kimachame is the mother tongue language for the majority of people in Yuuri and Sufi, and the language that is used to communicate in all the social interactions except in schools. Being called mteja and spoken to in Kiswahili developed in me a sense of isolation, it created a business kind of relation and a distance between my relatives and friends and myself in the marketplace. But the people around me seemed not to take any notice of this condition. When I tried to initiate a discussion in Kimachame we could converse for some time, but the language was switched into Kiswahili the moment I asked about something I wanted to buy.

This phenomenon led me to take note of how women and men communicated with their customers. Incidentally, it was worth noting that while women used one word 'customer,' men varied the names, using words like aunt (shangazi), mama mdogo (aunt), sister (dada), great mother (mama mkubwa). To my amazement, this was completely different ways in which women and men communicated in the marketplace – so it would seem that there existed a

difference of interaction between women and men in the marketplace. While women were stuck with only one word *mteja*, male sellers used a variety of names to call out their customers. To explore how women in Yuuri and Sufi failed to vary names in calling out people in marketplace, I asked for their views about communicating in Kichagga and in Kiswahili.

Most of the older women were much less positive about Kiswahili as a language of communication, pointing out that in practice this increased their vulnerability and a sense of apprehensive workload and added responsibility without giving them any real voice to speak about what they thought was important.

Nevertheless, some women felt that communicating in Kiswahili was important for them because they could communicate with people who did not know Kimachame. For example, one woman commented that Kiswahili was fashionable language,

Kichagga is old fashion language, speaking in Kichagga in a marketplace is to disclose your *backwardness and ignorance*...I communicate in Kichagga in other settings, but not when I am communicating with people who do not know Kichagga or when I am in the market place (Interview, Mama Mercy, Yuuri July, 2004).

For this woman, communicating in Kiswahili is an indication of being knowledgeable and modern, and Kichagga is an indication of primitivity and backwardness. She believes that those women who cannot communicate in Kiswahili do not fit to be in the marketplace. She however admits that she communicates more easily in Kichagga than in Kiswahili and she uses Kichagga in all her communications apart from the marketplace or when someone who does not know Kichagga speaks her to. She

further acknowledges that older women did not ‘develop’ because they did not know how to communicate in other language than Kichagga,

Our mothers and grandmothers did not know Kiswahili, they did not know what was happening in the world or what they were supposed to do.

Another woman was happy that she can communicate well in Kiswahili and little in English after completing form four, and unlike her parents, she no longer has to ask anybody to translate for her what is said in Kiswahili or in English. She thinks that formal education and the use of other languages in schools were important for her to understand other languages and what other people in other parts of the world communicate. On this she said,

The fact that, unlike our mothers and grandmothers who did not go to schools and learn Kiswahili and other languages, we can now know what is said in the radio and in television, we are also able to communicate – read signs, sell and buy things in the shops and in towns in our own without asking someone to help us (Interview, Frida, Yuuri July, 2004).

For many men in Yuuri and Sufi, it is the use of Kiswahili or Kichagga in the marketplace that is a major area of contention.

The thing is what use is the language that cannot help you communicate with other people beyond your own family and community. Kichagga is not a bad language, but one needs to communicate with as many people as possible; Kichagga cannot help one do that. For me, Kiswahili and other languages are important in communication because they help us understand what other people who cannot speak in Kichagga are saying (Interview, Halfan, Sufi August, 2004).

However, Mama Mona thought that communication in Kiswahili rather than in Kichagga in the marketplace isolated some women from attending marketplace, and denied them a chance to sell and buy things. This situation had also imposed a burden to other women as she observed,

I am happy that I can communicate in Kiswahili and can converse with people who come to buy and who I buy things from them. But while my mother and grandmother used to sell and buy things on their own, my mother – in –law cannot communicate in Kiswahili, and therefore, cannot go to the marketplace on her own, I have to help her sell her produces and buy for her what she wants. When I have no time to come to the market, she suffers. I think it would be important if people were not too keen about speaking in Kiswahili, this would be helpful to those who are not fluent in Kiswahili, they could still sell and buy what they wanted without being forced to speak in the language that they feel shy to communicate with (Mama mona, July, 2004).

Although most women indicate their preference in communicating in Kiswahili, I wanted to know the reasons they could not use various names to call people like men did in social interactions. The following excerpts are the experiences the women encountered in calling people by the names that were not theirs:

When...for example you call some one 'aunt,' she will reprimand you that she was not your aunt, mother or sister. Some would say they are not as old as you think. Some women will even call you names. So it is safer to just call them mteja.

Men do not want to be called uncle, father or brother...they think you are trying to create a distance...they prefer mteja than uncle or father.

Another one commented:

I feel frustrated for not being able to use various names to the people who come to buy my things, [like men do], but I don't think this is a big issue, for I have been able to sell my things [like men]...I think this is just how I feel...

I can use various names to family members, but not in the marketplace, there I use only 'mteja.' If I call someone who is not a family member and uncle people might think, "Oh God, she is *showing off*, and she can call anybody what she wants" . . . they will not understand that I am trying to bring him closer for *the sake of business*. That is how it is. To men, things are very different.

Another woman speaks directly to the lack of a language for interaction in the marketplace:

When I started coming to the market I could not sell anything, people looked at my things and went away without buying because I did not have the language to invite them. I was shy to call them mteja, it sounded funny. I hate the name [mteja] but I have to use it, everybody uses it and people seem not to care (emphasis added).

I wondered about the prevalence and all-pervasiveness of this difference in market interaction in naming. What caused men to use various names to their customers whereas women in apparently similar circumstances could not?

From these conversations, it is clear that many women face impediments due to being forced to speak in Kiswahili. Although they think that they are competent in it, they cannot use it

as freely as men do due to cultural practice that limits women from associating themselves with strangers. Many seemed to recognize the pros and cons of using Kiswahili to women in the marketplace. They acknowledged that before the use of Kiswahili, everybody was able to go interact in the marketplace freely using the Kichagga language. They also pointed that due to the use of Kiswahili, those who were unable to communicate in Kiswahili used other women - their daughters and daughters in law to sell their produces for them. This in turn constrains even those who can communicate in Kiswahili.

The role of naming has been widely examined by feminist scholars and they have revealed that naming is an exercise of power and men have historically been in positions to name and define our reality (see, for example, Mary Daly, Marilyn French, bell hooks, Gerda Lerner and Marelouise Janssen-Jurreit). Feminists have realized that men have been (and continue to be) in positions to name and do the defining and therefore, women are immediately at a disadvantage exactly because the power to name has placed them there. It has been argued, for example, that even the name "wo-man" puts women in a position of being juxtaposed to men -- not full and complete in their own right, but a prefix to a man -- who continues to be the center, the foundation, the basis. For example, some feminist have reclaimed language, and thereby the power to define reality for themselves with a goal that when women attain power to define reality, they will be able to define for themselves what they want to be called. A number of Feminists have reclaimed power for women to name and define their experiences in oppression and exploitation in order to change the situation.

Without a language to communicate in the marketplace, women could not compete in the same foot with men who were able to use various names to call their customers. Similarly because marketplace was considered a place for everybody, people developed a belief in

egalitarianism and individual liberty, which hinder women from seeing their own precarious position. This lack of language to communicate helps explain why the majority of women were not able to compete with men in the marketplace.

Thus, instead of struggling for power just to name, women also need power to use various names and concepts for their own advantage. As such, from women's experience in failure to use various names to facilitate interaction in marketplace this project could be developed to identify not only women's powerlessness in naming their negative experience, but also power to name very common issues, events and situations.

It seems women were acutely aware of the power and danger of language in shaping their behavior, especially in public sphere. In this interpretation we fall back on Foucault on the relationship of knowledge and power in that, lack of acknowledgement of norms and rules that impede communication among various groups is an exercise of power, which aims at regulating group behaviors in interactions. Discourse about the use of Kiswahili in marketplace in Yuuri and Sufi provides particularly transparent examples of power/language relationship because there was distinctive difference in the way men and women communicated in the marketplace, which to me, has a goal to put women in subservient position than men in interaction and hence maintain womanhood ideas.

Women as Poor

The other issue in people's interaction in the market place is related to who was selling and buying what. *The issue of consumption has been theorized extensively* through the disciplines of history, cultural studies, feminist studies, post-modern studies, marketing research, anthropology and other discipline. These fields however, have not generated

a unified field of inquiry (Grazia & Furlough, 1996) and not all work on consumption has an interdisciplinary focus. Moreover, from the point of view of this study, it is important to emphasize that a lot of research on consumption has not been specifically linked to the issue of unequal relation of power. Feminists have focused on consumption patterns and have elaborated on how this is related to one's social opportunity to consume in ways that would satisfy her or his most basic needs.

Feminists have addresses two issues of consumption, i.e., the poverty and inequality nexus and the poverty and environment degradation nexus. However, if addressed in detail it is in these two consumption issues that a gender inquiry would reveal a different picture.

With regard to the poverty and inequality nexus, feminists inform us, that there are widespread disparities in relation to what people can consume. On the poverty and environmental degradation nexus, feminists focus on over-consumption among the haves and its effects on the have-nots.

The nature of selling and buying in Lawate market was very distinctive to other places such as in towns, where there were not much difference in terms of what men or women bought and sold. Because there was vivid distinction on what women and men sold and bought in Lawate market this condition illustrated the difference in economic position between women and men. To get a sense of this, I went round the market and took note of this phenomenon. Most women were selling vegetables and fruits. In turn, mostly women were also buying vegetables and fruits. The second item to be sold mostly by women was a variety of legumes, such as beans, peas, and cowpeas. Likewise, the buyers were mostly women. Men on their side, were engaged in selling things such as shoes, cloth, soap, sugar and other grocery items. Although some women were also selling these items, the number of men suppressed that of women. It was also

interesting to notice that there was no woman who was involved with selling meat. In Lawate, there were six butcheries and no woman occupied any. Not many were found to buy the meat either.

I tried to determine the quantity of the produce the women were selling. But after some time, I realized that my investigation was negated by a common arrangement in Yuuri and Sufi where women sold not only their products, but also of their neighbors, mothers, daughters or of their friends. Despite this, I could get a sense of how much one could realize from selling or buying certain produces such as bananas and many other food crops.

For example, many women were not selling more than three bunches of bananas in one market day. Each bunch was sold for about Tshs. 500/- and 800/-, which is about 5-8 cents (USD). So, a woman who was able to sell three bunches of bananas every market day was able to realize about 24 cents (US). However, only a few women were selling just one item in the market. It was common to find a woman with her two or three children, each selling different items for her. For example, one woman had her two daughters selling corn and another was selling tomatoes for her. She herself was selling ripe bananas. It could be difficult to understand this dynamic for an outsider because each item was sold in a different place.

However, despite selling a variety of items, the general picture was that, women, compared to men were engaged in selling and buying items that were relatively less costly.

Both men and women were selling commodities such as cloth, shoes, and corn, soap, etc equally. Interpretation of this interaction in relation to construction of womanhood, maintenance of ideas about womanhood and participation of women in constructing their womanhood identity one could safely say that due to women's low economic position in relation to men, this condition contribute to their selling and buying traditional food products – vegetables, fruits,

beans, peas, and cowpeas, which they could reproduce and afford to buy with their meager income as well as their place in household contribution of food for family livelihood. People's interactions in selling and buying at Lawate market place produced ideas about womanhood. Since women have continued to produce, sell and buy items that are known as "women's items," this practice led people to structure gender relations in the home, where women were perceived as producers of food and responsible for family well-being. The practice of selling and buying certain food and vegetables thus served as an active medium to both reflect and reinforce ideas about the role and position of women. An indication that women's low capacity to sell and buy items that could realize more money reflected their subservient role and position in this interaction.

Specific Women Activities

In Yuuri and Sufi, it is hard to identify clearly a boundary between women and men's activities. A stranger in the community will see people, both men and women carrying hoes to their farms in the early morning. While it is not common to see them in the evening when they come from work, it is common to see women carrying a load of firewood or a tin of corn or beans necessary to maintain the life of the people in the household. As mentioned in Chapter two, Leont'ev (1981) argues that people's participation in specific cultural practices are crucial factors in influencing their thinking and modeling their identity. Likewise, feminists have argued that the activities that women perform, specifically those related to reproduction (e.g. food production, clothing, and shelter, the care and socialization of children, the care of the infirm and elderly, etc.) have much to do with shaping women's attitudes, behavior and emotions and also the social organization of gender (Laslett and Brenner, (1989). Gender here refers to socially

constructed and historically variable relationships, cultural meanings and identities through which the difference between men and women become socially significant. Gender becomes a tool or an artifact to shape social relationship and to identify women and men as different.

Marxist feminists have identified reproduction activities that women are assigned as enabling the structuring of social and gender inequality and argue that women's activities have been trivialized and therefore become unremunerated, a condition that has effected the organization of gender relations and gender inequality.

In this study, I wanted to examine specific activities in the cooking that women were involved in together with the discourses around them. To achieve this, I first examined the literature that discusses gender division of labor. Then I present the actual activities of women in Yuuri and Sufi.

In discussing about gender division of labor, feminists use the concept of social reproduction. Feminists use the concept of social reproduction to refer to the activities that perpetuate or reproduce the social relationships, behaviors, emotions, responsibilities and attitudes that are involved in sustaining domination on a daily basis. Feminists have also identified family as a key institution for accomplishing social reproduction. Lamphere (1987) for example focused on how families distribute labor within the household and between domestic and non-domestic spheres. In this study, I identified family not as passive social institution, but as consisted of actors consciously working to achieve their own goals. I argue that women's activities in the family are not monolithic but vary with women's social and economic position they hold in their families, as well as women's own interest and predispositions.

While feminist literature identified family as a unit, I consider individual women to possess different needs and interests from those of their male partners, or even from their female

friends and relatives. Third world feminists and African feminists in particular have argued forcefully that women's activities in the family are as much shaped by the organization of gender, including gender inequality inside and outside the family (see for example, hooks, 1990; Smith, 1990; Hall, 1996; Mbilinyi, 1996).

Furthermore, while feminist literature has tended to identify gender inequality as a result of their participation in reproductive activities (Oyewumi, 1997) this study illustrates that despite women's participation in productive activities, there is not much change in their roles and positions in the family. Women within womanhood identity are left with hardly any leisure time and have limited options regarding the right to participate in other essential social activities that could enrich their humanness.

Separate Activities for Women in Yuuri and Sufi

In Yuuri and Sufi, the notion that women and men should inhabit separate spheres is governed by ideas about the role of women in the family that are guided by ideas about womanhood. In all the homes that I visited and observed, cooking, taking care of children, the old and the sick, feeding the animals, cleaning the house and washing clothes were activities specifically for women. In the public women did variety of activities specifically identified as 'of women,' including visiting sick relatives (especially those in hospitals), cooking in clans' ceremonies, performing rituals including those related to arrival of new babies, the naming, and wedding. I selected two activities to observe in this study: cooking and wedding ritual.

Cooking as ‘the Activity’ for Women in Yuuri and Sufi

Cooking as ‘the activity’ for women in Yuuri and Sufi was not of women’s inner interest but was through socialization of girls from when they were very young. This socialization is done through stories, wise saying and proverbs. One prominent proverb to socialize girls and women in the activity of cooking was to lead them into thinking of cooking as important for them to be accepted as ideal women. Society developed a say that would create into women emotion and a feeling of responsibility for cooking. A say, “*Upendo wa mume uko kwenye tumbo lake*” (husband’s love is in his stomach) for example aim at making women think that their husbands’ love can be attained from their cooking. Although mothers do not openly teach their daughters how to cook, but they let them see and learn through cooking as Makirembe observes:

I just realized that I know how to cook. How could I not know? You grow up seeing what others are doing. Sometimes you are told do this, do that. When you make a mistake you know what will happen, people will not eat your food, so you try to learn how to cook. Although I do not remember my mother teaching me how to cook, I think I learnt from seeing what she was doing and did what she told me to do. Sometimes I had to figure out what to cook even if I was not told what to cook.

Almost all women, married and unmarried in Yuuri and Sufi considered knowledge about cooking as important. It was common to hear “who doesn’t know how to cook?” (mmbi alleshi ikora). Since cooking was considered ‘a women’s role, it was also in women’s daily conversations. It was not uncommon to hear a conversation among women on how to prepare certain food, or what type of, for example bananas, rice or beans made the best dish. Women known to be talented in cooking enjoyed special status and often were consulted on special

occasions such as weddings or church functions. So cooking activity was understood as part and parcel of women's identity in Yuuri and Sufi. Knowledge of cooking therefore is an artifact that can separate good and bad women. Lack of the cooking skill indicated a weakness.

Skills in cooking also was used to negotiate with men for promise of love or even of marriage as one woman observed.

There is nothing that makes a woman happier than seeing her husband eating and enjoying the food she has cooked. It shows he had not eaten somewhere else. If mine refuses to eat he better have a good explanation.

Not all women had the same view especially for those who were employed outside their homes. To them cooking was a tool of oppression, clearly visible in cases where women were able to afford to employ house helps and cooks, but whose husbands insisting that they wanted food cooked by their wives. Clearly, the idea was not for food being brought on the table, but about who cooked it, using cooking as a form of manipulation and control. One woman disclosed to me that her husband would not eat food that was cooked by a house girl, or that was preserved in a hotpot, "...he threw away the hotpot with his food arguing that I was becoming too lazy and I was feeding him leftovers."

So, the activity of cooking was regarded a woman's job regardless of level of education, income or interest. As the above scenario illustrates the perception of cooking for women vary from one woman to another. It can also be speculated that, these variations were influenced by the kind of relationship and woman's preferences, dispositions and social status.

The following is my observation of cooking activity as a system of one research participant. This was cooking for lunch. This woman had two children (ages 12 and 14) and a husband and she was cooking bananas with beans. The kitchen was traditional – where there are three stones to support the pot and they use firewood. This was a common kitchen in Yuuri and Sufi. Water for cooking was to be fetched from a public water tap about half an hour away. Collection of firewood, fetching of water and cooking took almost half a day.

When I started observing cooking activity, everything was ready, including firewood, water, beans, bananas and all items needed for the preparation of food. I only observed the actual activity of cooking.

1. The cooking started at 11:00 am.
2. She lighted the fire, washed the beans and put in the cooking pot to boil.
3. She peeled the bananas and checked from time to time whether the beans were ready.
4. She added water to the beans and some salt.
5. After about an hour, she added bananas in the boiling beans.
6. She peeled onions, tomatoes and carrots, which together were poured in the pot to boil together.
7. She put some cooking oil.
8. While waiting for the food to be ready, she washed the utensils that were in the kitchen.
9. She then cleaned the mess and put the bananas peelings in the shed for cattle feed.
10. She arranged the table and brought the food to the table.
11. After eating she cleaned the table.

The whole process took about three hours. In observing this activity, I identified various actions going on, which in isolation, could not point into the activity of cooking. These include cleaning the cooking place after peeling the bananas, making sure that water, fire, and ingredients were stable in the food, assembling the cooking ingredients and eating utensils. Those apart, there were other things going on psychologically and emotionally. For example, how long was she to wait for the beans to be ready and if she will do everything properly. Furthermore, because my research participant was using wood as fuel, her presence within the vicinity of fire burning from wood means that she was directly exposed to air pollution thrown off through smoke. All these, time spent for collecting water, firewood, cleaning, worrying about the food, exposure to air pollution contributed in completing the activity of cooking.

According to my research participants, in many homes, there were three meals a day: a light breakfast in the morning followed by lunch around midday, and dinner/supper in evening. My informant's normal breakfast consisted of tea with yams or sweet potatoes or leftovers of the previous evening meal. This was typical of breakfast in homes that had no young children. In homes with small children, breakfast consisted also of porridge, which normally was made of finger millet or corn flour mixed with milk. Lunch and supper varied from bananas mixed with beef, beans or chicken, stiff cornmeal (ugali) with a variety of soups. Rice was eaten, but rarely.

Overall, cooking was found to be a social and cultural artifact that took a lot of time in women's lives, and therefore acted as a mechanism for shaping women's activities, attitudes, behavior and emotions. As a consequence, women's time to do other productive activities that would enable them to develop their lives on a daily basis, and intergenerationally was minimal. It is in this context that cooking activity becomes a mechanism for social control.

In my observations, reflections, and interviews, I saw a consistent theme of work intensification resulting from the demarcation of work between woman and men, which led into women to perform double work. Employed women for example were expected to assume all responsibilities of home including taking care of children, the sick, and seeing to it that children attended school, apart from contributing to family economy through her salary. Employed women were expected to use their salaries for home consumption and at the same time, assume all the roles expected of them without any variation. Moreover, women in Yuuri and Sufi still hold a notion of super woman (to have it all" and "to do it all."). Marsha stated that

There is nothing that makes me happier than being able to take care of my house, the farm, volunteer for community service, my house is beautifully decorated...

Wedding Rituals in Yuuri and Sufi

Over the decades, feminists have tried to fathom how weddings are implicated in the process of negotiating people into marriage institution. In other words, they have tried to explore how weddings perpetuate or reproduce the gender relationships and attitudes needed to sustain marriage relation and institution. Marriage rituals are sites of membership negotiation (Whiteside, 1989), and the importance of belonging is perhaps heightened during weddings and other “family celebrations” (Oswald, 2002b; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Wedding rituals reproduce gender relation within the marriage life through wedding ritualizing young couples into subjectivity and by establishing gender relations characteristic of the wider society.

Conventional weddings glorify marriage through the repetition of symbols that elevate what a participant in Oswald (2000) referred to as “the man woman thing.” The tight symbolic infrastructure produced through multiple forms of spoken and physically legitimated practices—

by family, community, legal, and religious institutions. These social practices (wedding rituals) create the illusion that grown people are *naturally* married people.

Research on wedding experiences has emphasized gender without examining the context in which gender relation is negotiated. According to Cheal (1989), bridal showers facilitate bonding that will provide emotional and material support for wives in marriages. Braithwaite's (1995) study of women acting as ritual experts who embarrass men during wedding rituals lends further support to the idea that weddings are defined as female. Looking at wedding planning, Currie (1993) found that brides utilized traditional symbols of female subservience in their weddings but redefined them as a matter of personal choice rather than patriarchy. The fact that these studies of weddings illuminate the social construction of gender without also illuminating the social construction of the position of women in marriage is consistent with what Herek, Kimmel, Amaro, & Melton (1991) referred to as "heterosexist bias," the presumption that marriage is the women's default option and therefore not necessary to investigate.

The few studies of wedding rituals that have been published have not questioned the unequal social relation in which marriage is negotiated. For example, Braithwaite and Baxter (1995) interviewed husbands and wives about their vow-renewal ceremonies. Participants emphasized the importance of having their renewals, but did not acknowledge the existence of social and cultural influence, or the impact that the wedding ritual might have had on others. Cheal (1988) observed bridal showers and argued that they are sites of female solidarity where women affirm the ties that they will need in order to survive their marriage. Currie (1993) interviewed brides about their wedding planning process and found that they opted for traditional symbolism and behavior that subordinated them to their husbands. Brides defined their choices

as a matter of preference rather than being shaped by social and cultural norms and values about their position in marriage relationship.

In this study, I wanted to understand how ideas about womanhood shape wedding rituals in Yuuri and Sufi and how women participate in reconstructing those ideas. I observed ways in which girls are initiated into marriage. In Yuuri and Sufi marriage and childbirth are probably the most important activities through which women acquire identity and graduate into women. Although there are no specific teachings about marriage as a girl grows up, like in many other ethnic groups in Tanzania, people know that when one grows up, she should get married and bear children. So, this study identified ways in which women were initiated in marriage through wedding rituals and their participation in them.

The wedding ritual that I observed was conducted in two parts. The first part included activities that were performed before the actual marriage; this was known as a kitchen party. The second part was performed after the wedding day, this ritual was to welcome a new bride to the clan.

Kitchen Party

The kitchen party that I attended occurred in the home of the bride and was attended by about 200 women, most of who were in a uniform-kind of attire. This was made from khanga. Khanga is a cloth, worn on special occasions, and also as daily attire for women in East Africa. It was common for friends and relatives attending a wedding to agonize over what to wear as what one wears in a wedding symbolized both the importance of the person to the wedding and the demarcation of wedding ritual from everyday life.

Apart from clothing, three women had been invited as guest speakers or ‘marriage experts’ for the party. Their main activity was to teach the bride (and remind the attendees) ways to make their marriage work. Among these three were one woman who represented the church; the second was from legal office and the third was an expert in teaching things related to sexuality. Other invited women were also allowed to give a lesson or share an experience. The following are excerpts that were key to the talk of each guest speaker.

From the church:

This woman started her speech by a long prayer. After this she started:

...Christianity has brought liberation to us (women)... A Christian woman (wife) is a helper of her husband.... this means that a woman is a heart and a man a head of the family, just like Christ was the head of the church.... We know hearts are inside our bodies; likewise a woman’s territory is the home. The heart beats silently; likewise we (women) are supposed to talk to our husbands softly, without letting people to hear our voices... In this way your home will be a home of peace and harmony...

From the legal:

This woman had come with some brochures with marriage legal message, which she distributed to the audience. Generally she spoke about marriage and law and what a woman with marital problems should do and where and who she should seek help from.

...As a woman, you should know your rights in marriage relation...you are an independent individual....look for legal help whenever you encounter marital problems...

Sex Expert:

...a married woman no longer has a say to her body...When you are married, your body becomes your husband's property. He has chosen you among many other women, but he decided to pick you to become his wife and a mother of his children.... When you enter a marriage relationship, you have to know when your husband wants sex and how he wants it. You will have no power on these issues [sex related matters]...A wise woman is creative in sexual matters...

From the floor:

Other women from the floor spoke about general issues related to home and marriage relationship. Examples included house chores, like cleanliness; body cleanliness and adornments; and cooking, "...you should not leave this chore to a house girl. A husband will love you when he has eaten the food prepared by you. If you leave this task to your house girl, then you should not blame him for making substitution.". Others talked about issues of obedience to the husband and in-laws.

Kitchen initiation party

This was performed to welcome the new bride to her home and bestow a kitchen to her. In this ritual, the new bride was expected to cook a traditional food and distribute it to the women of the clan, starting from the most senior. A new bride has to do her homework before this day. For example, she has to know who the most senior woman in the clan is and how to cook food and offer it to people in the accepted traditional manner. The meaning of this ritual was to illustrate that the new bride know how to cook and also she is of good manners. In Chagga society and in Yuuri and Sufi in particular, it is an insult and unforgivable mistake to offer food to a junior person before the senior. This is taken very seriously and in case of

mistake, forgiveness will go with slaughtering a goat. The shed of blood in Chagga indicates the seriousness of the issue, which is taken to be a means for cleansing the sins and forgiveness from the living and from the dead.

Wedding rituals in Yuuri and Sufi may be interpreted as strategies, the calculus of girls initiation into womanhood and wifehood. Kitchen party and kitchen initiation party assumed a place that can be circumscribed as proper and thus serve as the basis for generating ideas about the roles and position of women. Political, economic, and cultural rationality has been constructed on these activities.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the ways in which womanhood ideology is represented in people's day-to-day interactions in Yuuri and Sufi. I identified the ways in which this ideology is depicted in marketplace interactions, consumption and women's activities in cooking and wedding rituals. Through the investigation of these interactions, we see that to maintain womanhood ideology there were specific mechanisms to manipulate women into acting in a certain way.

In the interactions in the marketplace, this chapter has shown that Kiswahili rather than Kichagga language was used, a condition that isolated other women and impeded their communication. In consumption it was also found that, women were buying and selling items that have lower value, a behavior that indicates their weak bargaining power.

The chapter has also revealed that women's activities perpetuated gender inequality in that, reproductive, rather than productive activities occupied most of women's time. Lack of time

to engage in productive activities offered a powerful antidote to ideas that women do not work and are poor.

Wedding rituals as a process of initiating girls into 'wifehood,' was identified as mechanism for constructing women as sexual objects and a mechanism to initiate women into unpaid house servants.

In this chapter therefore identified lack of language for communication, lack of resources, reproductive activities were important mechanisms for institutionalizing and maintaining ideas about womanhood. Women, regardless of their social status, age, education or class was expected to participate in those hegemonic processes and practices.

The next chapter (chapter 6) looks deeper into a four women's perceptions and reflections of their experiences as women.

CHAPTER 7

WOMANHOOD IN YUURI AND SUFI

Introduction

This chapter provides responses to my third research question: What are particular women's perception and actions about womanhood identity? Following the framework of this study, an analysis of reasons women participate in constructing their womanhood identity requires that we understand their genesis, so an adequate account of women's decision requires that we trace their development. This genesis will help in understanding how social and cultural processes and relations have shaped these women's perceptions and behavior and whether there were any contradictory perceptions of womanhood, and how these were accommodated or critiqued. All these are taken as variables to shape women's behavior.

The primary data for this chapter are interview transcripts from four participants, my observation and field notes. The narratives presented in this chapter represent the voices of women in Yuuri and Sufi with consideration of their geographical, chronological, social, economic and cultural variations. I considered these as significant as they would bring out women's notions of their womanhood more succinctly and holistically. These responses are limited to four participants because I wanted to present a sense of women's perceptions about womanhood and ways they participate in reconstructing it in depth.

Since not all the women demonstrated womanhood identity – being a wife and/or mother, I identified their behaviors as reflecting womanhood ideology within multiple and contradictory activities as they struggle to affirm themselves as women within their families and in the community. In this way, I was able to analyze women's narratives and behaviors within the framework of their multiple positions as mothers, community volunteers, wives, etc.

I start with a profile of each of my four research participants in order to present a general sense of each participant's biography. I then present their voices in their own narratives, after that, I examine their narrative through conceptual framework of this study.

Profiles of the Participants

All participants had lived in the research site for more than three decades. Their ages ranged from 45-71 years of age. So, three out of four women had been married and had children, one was divorced. So I have four voices of two married women, one divorced and one unmarried. One woman had only girl children and one had no children of her own and the remaining two had boys and girls.

The participants represented a wide range of experiences and activities. One was a retired primary school teacher, one was traditional birth attendant, one was a retired parish worker and one was a volunteer, teaching kindergarten in a community church. All participants had acquired 'formal education': two of them had acquired Tanzania ordinary secondary education, one had reached primary seventh grade and one had a literacy certificate. All the women were Christians; three of them were of Lutheran denomination, which is the dominant religion in the research site; one was a Catholic.

All the women described themselves as *wamama* (mothers).

I had offered to interview women in their own convenient time and place. One participant offered to come to my place for all the three sessions of interview because she didn't want anybody to eave-drop on our conversation if we had to do it in her home. One wanted to do the interviews at the church site. All the women however, invited me to their homes several times.

During interviews it was immediately evident that the notion of narrating their life-story was an unusual one. Almost all of them asked for further clarification from me. “Where do I begin?” or “I don't know how to begin,” were common phrases in each beginning of our conversation. Because I did not want to shape their narratives, I encouraged them to tell me whatever they thought was important in their life in any order that they wanted. Most of them thought nothing in their lives that was worth sharing.

See their profile in Table 6.1

Table 2

Profile of the Selected Participants

Name	Geog. Location	Age	Level of Education	Marital Status	No. of Child		Rel.	Occupation
					B.	G.		
Anita	Yuuri	57	Std. VII	Married	3	3	Luth	Retired Parish Worker
Kyekue	Yuuri	71	Literacy Level II	Married	4	1	Luth	Traditional Healer
Mankya	Sufi	67	STD. VII with Teaching Certificate	Divorced	-	3	R. Catholic	Retired Pr. Sch. Teacher
Nkasara	Sufi	45	Form IV & Secretarial Cert.	UnMarried	-	-	Luth.	None

Table 2: Profile of the Selected Women Participants

Anita

Anita met with me in my home. She was 57 years old with six children, three sons and three daughters all grown up with secondary education certificates, and working in various towns in Tanzania. She had been volunteering to work as parish worker in the community church from

the time she became a pastor's wife more than thirty years ago. Anita was eager to tell me about her children's achievements. Her oldest son worked as a mechanics in Arusha, followed by the second who was a carpenter in Hai. Anita's third son was a primary school teacher in Singida. Her eldest daughter was working at Machame Hospital as a nursing assistant. The second daughter was a clerical assistant in Hai, and her third daughter was a bank clerk in Arusha. Anita was very proud to update me with the achievements of her children. Her husband was a retired pastor of Lutheran church, but was still working in Yuuri church as a Bible teacher and a church elder.

As Anita entered my house to begin her first interview, her face was lighted and her mood jovial. She was dressed in two khangas, with one covering her hair and another securely tied to her waist (this is typical women customary attire in the area). She looked clean and smart dressed. She was carrying with her a crochet, and I could see she was knitting a sweater. She later told me she was knitting it for a neighbor's daughter who had recently got a baby. She did not appear to be in a hurry and was very willing to sit and talk with me for a long time. She had a lot to talk about her feelings regarding her life as a pastor's wife, a successful mother, a parish worker, and a leader of churchwomen's group.

At first I had wondered why she volunteered to be interviewed on a market day, when most of the women usually went to marketplace, either to sell their farm produces or buy groceries or both. It was unusual to find women at home during market days. I got the answer for this in the interviews. After initial greetings, followed by customary tradition of offering something to eat to a guest, we started our interview. This initial ritual was typical for each individual interviewee. Here is her story...

I grew up in a family of eight children. I was the second born. So I had my elder sister and six brothers younger than myself. My parents had a big house, so we grew up quite comfortably (her father was one of relatively rich people in Yuuri, and the first one to buy a vehicle. He also owned a house built in blocks, which was rare to many people of his age). I shared a room with my sister, but when we were still very young I enjoyed playing with my brothers more than with my sister. I liked my youngest brother a lot. He was born when I had just started primary school, and I spent a lot of time with him whenever I had the time or when my mother was preoccupied with other activities or was unwell. *(This was typical of many girls of her age with younger siblings. It was their responsibility to take care of them whenever their labor was needed).*

My mother was very strict and hardworking. I remember she used to wake up before six in the morning to tend to the cows and goats. I used to hate waking up and doing all those jobs when I was younger, but as I grew older I enjoyed them because I didn't like to leave all the housework to my mother. *(Here I noticed she did not mention her father, and indication that he was not supposed to engage in those activities).*

I liked my father a lot too, but he was too busy with the farms. We had a big coffee farm around the house and another one for corn at Lawate. *(Both of these activities were for cash).* So my father was always out supervising the work in the farms. He used to be tired all the time and he did not like to be disturbed when he came home, so we were not very close with him. I remember sometimes he would come home with very foul mood. So as children we would make ourselves as inconspicuous as possible. If the cows made noise my mother was in trouble and we would be sent to look for fodder even at the middle of the night. So my mother was very

particular in feeding the cows. I used to think she liked the cows more than us, many children think that way, even mine....

I remember we didn't get along very well with my sister when we were growing up. (*She responded after a question about her relationship with her sister*). I don't remember but we didn't seem to have much in common. Though we shared a room, each of us kept our things and we would not use each other's things. Not that we had much, but the few that we had, she wanted to keep for herself. I used not to mind if she used my cloth, or used my blanket, but she didn't allow me to touch any of hers. She always quarreled with my mother, especially when it reached her turn to cook or to wash the dishes. She always wanted our brothers to wash their dishes but they wouldn't listen to her. (*I wonder if she was rebellious of her identity as a girl*). Our mother did not encourage our brothers to do any work in the kitchen, but we both collected fodder and worked in the farm. So my sister was angry all the time, and she used to fight with everybody, even with our mother. My mother at times would wonder if she was her daughter. I used not to quarrel with her as much as our brothers did, but we didn't get along very well either. But now we are very good friends.

I started primary school at Lukani when I was 7 years old. During that time Sufi was not yet built. There was only Lukani and all the children from Yuuri, Sufi and other nearby village attended Lukani for their primary education. I loved school very much. I loved playing, singing and dancing. I also liked English, history and Geography. In those days there were no many women teachers like today. I remember we had only one female teacher who we used to call her madam, she taught us English, dress making and cookery. We liked her a lot and she encouraged us to read to pass the exams. I was among the five girls who passed standard four examinations.

My friend and I went to Masama Girls' boarding school and the other two went to Lemira. Many failed and could not continue with school. I did not pass standard seven examinations. The year that I finished class seven no one passed to go to secondary school. There were no many children who passed standard seven examinations during our time. We came to see children going to secondary schools during your time (*here she was referring to me*). I think we were not as smart, but I also think things were different. (*Here Anita is blaming herself for not passing standard seven, she thinks she did not make enough effort. She also blames the time - that she grew up in a bad time*).

I was very happy to be accepted in Mwika Bible School. They had advertised the positions in the church for children who had finished standard seven and who had got church confirmation. I was lucky because I had just been confirmed that year and had finished standard seven. My mother encouraged me to apply and she took my application to the pastor and to my Sunday school teacher and both wrote very good recommendations for me, so I was accepted. I think other girls could go, but their parents did not allow them to apply, and there were no many girls who had completed standard seven and had gotten church confirmation.

I truly enjoyed life in Bible school. It was a good experience for me. There were very few girls ~ about ten from all over the country. I think we were about two hundred students in the whole school. There were about one hundred first years, and one hundred second years. I was actively involved in a lot of different things, choir group, domestic science club, and visitation club. I was also in the netball club. We visited many people, especially old people in their homes. In Sundays after church we visited the sick; we prayed and sang with them. We normally visited the sick in Mwika hospital. It was joy to see a patient singing and smiling and forgetting their suffering.

I received the best girls' student bible scholar award, and when we graduated the pastor was invited to attend to my graduation. Many people came along with him, my father, mother and many other people from the church. Our church and the pastor were very proud of me. My mother was very happy to have me for her daughter, and she would always praise me to her friends.

After my Bible school I was involved in a lot of things in the church, teaching Sunday school and helping the pastor with teaching those who were in confirmation program. *(Although Anita had attended Bible school just like the pastor had, she did not secure pastoral employment because during her time, Lutheran churches did not accept women to assume pastoral jobs. Instead, she volunteered in the church and worked for free as a parish worker although most of the activities that she did were the same as those the pastor was doing for pay).*

Two years after my Bible school, I got married when I was nineteen. The first few years of marriage were very difficult for me, partly because right after marriage my husband went back to his pastoral work in town, and we agreed that I would stay at home to take care of our new home, animals, the farm, and to take care of his old parents *(this was typical of many families with employed men in Yuuri and Sufi. Rarely did they take their wives along with them to town. Women were to remain behind to take care of 'the home' so that they would have a place to live when they retired or left their jobs).*

In the beginning I thought it would be fun to be in charge of my own home and life. But life was not as I had expected because my in-laws, especially my mother in-law did not like me or to put it differently, did not see me as a daughter or an independent woman with her own home. She treated me like a house girl or a slave. Although I tried to help her to feed her cows

and milking, she also expected me to work in their farm. She did not care about my house, farm and animals, she only expected me to work for her.

At first I tried to do all the chores whole-heartedly but after... after my first pregnancy my energy went down. I could not work as many hours as I used to. The worse part was, I could not wake up early to milk my cows and hers in time. This caused a lot of trouble for me because she thought and said I was too lazy to be a pastor's wife. What troubled and saddened me more was that, she did not consider my health even after telling her I was expecting a baby. I was very confused with all that was happening.

It didn't sound good to people that I was lazy (she responded to the reason for her concern). Lazy women are ridiculed and mocked and I did not want that to happen to me because I knew I was not lazy. Although I have problems – financial, marital or problems with my mother-in-law, I can not confide them to friend because being a pastor's wife, and a women leader I am expected to teach other women about childcare and how to take care of their homes as Christian wives and mothers. So my problems have been kept my secret. Everybody thinks I am the happiest woman in the community. When they come to me for advice, I don't want to break their hearts that I am also in the same boat, in that way, they trust me with their secrets. You (referring to me) are the only one person I have ever confided to, and I know it will remain a secret.

I can say that I raised all the children by myself. Their father was away to his job all the time they were growing up. Although he would come once in a month, they grew up not knowing him very well. I planted all the corn, beans and vegetables. I used the empty spaces in the coffee farm, so when I took care of food crops, I was also taking care of coffee trees. This worked very well because I was able to get something on the table and also money from coffee

for school fees and other expenses. Their father helped in paying their fees too, but his salary was too small to cover all the children. So it was a blessing that I stayed at home and used the farm products.

I have tried to raise chicken, goats and cattle, most of which I borrowed from my mother and from my neighbors, a form of traditional cattle-loaning system (known as *iaría* among the Chagga). *(It is a common practice to borrow animals from friends, family or neighbors with specific arrangements, some including paying in kind or from the products attained from the loaned animal or land. Most of these animals are traditional ones and are raised in subsistence level).*

Although they have multiplied, most of them died because their vaccination is too expensive, and I cannot pay a veterinary to check their progress. So, although I try to feed them and clean their shed, I am helpless when it comes to falling ill.

Kyekue

Kyekue was the oldest participant in this study. She was a traditional birth attendant and at the same time, she knows and traditional herbs, which she use to heal people and animals. She was happy that I included her in the study and happy to visit her home. In her three rooms house, I could observe everything was well organized I could see she had made an extra effort to clean her house and compound. As in many household compounds in my field, the main house was built to face the valley, under which there was a kitchen house, and some separated kitchen and animal house. At Kyekue's home, kitchen was a traditional Chagga house (*mbii*), which also housed animals – two cows and three goats.

Kyekue looked clean herself and had put on her best Sunday attire – a clean dress not necessarily new looking and she had on a pair of khanga. She had also prepared something for me to eat. Upon my arrival her husband left the house after we had greeted each other. I think he wanted to give us a room for ourselves. Kyekue estimates her age to be 71 years. She might be one of the few old women in the community, but not the oldest. She had one daughter and four sons, all grown up with their own families. She lives with her husband, an energetic and jovial old man and a grandson.

Her kitchen house was constructed with two rooms, the inner one for the animals and the outer was a place where she used for cooking. There was a rack in one corner of the room on which there were a few plates and bowls, some tea cups, spoons, glasses, wooden spoons, earthen pots, etc. On the other corner there were two buckets of water and two drums; I could guess they contained corn and legumes. Her cooking place, as in many kitchens in the field area, was comprised of three large stones to support the pot. There was also a small bed facing behind the door. I was not sure if it was for her grandson or for herself.

The kitchen was also divided into two. On the upper side of the room just below the roof some wood was used to separate the lower part from the upper, where she stored things such as hoes, some baskets, a sprayer (normally used to spray insecticides on coffee and vegetables) and other farm utensils. I could also see several stalks of bananas. The impression one would get from this environment was clean, serene and well arranged given the space and activities in the family as well as resources available to make the place attractive and habitable.

From where I was sitting I could see to the right, about fifty feet away another hut, this was built for his then grown up sons. She was then using that house as an office where she

attended her patients. We sat in the kitchen because she was preparing supper. So we talked as she busied herself with cooking.

After the usual greetings, which included a lot of questions about my health and how I was doing and how America looks like, we started our interview. Here is her story...

I grew up in my grandfather's house. My father was a Lutheran pastor and my mother was a housewife; she was also a Sunday school teacher and a leader to the churchwomen' group. I was the first born of five children; I had two younger brothers and two sisters. Two of my brothers and my sister already have passed on (she meant had died). I have remained *behind* with my sister. (*I came to realize the word behind was among the words that women in Yuuri and Sufi used extensively to show their humble position that they occupy*).

I don't have much recollection of my life in my parent's home because I went to live with my grandfather and grandmother when I was very little, about four years old I think. Being the first-born and their first granddaughter, my parents thought I should be the one to help their parents in various errands. (unlike Anita who was expected to take care of her in-laws, Kyekue was expected to take care of her grandparents).

Unlike my younger siblings, I did not get a chance to attend formal school, which was located four miles away, there were no many girls going to schools in those days anyway. So in my childhood I just stayed home with my grand parents, I only came to learn to read and write when literacy programs started, well after independence.

Well I can't deny that I have not benefited from literacy classes, for now I can read and write my name. I can also read a letter from my children; I think this is important to know how they are. Earlier I did not know when it was day or night, but now I know (*Here Kyekue is proud of her achievement in literacy skills. She seems to have internalized a notion that not being able*

to read and write Roman letters one was in the darkness and able to read and write was considered being in the light). I don't really use my literacy skills very much; the knowledge that I got from grandparents is the one I am using till this day. Though I used to be angry with them for not sending me to school, I have come to appreciate living with them especially my grandmother.... She taught me many things. What I am today I owe to my grand mother. She taught me all types of herbs and their cure. I don't think I could learn as many things in school.

When I was growing up, there was only one Lutheran church in the whole of Masama (this is a size of a county). So people from all over the place - from South, East, and West of Masama used to worship at North Masama, the church where my father used to preach. So my grandfather met my grandparent-in-law to be in the church. This is where our marriage was arranged and tied. That is how I came to be married in these parts. We did not know each other before. But that is how it used to be. Now children are choosing their own husbands and wives. Kware and Nkiro (These are pseudo names of her two sons) have married from Singida. Their wives don't even know a word for water in our language, but I can't blame them, I know it is not their fault, they don't know, they did not grow here to know. Nguni (pseudo name of her grandson) has learnt a lot of things, and he has been my eye and feet. (eye and feet was a figurative for doing everything for her – to see and go).

Here the marriage of her two and only sons distracted the trend of her thought on her own life. But I think she is proud of her children just like Anita was. I had to lead her to go back on track by asking, "How was life like in your new home as a married wife?"

We lived in the same compound with my in-laws for many years before we built our own house. My mother-in-law was a traditional birth attendant (*mwaanga*). She was a very tenderhearted woman. I accompanied her to deliver babies or when she went to help women with

various pregnancy problems. I had some skills in many herbs to help people with various health problems, so we combined our skills and worked like a team. I was able to deliver babies before I even got mine. So, although I missed out in school, I learn a lot from my grandmother and from my mother in law.

Well, I cannot deny my mother's role in my life.

She replied after question about her mother.

Remember unlike today, traditional healing was regarded pagan and a taboo in Christian homes. So it was hard for my mother to involve herself in my life or in her in-laws. She and my father never visited them, and I used to see them only in the church or when I visited. It was ok for my siblings to visit, but they did not do that very often. So I have no much recollection about my parents or siblings. I remember I used to dream of growing up in my parents' home, and I used to hate them for making me live with my grand parents rather than with them and my siblings. I was more furious when I could not attend school - for not making an effort for me to go to school like my other siblings. I have come to accept my situation because compared to those who went to school; I feel I didn't miss much.

I have been helping women in labor for more than forty years. I am known in the whole district. No *mwanga* (gynecologist) in Kilimanjaro who does not know my name. My skills in traditional birth attendance (*ukunga wa jadi*) and healing (*uganga wa jadi*) have helped many people, young and old, men and women.

Apart from helping people with their ailments, I also farm. I have been planting corn, beans and other vegetables all the years I have been here. These, I plant at Sufi (a borrowed land four mile outside the community) because they cannot grow well among coffee and banana plants. I give the landlord 1/3 of all the produce I get from this farm. This is a common

arrangement in this place. You are given a farm for free, but what you realize from there, you have to share with the landlord. In this way, we (women) have been able to feed our children and even to take them to school.

Mankya

At her suggestion, Mankya and I met at her house. Mankya, a 67 retired teacher had recently been discharged from a hospital after being admitted with a broken leg. She was hospitalized for a week and was relieved to report that she had only a minor fracture. She looked tired but happy to invite me to her home. Mankya had been divorced long ago, and lives with her two grand children, a granddaughter and a grand son. Her compound was slightly different from most of the compounds in the community. Her's had a large area covered with *panicum trichocladum* (rambling perennial green grass with numerous short leaves) and nicely cut fence of bougainvillea. Her house was not built in bricks, but with mud and stones and thatched with corrugated iron sheets. The walls were well plastered with cement mixed with whitewash. After brief greetings, we started our interview...

I am 67 years old and was the first born of a family of ten. I lived with my two younger sisters and my two younger brothers and later when my father re-married, we came to live with our three half brothers and two half sisters. My mother was a housewife, but she died in labor when I was only ten. My father had a butcher where he slaughtered cows, goats and sheep for sale. When we were young, he used to travel a lot. He would go as far as Maasailand or to Dodoma and Shinyanga. He would be away for weeks, even a month depending on whether he got herders to bring cows from the market. So my father used to be away all the time and since I was the first-born and a girl, I was responsible for my younger siblings. My grandmother came to live with us the first three or four years after the death of my mother, but she partially took care

of us, as she was herself ever sick. The third year after our mother died, my father re-married, so, we lived with our stepmother.

When I passed class four to go to class five my father could not approve of me to go to a boarding school in Ashira Marangu where I had secured a place. This was a big blow for me. I remember I cried for weeks, refusing to eat or to talk to anybody. I enjoyed school so much and could not think of being home while my friends were continuing with school. I pleaded and pleaded but my father would not budge. Even the head teacher pleaded with him to allow me to go but he would not hear of anything about me going to a boarding school. So I remained at home with the growing family from my stepmother.

It was very hard for both of us – my stepmother and I. She was barely my age. I remember we used to fight verbally and sometimes physically. Since my father was always not around it was easy for me to be rude to her. She wasn't a bad woman, but I was just angry about everything and with everybody and I think I did not take time to know or appreciate her. I think it was hard for her, just as it was for me.

When I reached age 16, I got married. At first I was excited to get out of my natal home, have my own home and family. My husband was a driver. He used to drive trucks to ferry beer from Arusha to Moshi, so, like my father, he was rarely at home, but I lived with his mother and two sisters. For the first four years we lived happily and I got three children, all girls. The problem started when I got my third daughter. Like it is traditionally that a mother-in-law helps her daughter-in-law upon the arrival of a new baby, with my third daughter I didn't see her, not in hospital or when I was discharged from the hospital. She never visited. This didn't bother me so much until I heard the rumors that she was saying I was a witch, and that my witchcraft had chased my husband from home.

I don't know where she got those ideas from, my husband and other members of their family seemed to agree with her. There were many deaths in the family ... then people thought I was the one who was killing them ... my own husband started to hate me. He stopped completely from coming home and when he visited, he refused to eat the food I cooked for him. He eventually accused me for wanting to kill him and all the members of his family. I tried to vindicate myself but he and other members of his family did not give me the chance. I knew what would befall me in view of what had happened to other women. Witches used to be chased out of the community in disgrace. One woman was brutally killed. Thus, when ... one of my sisters in law whispered to me that they were planning to evict me, I took my girls (daughters) with me and boarded a bus the same day and came here. It was very hard at first, but my brothers helped me. My eldest brother gave me this plot and helped me to build this house. He also saw to it that my children's school fees were paid.

Later on when they announced the UPE in 1974, I enrolled for evening classes and after passing college examination I was among the first students to be selected for teacher's training. I went to Kinampanda Teacher Training College in Singida and after two years I became a teacher. I have been teaching in primary school for twenty years. That was what saved my children and me. I don't have the language to thank my brother. My life became a dream that I thought I had lost.

Nkasara

Nkasara willingly agreed that we meet at the churchyard. She was the youngest of the four women. She limped as she walked because one of her legs was shorter than the other. She was a charming and energetic woman. As we sat on the grass and carried out the interview, I

learned that she had just finished cleaning the church and was planning to go cut the animal fodder after the interview. But she assured me that she was not in any hurry since she was not planning to go far for it. At the age of 45 she was among the oldest women in the community who were unmarried. Her family was among the relatively affluent in Sufi. Her father was a retired Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union (KNCU) secretary at community branch and her mother was a housewife. She looked calm but when we started talking she sounded nervous, so much so that I had to repeat questions twice, sometimes three times and I wondered after the first interview if she would agree to continue with the study. An idea crossed my mind if I should discard her story, but she was the only woman in her age that had not being married, and among the very few who had finished secondary education and two years of college education. Eventually I thought her views were important in this study. This is her story...

I grew up in a family of four. I was the last-born; I have two brothers and a sister. When I was growing up I was close to my brothers, and we used to play together. I was also close to my mother, closer than any of my siblings. I used to be the baby of the family, I still am. Many people also call me baby. I liked my mother because she used to tell us stories, which I found funny and entertaining. My mother was always at home. Despite much work and many responsibilities of the family and farming, my mother would always find time to tell us stories. She had grown up in her grandparents and she knew a lot of stories about the Germans, the British and the wars with the Maasai. She also told us stories of animals and of heroines in her family. Her grandfather had gone to India to fight, and died of the wounds he got from there. People say they were not from the bullet, but from walking for days without shoes. Sometimes my mother told stories of her childhood; how she used to travel a long distance to fetch soda for cooking dry corn and beans; how she used to take care of two homes, her family's and that of her

old grand parents. I liked the stories about her life most, because they made me see how different her childhood was from mine.

I didn't like my father very much. He was not always around because he was busy at KNCU. We only saw him on Sundays when he did not go to work. But other days he used to come home late when we were already asleep. I remember one Christmas Ben (her eldest brother) and my sister went to a party and came back the following day. This was the time I saw my father beating my mother very seriously and she was hospitalized for weeks. My father used to beat her, but that day, it was a real beating. But I loved my mother and thought it was terrible for my father to blame her, but later she told me it was because she did not ensure that everybody was home and she did not tell him about their absence.

I liked to play with friends in the neighborhood and in school. I enjoyed *ready and tickri* (*these were common children's games. I wondered how she used to play these games with her handicap. An idea crossed my mind if she dreamt of playing these games or she wanted to cover her physical problem*). In primary school I had no many friends, but I liked school and I did all the subjects very well. My teachers like me a lot, and they would ask me to give examples on the board. I used to be shy but I liked to read well ahead to prepare myself. Some of my classmates didn't like me, they thought I was teachers' pet, but I knew it was because I worked very hard. I passed standard seven and went to secondary school in Marangu. After form four I went to Tabora Secretarial College where I was trained as a secretary. I passed very well, but in all the interviews I have attended, no one has offered me a job, that's why I am still living with my parents. I know if we were living in town or in a big city I would have secured a job but now I just have to live with my parents, and I am happy to teach Sunday school and help teach the

kindergarten. I have been volunteering in the church for ten years now. Some people think the church should pay me, but I don't feel they should, I enjoy what I do.

I don't think I will ever marry... May be, it is because of my leg... But frankly speaking, I don't feel that I am missing anything if I stay the way I am. Nobody in my family has said anything about me getting married, so it is a relief for me. I know my mother would like to see me getting married, but from her own experience in marriage (beatings), I don't think she will want me to marry in a hurry.

Narratives Results and analysis

From the women's narratives and the framework and purpose of this study, several themes emerged: The findings are categorized and organized into three themes: (1) women's motive; (2) source of influence; and (3) the contradictions experienced.

Motive to participate in constructing their womanhood identity

Motive here is not conceptualized as something residing within the individual women and resulting in their behavioral patterns, and therefore possible to identify by focusing on individuals, but that is influenced by power that prescribes what is wrong and right, and which position women and their actions in certain ways.

In order to get a clear understanding of women's motives, rather than asking a direct question I traced their experiences from their family as they were growing up, in their married life (three of them) educational background, as wives and mothers, as well as resources accessible to them. These are conceptualized as contexts or intervening variables that shape women's thinking and behavior to act in certain ways and not in others. The study noted that

women's motives differ at different stages of their life. However, what is presented here is part of the findings, which focused on the women's current stage of life, i.e. the decision to act as a woman, a mother, a wife, an in-law and/or a grandmother.

All of the four women experienced economic and cultural structural and relational constraints in affirming themselves as women in society. Economic structural issues refer to the challenges the women face when trying to reaching their goals in life such as attaining formal education, employment, produce food for their families, pay schools fees for themselves and children and the like. Cultural structural issue on the other hand refers to certain aspects of culture that are associated with women such as care takers, home makers, which afforded them less power than men. Economic and cultural issues arose out of the larger socio-cultural and historical processes.

Economic constraint impeded women from realizing of their life goals, a situation that afforded them subservient position and construct them as dependent of their male partners, neighbors and friends. Each woman tried to use her agency to navigating different situations, and all of them felt that the condition they found themselves in was natural and their failure to achieve their goal was because they did not try harder. Anita shared her frustrations when she tried to raise animals to increase her economy.

I have tried to raise chicken, goats and cattle, most of which I borrowed from my mother and from my neighbors (iaria). Although they have multiplied, most of them died because their vaccination is too expensive for me, and I cannot pay a veterinary to check their progress. So, although I try to feed them and clean their shed, I am helpless when it comes to falling ill.

Cultural constraints led the four women to questioning their identity as women; assume the roles and activities; and their struggle to meet unmet standards and expectations as wives and mothers. All women were aware of their weak position, role and place as women though they did not describe directly how these were curtailed and they accepted the situation as natural as Anita narrates:

The first few years of marriage were very difficult for me, partly because right after marriage my husband went back to his pastoral work in town, and we agreed that I would stay at home to take care of our new home, farm animals, the farm, and to take care of his old parents.

Almost all respondents mentioned the theme of family development. Participating in social and economic activities was a means for them to contribute to the development of their families. This in turn, acted as leverage for their acceptance as ideal wives, mothers and daughter – in – laws. Anita, who had to stay at home to take care of her children while her husband worked outside their home, stated that she worked very hard in both her family farm and that of her mother-in-laws with a goal to be accepted as an ideal daughter-in-law and a pastor's wife. However, her desire has always been to be a good mother and a women leader. She tried to get piglets to increase her family income but failed.

Besides family-development, there were other extrinsic motives. Kyekue for example, indicated that working in a rented farm while being exploited by her landlord was not a matter of choice, but of survival. This was regardless of whether she wanted it or not. Working in her own farm and in that of her landlord was also a necessary action towards constructing her identity as an ideal woman.

Mankya, a retire teacher and divorced, said that together with an urge to develop her daughters, it was her chance to pursue a professional work and become economically independent.

These findings demonstrate that women have a range of motives for constructing their womanhood identity. These include the desire to work hard in the farms, taking good care of their children and extended families, to demonstrate that they are capable of taking care of their husbands, children and in-laws to be respected as ideal women. The women's motivation to participate in constructing their womanhood identity closely relate Vygotsky's (1978) ideas that identity is formed through one's participation in social and cultural activities.

Source of Influence

All four women said they had encountered people who had positively or negatively influenced their thinking and behavior. Mothers and siblings' influence were reported to have played a great part. Father's ambivalent behavior towards family chores was also a cue for women to understand their position as a subservient (inconspicuous) one. Anita, who come from relative affluent family explained how her father used to make them keep to low profile whenever he was at home and her mother's behavior brought her up to believe that animals were more important than her.

What emerges from this study is the importance of parents, peers and in-laws in conveying images of appropriate womanhood ideals. It is interesting to note that all the four women, though trying to accomplish all the tasks that they felt were expected of them but none was regarded as an ideal woman. In a way these findings support Bourdieu's idea of

reproduction in that women's subservient position is reproduced by their own participation in that position.

Contradictions Experienced

The findings from the study indicate that the contradictions women experience in trying to construct their womanhood identity are mainly social-cultural, and psychologically deeply rooted in womanhood ideologies, in that, women traditional role is in the house. All the women in this study were involved with activities outside their homes – in farming, selling their produces in marketplace. Likewise, women were primary supporters of their children's education despite the fact that, men were supposed to assume this role.

The implication from these contradictions is that while women participate in the development of their families, their actions are trivialized and marginalized, and therefore, they do receive equal rewards towards their effort. This demonstrates a range of contradictions inherent in womanhood identity. The conflict is based on the mismatch between womanhood ideologies and women's real experiences and activities. Therefore it seems that no matter how much effort women make in assuming their expected 'womanhood' roles, they will still be perceived as second class citizens.

Mankya for example, despite the fact that she was a career woman and she had successfully reared her children single-handed, the fact that she was divorced, her achievements were suspiciously accepted. This is because the society regarded divorced women as bad women, and from this premise, whatever a divorced woman does is perceived negatively. This brings us back to Bourdieu's metaphor of habitus, where he argues that social structure (in this case,

divorced women) contains the 'genetic information' which both permit reproduction of itself. He calls this structuring structure (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1996).

In many occasions, women's thinking and behavior succumbed to societal's pressure attached to womanhood ideologies of marriage and children, in that a woman's success in life is associated with being married and bearing and rearing children. This was despite the fact that women were happy in their marriage or not. This means that people identify a woman, not for what she is, but for what society expects her to do and be. This is illustrated by those women who stuck to their marriage not because of love, but in order to be accepted as ideal women.

Subsequent analysis of the findings indicates that a woman who is employed is disadvantaged from the start. Although she might be contributing as equal as her husband in financially, she is also expected to work in the farm and assume all the domestic roles, just like any other woman. Although she may have the option of hiring a house maid so as to avoid interruption, modification or abandonment of her career goals, she is faced with pressure both from her husband and extended family that she has to assume her traditional role as a wife and mother. Failure in any of these traditional roles makes her feel inadequate.

In summary, all the four women experienced economic structural constraint in their lives and they looked for alternatives to achieve their goal – to act as 'ideal' wives and mothers. Their actions illustrate an urge to affirm their womanhood as they assumed roles that were regarded as 'women's roles such as taking care of home and producing food crops. This is in contrast to previous studies reviewed in Chapter 2 that indicated women subverting their womanhood identity by refusing oppressive practices and relations (Cornwall (2000); Lovett (2000); Byfield (2000)).

Summary

In summary, all the four women experienced social, cultural and economic structural constraint in their lives and they looked for alternatives to achieve their goal – to act as ‘ideal’ wives and mothers. Their actions, while can be interpreted as acquiescing, as they assumed roles that were regarded as ‘women’s roles such as taking care of home and producing food crops to them was an urge to affirm their womanhood.

Women’s narratives demonstrate that despite social and cultural constraints they continued to affirm their womanhood identity and become independent human beings. However, due to the precarious position and relation that they found themselves in, these women were forced to take a longer route to navigate their journey (including being exploited by landlords, double work in their families and in the homes of their in-laws, etc.). To achieve their goal (construct womanhood identity), these women needed to develop exceptional determination to overcome the obstacles presented. As portrayed from the findings, motive did not reside from within the individual women, but from the social, cultural and their precarious position and relation, which forced them to hard work and persevere despite all the odds. There is good evidence from the findings that despite all the odds, women were prepared to deviate by taking a longer or harder route, such as renting land and sacrificing their labor, leaving their husbands as the case of Mankya, thereby going against social and cultural expectations. Consistent with the findings, it can be concluded that women’s participation in constructing their womanhood identity is not to achieve individual goal as post structural feminists have proposed, but also social and cultural.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

I have cast a broad net in this dissertation. The purpose was to chart a path with key elements that shaped my research participants' thinking and behavior, with a view to understand reasons my mother and I participated in enacting the norms that constructed our identity. This path took directed me to various locations including the history of political economy in rural Tanzania and the processes that led into practice of allocation of land and the provision of education to women, the development of ideas about womanhood and how they shaped people's thinking about women and shape their day-to-day people's interactions. This path also led me to the homes of four women, whose stories and behavior reflected their subjectivities.

The goal of this chapter is to discuss the meaning of the finding and what this meaning can help us to better understand the concepts of learning, knowing and constructing identity. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section contains conclusions relating to study findings. This includes the discussion of how land, education and womanhood ideology have been used as hegemonic social structures, and how women configured them as their source of agency. The analysis of the impact of denial of cultural means and legitimation of women as poor, silent, and dependent supports the conviction that that learning, knowing and construction of identity occur within the complex intersection of structural, cultural and individual subjectivity. In this section also, I offer challenges to post structural feminist and cultural-historical activity literature on construction of identity and learning presented in chapter 2. The second section focuses on the study's implications for the theory and practice of adult learning

and construction of identity. The last section contains recommendations for future research and methodological reflections.

Conclusions

The main purpose of this study was to understand reasons women in Yuuri and Sufi had to participate in constructing their identity. In order to understand this phenomenon, I used the framework of this study to explore historical, political, social, and economic of rural Tanzania as contextual backdrop, which situated women in their economic, social, cultural, and political and gender practices.

My research questions are:

5. What are the socio-cultural and historical conditions under which the women in my study operate?
6. How are womanhood ideas represented in people's day-to-day interactions?
7. What are particular women's perception and actions about womanhood identity?

This chapter therefore, opens a discussion about participation, learning and construction of identity as activities that cannot be separated from structural, cultural and personal subjectivity. Concepts of participation and learning are rarely discussed in these terms. Much of what have been written about participation in adult education focuses on the individual's experiences (Donaldson et al., 1999; Hayes & Flannery, 1995; Kasworm, 1990; Spanard, 1990), motivation, (Kasworm1990) and contextual factors (Spanard, 1990; Donaldson et al.1999). In these three major literature reviews, issues of structural and culture never surfaced as a factor in one's participation in learning.

This chapter provides a deeper perspective on the concept of participation, learning and construction of identity through the experience of women in Yuuri and Sufi. Cultural-historical activity theorists argue that socioeconomic processes and practices, as well as division of labor are key to shaping one's identity (Sen, 1989; Storper, 1993). These ideas are based on an assumption that one's economic position and the kind of labor that one performs determine how one is perceived and this perception shapes what ones does in the world. Post-structural feminists on the other hand, identify one's gender as key to shaping one's identity. Unlike capability stance, these ideas originate from assumption that sex and sexism are fundamental to the social practices that are oppressive to women. Higginbotham, (1992), for example, has argued that some social structures such as race should be understood as the primary social condition that is a "...powerful, all encompassing effect on the construction and representation of other social and power relations, namely gender, class, and sexuality" (p. 252). Several authors have expressed interests integrating the way culture, ethnicity, gender, and age function together in structuring social inequality (Dua, 1999; hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1984). While scholars identify various structures and relations as more oppressive than other my interest is not to explain which structure or relation is primary and which is secondary, but look at them as hegemonic structural and cultural authority. My aim is to engage in a rigorous counter-conceptualize both structure and culture, to find possibility for change and transformation.

Returning to women in this study, while women's subjectivities were shaped by their interactions in day-to-day activities, their interactions were also shaped by individual's cognitions about their identity as women and their position social, economic, and political spheres. Guerra, Huesmann and Hanish (1995) suggest that one's beliefs, and therefore, her behavior are acquired through the perception themselves and of social norms, and personal

evaluation. Women's beliefs and behavior were not merely developed from understanding the womanhood messages but also their own evaluative process. According to Guerra, Huesmann and Hanish (1995), individuals construct normative beliefs in accordance with their own evaluative schema. This schema includes one's assessment of their own capacities and the outcome of their behavior. Thus, individual values, capacity, social and economic positions are important components of the decision she makes.

This conceptualization thus enhances our understanding that one's participation does not depend on individual's experience, inner motivation or some context such as distance in isolation, but is dependent on a complex, interactive, interrelationship, and situative processes, practices and relations. Womanhood ideas mediated people's interactions in various ways and provided a means to develop women's subjectivity, which was not been shared by all women, but each woman interpreted her situation differently and involved in the construction of her own individual world.

Structural Aspect of Participation in the construction of Identity

In this study, unequal allocation land and provision of education were identified as structural aspects that shaped women's subjectivity, which in turn shaped what they did including spending more of their time in reproductive activities. Women's subjectivity also shaped how women participated in day – to – day activities including as poor, silent and insecure.

Unequal allocation of land

The analysis of unequal allocation of land presents some relevant examples where women in Yuuri and Sufi, like in many parts of rural Tanzania are excluded from direct access to land through unequal networks of power relations. This power relation was effected through the creation and transformation of land due to State control of land property where men are identified as owners through statutory laws and the zoning policies of the State.

In rural Tanzania the rule of colonialism had fateful consequences for women, especially from the 1920s onwards. The development of conceptualized land as a space through State power was the colonial identification of land as a space in isolation from the ways in which people arranged their lives into the image of the West, where land became a resource to be bought like any item. Land, in a form of rigid spatial image and a commodity diminished people's meaning of land as a common property resource and a source of food for the survival of the community. This transformation show how power in the allocation of land reproduced, marked and differentiated women from men. Within land policy, women's access to land became illegal and illegitimate as land became a space for cash crop production.

The repercussion of denial of land to women was severe, and I could not analyze it dynamics or consequences without examining women's primary role and colonial and postcolonial idea about land. With modernization and development discourses, there were conflictual ideas about what the political elites and women considered important. While women considered food for the well being of family, political leaders considered cash as more important for the development of industries and other social services such as education and health. Nevertheless, the most striking finding of this study is the impact of colonial and postcolonial processes on alienation of women from land.

Since independence and especially from the 1970s onwards, the access to land has clearly been related to the power of the State and State land reforms such as the Ujamaa Villagization. The Ujamaa Villagization meant restricted land and a process of undermining customary land property and the activity of food production. Since the 1980s the increase in land value further isolate poor people and women, where land became “spaces of capital,” when private investors entered the scene. This study shows that a representation of land as a space, a commodity and in isolation from people’s survival has created unequal power and political relations not only between women and men, but also between the poor and the haves. The process of isolating women from land has meant ongoing denial of land/resource along with land conflicts and contradictions as the case illustrated in Chapter 4. Here the contradictions in the access to land have often had political, and land tenure-related tensions, given that there are more women divorcing or becoming single parents compared to the past.

In this conflicted environment rigid policies on men as owners of land have heavily affected women. For instance, unmarried women and single mothers have signified the occurring disputes between and among families and siblings. This study shows that, land has become a site of women political resistance and the greatest economic hardships for women.

This study shows that land can be reconstructed as a cultural artifact and ownership of land elevates one’s social and political position. Women’s struggle around these social, economic and political barriers can be presented as a platform on which to understand their inferior position in society. While Vygotsky identifies cultural artifacts as free for all to appropriate, in this study I recognize that women cannot access these cultural artifacts in the same way as men. Likewise, women’s inferior position cannot appropriate cultural artifacts in the same way or with the same degree of control as men. However, the construction of land as a

cultural artifact and barring women from direct access to it did not lock them out completely, rather as many women's narratives illustrate, many were involved in the complex struggles including borrowing land from neighbors and friends, tilling the land for pay or sacrificing their labor. In this context, the notion of participation, learning and constructing identity can be understood as been shaped by structural processes where women appropriate viable modes of existence to construct their identity.

Unequal Provision of Education

As a means of mapping the key argument in the provision of education to women, it makes sense to reevaluate the boundaries and meanings of the concept of knowledge. The concept of knowledge refers to the complex cognitive process of perceiving, learning, communicating, associating and reasoning, which leads into the knower on certain truth, belief, and wisdom. This concept refers to knowledge as inseparable from one's specific socio-cultural contexts. This concept of knowledge has been developed by cultural studies scholars such as Harding (1991), Code, (1991), Collins (1998) as well as African scholars such as Asante, (1987, 1988); Baldwin and Hopkins, (1990), Schiele, (1994) and others with an argument that, rather than a timeless universal human process, knowledge is a product of human creation. This creation is not a natural product in the same sense as is a stone or a tree, but more like a tool, an artifact or a system of laws. Human beings use cultural artifacts (including language and various codes of thinking and knowing) to learn and know. This knowledge is more or less structured and it can be viewed as an element of the human environment with which knowers interact. Because of this interaction the knowledge that individuals construct plays an important role in one's thoughts and actions. As Smith (1990) and Collins (1990) discuss how modern education

has “create [d] an appearance of neutrality and impersonality that conceals class, gender and racial subtexts” (Collins, 1990, p. 65).

Returning to the provision of education to women in this study, while women had developed their own language and ways of knowing, with modernization program and colonial and post colonial politics in Tanzania, women became to be placed in a situation of struggle to understand the language and knowledge that colonial and postcolonial elites thought counted for what they believed would improve the experience of women to participate effectively in modernization program.

Modern structure of education alienated women from what they perceived as knowledge and way of knowing and introduced them to what the colonial and postcolonial elites considered to be education. This led into inculcating into women education that was seen as helping them to be good mothers, good companions of their husbands and good keepers of their houses. The notable pattern of provision of education to women before and after political independence was the effort to maintain control of the provision of education for national development, rather for the people.

This study suggests that modern education played a role in producing silent and unconfident women. I find in my analysis a conflictual tendency, in which there was on one side, a mismatch between the knowledge that women acquired from their day-to-day interactions and that provided in the classroom, and a difference between the education for women and for men. These conflicts led isolating women from creating knowledge with the consequences of affecting their thinking and behavior. Furthermore, the provision of different education between women and men continued to isolate women from participating with equal foot with men in modern society.

The construction of Kiswahili and English as the language of instruction was another strategy of alienating women from knowledge and knowledge construction, which had varying impacts on women and their capacity to learn and know. As Vygotsky (1987) suggests, one's learning is situated within the sign systems of human culture. In this respect, women learning would be facilitated by the use of their mother tongue language – Kichagga. Coupled with conflictual meaning of knowledge and education, its provision in an alien language led into a situation that women found themselves as strangers. In this study, women became strangers, not only in modern education, but also in modern society at large. This strangeness led them into unending struggle to make sense of what seem senseless to them. For example, while women were expected to depend on their husbands in order to be good mothers and keepers of home, in reality, the family including the husbands depended on women for their livelihood. While men were considered the breadwinners from their position as employees and sometimes employers, what they realized from their position was not enough to keep the family going. Women who had been denied access to economy had to deal in the most palpable way to keep the family going with the decline of their own economic role and social position.

Since the 1980's, the gradual encroachments of globalization and neoliberal economic policies, women have been one of the most excluded from modern economic and cultural issues in Yuuri and Sufi and in Tanzania at large. While neoliberalism promotes free trade, deregulation, privatization, and welfare reduction, rich and educated people are appropriated the little that women had gained. The majority of women are left with no social, economic or political positions. For example, many of the farms that women used to access for food crops have been bought by people from urban areas for “development” purposes, and hence creating

more income inequality between the rural and urban dwellers, as well as critical shortage of food.

As this study illustrates, older women have no coherent way of expressing themselves in Kiswahili or a sense of what they need and aspire. As their isolation from economic and cultural means through the generations, these women have been forced to move away from the efficacy of any narrative of their needs and interests, a condition that makes their perception of realizing their goals in life as impossible. An inescapable conclusion of their identity seems to be that the most dispossessed individuals understand their lives the least and are certainly the least able to articulate their existence.

Participation of women in their day – to –day activities were to some extent been mediated by their sense of isolation and strangeness in modern society. The ways they participate in turn, allowed for people's perception of them as 'women.' The practice of ignoring the needs and interests of women through unequal allocation of resources (land and education) provides insight into possible variations between women and men participating in social and cultural activities and hence in constructing their identity.

Cultural Aspect of Participation

The cultural aspect has a potential for use in discussing what society expected of women and what women were expected to be and do. In this study, cultural aspect was womanhood ideology, which was represented in various social institutions and relations. Womanhood ideology suggests that women's participation in 'women's' activities would help them to be considered as 'ideal' women. An understanding of 'womanhood' expectations involves participating in 'womanhood' activities. The activities that women engaged themselves in might

be identified as emanating from individual's decision, but as this study illustrates, a decision toward doing something was shaped by complexity of women's social position and relation. Coupled with societal norms, values, and rules, about what a woman is and is expected to do, the participation of women in many activities that they engaged themselves in was shaped by the complex situation they found themselves in, and their urge to discover new identity and viable mode of existence.

Womanhood ideology is a central starting place in which women's subjectivity was produced and maintained. The ideology of womanhood, which represented women as mothers, cooks, and keepers of tradition, was institutionalized to identify ideal and abnormal women. I sought to examine how womanhood ideology was represented in social structures (buildings), social organization (division of labor) and social relations (language use, consumption) and tease out their connections with women's structural (social, economic and political) position.

However, womanhood ideology was not overt representations of women's roles and positions. As I suggested in the first chapter and tried to point out throughout, womanhood emerged in people's day-to-day interactions, and it changed with time, location and from one individual to another. For example, symbols that were associated with womanhood were witchcraft, male dependent, poverty, and silence. However, relevant symbols were not restricted to particular women. For instance, women witches extended from poor widowers, to businesswomen, from young women to old. Likewise, women as male dependents did not depend on whether a woman was poor, married or not, but womanhood ideology depicted women of all social status and each woman was expected to conform to womanhood ideals.

From this study it was apparent that womanhood ideology clearly linked women's experiences with larger social ideas about the position of women in society, particularly that of

nurturing and care taking. The expected roles of cooking and teaching of young women about their roles as women, women's subservient position and role come together in an interesting and productive way that portrays them as nurturers and keepers of tradition and culture. These characteristics are not developed from individual woman's volition, but rather they are developed within interconnection of power in everyday women's experiences as women, mothers, wives, in-laws, and neighbors among other relations. Even if one does not participate in the expected activities and roles, or if one participates in them in a different way than that expected, other ideas come to view that mark one's character, such as ignorance, laziness and antisocial. Such ideas are developed as symbols of power that aim to confine women in subservient position. Therefore, whether one participates in social and cultural activity, whether she participates in unexpected way or does not participate at all, there will always be a symbol for the action.

Thus, womanhood identity is determined not only by one's participation in 'expected' roles, but by many other indicators. In this study therefore, women's gender is the primary organizing variable for other structural oppressions. The allocation of land and provision of education depended on what gender one embodied. Structural oppressions however, cannot be identified as less important in the process of constructing womanhood. They were key, but in this context, they were secondary because even if individual woman was richly endowed with cultural capital such as education and wealth she was still identified as a 'woman' and was expected to engage in "women activities."

Therefore, in this dissertation, I have examined women's participation in constructing their identity with the aim of painting a picture of their social, economic and political space. The interconnection of structural and culture work together to shape women's thinking and behavior.

While women may perceive what they are, or other people may perceive what women are from women's behavior as they interact in day-to-day activities, their history and structural processes are shielded from view.

Based on these findings, it is possible to conclude that structural and cultural processes, as well as women's subjectivities have shaped women's participation in constructing their identity. Women's struggle in various ways was a way to discover new identities and viable modes of existence, which is identified in this study as participating in constructing their identity.

Recommendations for Teaching Practice

My study provides different ways of understanding participation, learning and construction of identity. I focused my study in three areas: Socio-cultural and historical contexts of Sufi and Yuuri; representations of womanhood ideas in day-to-day interactions of the residents of Yuuri and Sufi; and particular women's perceptions and behaviors. What I found in this critical ethnographic research cannot be easily applied to other situations due to its contextual particularity. I believe, however that lessons from my study can assist adult educators and feminists who are interested in how learning takes place or how identity is formed. The recommendations and suggestions provided in this study, I hope will create a space to critically revisit the idea of participation, learning and construction of identity not as occurring the same to all people, but from people's socio-economic and historical experiences and relations.

Therefore, when helping learners to learn and construct knowledge, which is tantamount to constructing identity, the starting point is to look at them not as free individuals unmediated by their history, social and cultural location. In this way, adult educators and feminist will be in a

position to understand that the capacity to learn is not only shaped by learner's cognition or desire (or motivation) to learn, but also by specific social organization of society, which isolate the learner from her position as a knower, forcing her to learn what others consider are more important to her.

Thus, this study urges adult educators and feminists to reconceptualize participation, learning and construction of identity as sites of struggle over personal meaning as well as occurring within the learners' limits and pressures. We need to examine what we consider to be participation, learning and constructing identity in order to see whether or not these concepts bring up traditionally defined learning, which constitutes a foundational element of the hegemony of capitalism. In addition, we need to pay particular attention to hegemonic structures and relations that have been imposed on the learning context such as classroom situation, learner/teacher relationship, and the like, which have been accepted as norms and ideal values and which may impede participation, learning and construction of knowledge.

Recommendations for Further Research

Due to the limited focus of my study and small size of my sampling, I did not answer many questions that arose during the study. Among those, I suggest a few ideas and possible future research to complicate an understanding of participation, learning and construction of identity.

Further research should be done on the relationship between marginalization of one's identity and ways this may shape how one participate in learning. This study could not explore much on this issue. Recognition and miss-recognition of one's needs and interests in adult education has been explored in the studies of motivation and emotions in learning. This construct

has not been explored within a contextual level of cultural, political, economic processes and practices. Contextualization of participation, learning and construction of identity entails recognizing learners in their diversities in order to counteract stereotyped images of 'learners' and 'knowledge', which are discursively reconfigured as free floating and universal.

I believe contextualizing identity within adult education would allow an understanding that learners are not universal but a particular individual with unique concrete experiences and aspirations. An acknowledgement of uniqueness and diversity among the learners will enable us to develop empathy towards marginalized groups, which I think is a positive beginning towards acceptance of diversity and uniqueness not only of physical bodies, but of knowledge, skills, perceptions and ways of knowing in the field.

Significant exploration needs to be done on ways in which we knowingly or unknowingly embrace hegemonic theories, practices and relations and how this practice constrains or liberates learners. While critical adult educators and feminists have long understood the effects of hegemonic relationships, most have tended to focus on physical relations such as teacher/student, researcher/researched without critically looking into how they may embody hegemonic epistemologies which are problematic in understanding others and their ways of knowing. Hegemonic structures, relations and epistemologies need to be understood as systems of oppression that shape learning.

More studies on womanhood, manhood, childhood, motherhood, and fatherhood need to be conducted to avoid imposing hegemonic identities on people's experiences. Such studies may help in comparing perspectives on how discursive representations constrain people and limit the attainment of their life goal(s).

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Swai, E. V. (2006). Gender, Feminism and Lifelong Learning in Africa. In Moses Oketch and Maurice Amutabi (eds.), *The Distance Future: Perspectives on Lifelong Learning in Africa* (UNESCO, Forthcoming, 2007).
- Swai, E. V. (2006). Trafficking of Young Women and Girls: A Case of "Au Pair" and Domestic Laborers in Tanzania. In Toyin Falola (ed.) *Movements, Migrations, and Displacements in Africa* (forthcoming, 2007).
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HONORS AND DISTINCTIONS

- SIDA Scholarship 1997-1999
- Fulbright Scholarship 2000-2001.
- Delta Kappa Gamma International Fellowship 2000-2002
- Margaret McNamara Foundation Fellow 2002-2003