NEGOTIATING SEXUALITY: ADOLESCENT INITIATION RITUALS AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN RURAL SOUTHERN TANZANIA

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List of Abbreviations

**ASP**: Adolescent Socialization Project

**CDR**: Crude Death Rate

**HAP**: Harvard Adolescent Project

**HIV/AIDS**: Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

**HMIS**: HIV/AIDS and Malaria Indicator Survey

**HRAF**: Human Relations Area Files

**MoEVT**: Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

**NGO**: Non-governmental Organization

**PHDR**: Population Health and Development Report

**PSLE**: Primary School Leaving Examination

**STD**: Sexually Transmitted Disease

**TDHS**: Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey

**TFR**: Total Fertility Rate

**TNBS**: Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics

**TSH**: Tanzanian Shillings
Glossary

Aibu: shame or embarrassment.
Anahaku: the general term for the state of a child’s life before passing through unyago or jando.
Chapati: traditional Tanzanian flatbread made from corn flour, water, and oil.
Chibuku: local beer made from fermented sorghum and corn flour.
Chiputu: the space (either in a designated home or in the forest) whether girls may gather during the middle days of unyago to practice their songs and dances.
Chakula: commonly translated as food, but also used to specifically refer to the large portion of starchy food that forms the basis of a typical Tanzanian lunch and dinner.
Chikula: the traditional name-changing ceremony performed during the final days of jando.
Chiramabo/Virambo: singular/plural, Makonde term for political grouping of overlapping clan units, organized by territory.
Chiputu: the location where the wali gather during the middle days of unyago to practice mizimu.
Chivelele: the most common version of unyago practiced in rural Mtwara. Also refers to the final ngoma of this type of unyago.
Dawa: literally translates as “medicine,” in unyago is used to refer to substances or practices used in ceremonies to cleanse, bless, or protect the wali.
Gongo: the distilled local liquor made from the fruit of the cashew tree.
Hodi: the word used to alert one of your presence or arrival, similar to knocking on the door.
Inshallah: Arabic phrase meaning “God willing.”
Ishara: generally meaning “signs,” but can be used to refer to the various ways that girls may communicate their affection for boys indirectly.
Jando: the male initiation ritual, also used to refer to the tree and thatch structure the boys live in during this ritual.
Kanga: the traditional cloth worn by women in rural Mtwara.
Kaniki: the large black cloth used in the unyago rituals.
Karibu: welcome, come in.
Kata: meaning ward, an administrative designation subdividing Divisions within the Mtwara Rural District.
Kiburi: character trait similar to apathy or disinterest. It is used to refer to a person who is not moved by the encouragement of others and shows a lack of caring for their needs or wishes.

Kimakonde: The general term for the Makonde language, though there are many different dialects.

Kisamvu: a staple food in rural Mtwara, made from the leaves of the cassava plant.

Kuaruka: the verb that refers both to going through unyago or jando in general, and also specifically to the final coming out ceremony on the final day of the rituals.

Kubalehe: to go through puberty, most commonly used for boys, for girls see kuvunja ungo.

Kucheza Mgongo: the signature dance taught in the mkomango version of unyago. It involves bending forward with a straight back until the torso is almost parallel with the floor, and then shuffling in opposite directions, one forward and one backward, while holding the shoulder completely still.

Kufupa: to contribute money.

Kuhonga: to give a girl a present to show appreciation for sex.

Kuinamila: refers both the strings worn by the mothers of children in unyago and jando and the act of remaining close to home, speaking quietly, and remaining faithful to one’s husband during the ritual time.

Kukata Viuno: a women’s dance that involves rapid hip movement from side to side.

Kukulavya: to wash or to cleanse.

Kuliganga: ceremonies performed in unyago/jando intended to protect the young wali from physical and/or spiritual dangers while they are going through the initiation rituals.

Kuloweka Mtama: to soak sorghum, also the name of a brief ceremony taking place during the middle days of unyago.

Kumiliki: meaning to control, to rule, or to own.

Kumwinamila: a brief ceremony near the end of jando/unistago which involves placing a drop of oil on the mwali’s forehead. If it drips down the end of the child’s nose, it means that his or her parents had been sexually active during their child’s initiation.

Kuota Matiti: to begin to grow breasts.

Kupamba Moto: to stir up the fire/excitement, in unyago refers to the drumming troupe that circles around the village during the final days to encourage celebration.

Kupenda: to like or to love.

Kupendeza: to be/become beautiful.
Kupiga Stori: “to hit the story” meaning to sit around and tell stories, a favored and highly valued pastime.

Kushinda: the verb meaning “to practice the skills of unyago,” during the middle days of the ritual.

Kutamba: to call out the mwali, done on the final morning of unyago.

Kutongoza: the act in which a boy pursues a girl for the purpose of a sexual relationship.

Kuvunjia Ungo: most literally commonly used to refer to menarche, but is also used to refer to the breaking of the hymen at first sexual intercourse if a girl has not yet reached menarche.

Kuwa Na Akili: literally “to have sense,” a characteristics that signifies a girl’s readiness to go to unyago.

Kuweka Mwili Sawa: literally “to make the body right,” this refers to the process of stretching and strengthening the joints and muscles so it is capable of performing the necessary activities of daily life.

Kuwekwa Ndani: to be put inside, often used to mean, “to go to unyago.”

Kuzaa Kwa Wakati: literally translated as “giving birth by timing,” this phrase refers to the intentional spacing of births to improve child health and survival.

Lipanda: the room used for the group gatherings/ngoma.

Likulutu: the song and dance routine performed by boys during the “coming out” ceremony following jando.

Likumbi: the name for the traditional hut where the boys live during the jando ritual.

Litawa: the Makonde word for matrilineal kin group or clan.

Liyanga: traditional dance in unyago that imitates sexual intercourse.

Mabibo: the fruit of the cashew tree.

Maisha Magumu: literally translating as “the difficult life,” the phrase is used to refer to poor village life, characterized by hard labor and food insecurity.

Malaya: a prostitute or an otherwise sexually promiscuous woman.

Mauridi: a Muslim celebration sometimes performed after unyago that involves traditional Islamic song and dance.

Matambiko: ceremony done to request ancestors to protect boys before they go to jando.

Mchawi: a witchdoctor or other individual who uses supernatural powers to harm others.

Miaa: rope woven from grass.

Michango: literally translating as “contributions,” also refers to the many unofficial fees associated with attending public school in Tanzania.

Migahawa: small huts where women sell cooked food.
Ming’oko: a wild root commonly gathered and eaten in rural Mtwara.

Mjumbe/Wajumbe: singular/plural, refers to the elected members of the village council.

Mkokoto: refers to a specific style of tying a kanga only seen in unyago. The kanga is tied in such a way that it resembles a diaper, covering only the girl’s buttock and genitals.

Mkolomwali/Wakolomwali: girls who went through unyago the previous year and whose job it was to guide the current initiates.

Mkomango: the version of unyago practiced by the Christian Mozambican Makonde, also refers to the final ngoma in this version of unyago.

Mlombo/Walombo: singular/plural, the ritual leader(s) who facilitate the unyago ritual, also refers to the male caretaker of wali in jando.

Mnalwa: food eaten before dawn after an overnight ngoma to give strength to its participants.

Mnandile: the house where the male wali stay for the final nights before coming out of jando. Also called tanita.

Mpenzi/Wapenzi: singular/plural, meaning girlfriend or sexual partner, most commonly used in adolescence, not used to refer to one’s wife.

Mshikamkono/Washikamkono: singular/plural, literally meaning “the one who holds the hand,” traditionally the aunt on their father’s side.

Mtendaji/Watendaji: singular/plural, literally meaning “executive” or “the one who does thing,” this term refers to the village leader appointed by the district administrative officer to oversee village affairs.

Mtope: the exact translation is unknown, but refers to the broad flat leaves of a tree found in rural Mtwara believed to be dawa, a type of traditional medicine.

Mtoto Yatima: The Kiswahili term meaning “orphan,” though it can be used to refer to a child who has lost both parents, or just his or her father, even if the mother is still living.

Mungu Akipenda: Kiswahili phrase meaning “God willing.”

Jando: the male initiation ritual, also used to refer.

Mwali/Wali: singular/plural, refers to the initiates going through unyago or jando.

Mwenyekiti: literally meaning “the one who has a chair,” or “chairman,” this term is used to refer to the elected leader of the village council.

Mweja: a stick tied with a small cloth used to swat flies from a circumcision wound in jando.

Mzimu/Mizimu: singular/plural, the traditional songs learned in unyago and jando.

Nauli-uli: the exercise done at dawn every day in jando to open up the groin area and “air out” the circumcision wound.
Ndege Ngoma: a common black bird that stands between two and three feet in height.
Ndelembo: refers to one style of ululation practiced by Makonde women.
Ngariba/Mangariba: singular/plural, refers to the traditional healers who specialize in doing the actual circumcision of the boys.
Ngoma: literally translates as “drum,” also refers to a drumming/dancing celebration or ceremony.
Ngoma Kuchezea Mwali: the ngoma celebrated on the second-to-last night of the mkomango version of unyago in which the wali are extensively tested on their knowledge of traditional song and dance.
Ng’opedi: white paste made from mtama, used in jando to protect boys during circumcision.
Nyumba Ndogo: literally translating as “small house,” this is also a euphemism for a mistress.
Panyabuku: a “forest rat,” a small rodent that is regularly captured and eaten in the inland areas of rural Mtwara.
Pikipiki: a small Chinese motorbike that can be used to carry one passenger and a common form of transportation in rural Mtwara.
Ruka Moto: literally, “to jump the fire,” refers to one aspect of the mkomango version of unyago
Sehemu za Siri: secret/private parts, euphemism for the genitals.
Shikamoo: the respectful greeting used by younger individuals to greet their elders, usually accompanied by a curtsy. The literal translation is, “I hold your feet.”
Singenge: a popular ngoma placed late at night during the rituals to encourage the dancers to keep up their energy.
Sunnah: in general, refers to actions or physical or moral attributes that were either done or approved of by the Prophet in his teachings, though it is also used to mean female circumcision.
Tabia: The general characteristics of a person’s personality and behavior.
Tamaa: refers to desire, may refer to desire for things or bodily/sexual desire.
Tanita: the house where the male wali stay for the final nights before coming out of jando. Also called mnandile.
Tegemezi: refers to someone who is depended on by others.
Togwa: a thick porridge made from fermented sorghum used in the final ngoma of unyago.
Uchafu: physical or spiritual dirt or contamination.
Uchawi: refers to supernatural powers or witchcraft.
Ugali: a stiff porridge made from corn or cassava flour, a staple food in rural Mtwara.
**Ujana**: literally meaning “youth,” but in the sense of the abstract life stage, not a group of young people, who would be referred to instead as *vijana*.

**Ukubwa**: literally translates as “bigness,” refers to the life stage following the passage through unyago similar to adolescence.

**Unyago**: the female initiation ritual practiced in Mtwara and in various forms in other parts of Tanzania.

**Utu Mzima**: adulthood.

**Uwezo**: literally meaning “ability,” it is often used to refer to one’s economic “ability” or general economic status.

**Vigelegele**: refers to one style of ululation practiced by Makonde women.

**Vishawishi**: temptations, usually material temptations offered by boys when propositioning young women for sex.

**Vitongoji**: a hamlet, the administrative designation for one section of a village, with each village made up of three to six hamlets.

**Watu wa Kupewa**: literally translating as, “those who are given to,” this is a cultural idiom used to refer to women and referencing the cultural expectation they will be dependent on men – and therefore given things – by men.
Negotiating Sexuality:
Adolescent Initiation Rituals and Cultural Change in Rural Southern Tanzania

Abstract

By

MEGHAN COLLEEN HALLEY

This dissertation examines of multiple factors shaping adolescent sexuality within the rapidly changing context of rural Mtwara, Tanzania. Rural Mtwara provides a particularly interesting context in which to examine adolescent sexuality because the historical isolation of this region has fostered the continued practice of adolescent initiation rituals. Referred to as unyago for girls and jando for boys, these rituals involve instructing youth on adult life, including sexual activity and reproduction. However, recent changes in the region, including the discovery of oil and natural gas and the expansion of formal education, are reshaping the cultural environment of rural Mtwara, introducing new structural and ideological influences and challenging existing cultural norms surrounding adolescent sexuality.

A close examination of unyago and jando reveal that these practices play an underlying role in shaping adolescent sexuality both by marking the transition to adolescence and, thus, to sexual maturity, and by communicating the expectations of male and female sexual roles to youth. However, a broader examination of the
surrounding cultural environment of rural Mtwara reveals that these rituals are consistent with normative developmental pathways for boys and girls and with normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ negotiations of sexual relationships. Though *jando* and *unyago* are related to adolescent sexuality, it is primarily in the sense that they are a teaching tool, with the lessons they teach reflecting the broader cultural environment in which the young initiates are being prepared to negotiate their sexuality.

However, the recent changes in rural Mtwara are reshaping the cultural environment in which these rituals are practiced. As evidenced by the high rates of school dropout, the expansion of formal education, in particular, is increasing both female students’ vulnerability to pregnancy and the consequences associated with these pregnancies. These changes are fuelling the emergence of a set of expectations and consequences surrounding adolescent sexuality, particularly for female students, which are contradictory to existing cultural scripts. However, a close examination of female students’ negotiations of their sexual relationships suggests that these girls are finding diverse and creative ways to navigate both their sexuality and their education in the context of change.
Chapter One
Introduction

1.0 Overview

Since Margaret Mead’s early work in Samoa, generations of anthropologists have documented the wide variation in community norms, values and expectations surrounding adolescent sexuality across diverse cultural contexts (Mead, 1928). Through comparative, cross-cultural research, scholars following in Mead’s footsteps identified patterns linking characteristics of the cultural environment, including norms of childbearing, kinship practices, and age of marriage, to variation in normative beliefs and practices surrounding sexual activity in adolescence (Ford & Beach, 1951; Murdock, 1964; J. Whiting, Burbank, & Ratner, 1986). This foundational work illustrated the important role of the cultural environment in shaping enculturation processes, including the process through which adolescents learn the norms, values and expectations of appropriate sexuality in their transition from childhood to adulthood (R. LeVine, 2007).

However, the increasingly rapid transnational flow of people, institutions and ideas associated with globalization is reshaping the cultural environment in communities around the world in multiple and complex ways (Inda & Rosaldo, 2008). Understanding the role of culture in shaping adolescent sexuality therefore requires an examination of the way in which the changes associated with globalization are impacting communities and, by extension, the context within which adolescents learn to negotiate their sexuality. This dissertation contributes to the anthropological literature on culture and human
development by examining adolescent sexuality a rapidly changing community in rural southern Tanzania.

Rural Mtwara, the region in southeast Tanzania that is the focus of this dissertation, provides a particularly interesting context in which to explore the specific complexities that arise when adolescents must negotiate their sexuality in a rapidly changing cultural environment. The history of rural Mtwara is one of extended physical, economic and cultural isolation. Though this isolation has left the population of rural Mtwara far behind the rest of Tanzania in terms of most indicators of development, it has also provided an environment in which local cultural practices have continued to thrive. Specifically, elaborate adolescent initiation rituals, largely abandoned in other regions of Tanzania, continue to be intensively practiced in rural Mtwara.

These rituals, referred to as unyago for girls and jando for boys, provide young people with instruction on gender roles and family life, including the details of sexual activity and reproduction. Anthropologists have long recognized that initiation rituals often play an important role in transferring cultural norms of appropriate sexuality across generations and marking an individual’s transition to sexual maturity (e.g. Herdt 1987; LeVine & LeVine 1966). In rural Mtwara, these rituals provide a unique opportunity to examine the cultural norms and beliefs surrounding sexuality as they are passed from one generation to the next.

After decades of isolation, the discovery of natural gas in 2003 has spurred an unprecedented influx of new people and resources to rural Mtwara, including the building of the first tarmac road to the region. In addition, recent changes in state policy have
driven a simultaneous rapid expansion in access to formal education. These changes are reshaping the cultural environment of rural Mtwara, introducing new structural and ideological influences, and challenging existing cultural norms surrounding adolescent sexuality. Understanding adolescent sexuality in contemporary Mtwara therefore requires a close examination of the multiple and contradictory influences adolescents must negotiate as they navigate their own emerging sexuality.

This examination of adolescent sexuality in contemporary Mtwara takes a multi-faceted approach, including: 1) a close examination of the deeply ingrained ritual practices through which adolescents learn norms and expectations surrounding sexuality; 2) a broad examination of the rapidly changing cultural environment of rural Mtwara and the characteristics of this context relevant to adolescent sexuality; and 3) an in-depth, person-centered exploration of the various ways in which adolescents themselves negotiate their sexuality in this complex and dynamic context.

1.1 Objectives

This dissertation will address the following three research questions:

**Research Question One:** What are the salient concepts, values, and meanings related to sexuality that are communicated to youth in *unyago* and *jando*?

**Research Question Two:** What are the salient biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural characteristics of the community of rural Mtwara that serve as underlying influences on adolescent sexuality, and how are these characteristics shifting in response to the ongoing changes in the region?
Research Question Three: How do adolescents in rural Mtwara negotiate their own sexuality in the context of these multiple and often conflicting influences?

To address these questions, I first closely examine the content of the rituals of unyago and jando to understand the role of these rituals as a life stage transition and the specific messages surrounding sexuality communicated to youth in this context. Relying on the methodological tools of ethnography and participant observation, I provide a detailed account of the structure, content, and locally salient meanings associated with these practices and summarize the specific ways in which these rituals relate to the question of adolescent sexuality.

I then turn to a broader examination of the surrounding cultural environment within which adolescents learn to negotiate their sexuality. Using LeVine’s (1996) cultural mediation framework, I explore the underlying biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors which both mediate the relationship between these rituals and adolescent sexuality and also may act as independent influences on adolescent sexuality. In this examination, I rely on multiple methods, including community ethnography, in-depth interviews, and a structured survey to identify the key factors shaping the context within which adolescents are negotiating their sexuality.

As part of this broad examination of the cultural environment of rural Mtwara, I specifically examine those aspects of this context which are currently in flux. In particular, I examine how the introduction of the secondary education is reshaping the social and economic expectations surrounding adolescence in rural Mtwara and, by extension, expectations surrounding adolescent sexuality. In this discussion, I examine
how these shifting expectations spurred by the introduction of secondary education also intersect with the economic changes underway in the region.

Finally, in order to closely examine how adolescents are negotiating their sexuality in this complex and changing cultural environment, I focus on a subset of the adolescent population of rural Mtwara – female students. Though the changes underway in rural Mtwara affect both boys and girls, the introduction of formal education is having a particularly drastic impact on the normative developmental pathway for girls. As a result of these changes, female students are required to negotiate a particularly complex set of factors in navigating their sexuality. However, this analysis draws on the broader examination of gender and sexual roles of both boys and girls in rural Mtwara discussed above. Relying on the tools of person-centered ethnography, I examine the diverse ways in which these girls navigate existing cultural scripts guiding gender and sexual roles, the specific vulnerabilities and constraints associated with secondary education, and their individual desires and circumstances as they negotiate their sexuality in the context of cultural change.

1.2 Significance

The study of human sexuality is the study of one of the most uniquely personal – and essentially universal – aspects of human experience. Scholars of sexuality have illustrated the important role of biology, culture, environment, economics, politics, history and psychology (among others) in shaping human sexuality. Indeed, perspectives on sexuality are as diverse as humans’ experiences of it. The discipline of anthropology is uniquely situated to draw from various perspectives to understand how these multiple
influences shape the consistency and variability in human sexuality. This dissertation draws on this disciplinary strength, utilizing multiple theoretical and methodological tools from the field of anthropology to contribute to our understanding the complex way in which sexuality is shaped by cultural, environmental and individual influences.

Within the study of human sexuality, the topic of adolescent sexuality has been particularly fraught with moral underpinnings and political agendas. Anthropologists have long recognized the important role of cross-cultural research in understanding “the disturbances which vex our adolescents” – including the “problem” of adolescent sexuality itself – as shaped not simply by the biological or psychological changes of puberty, but also by the specific cultural and historical context in which youth are developing and negotiating their emerging sexuality (Mead, 1928). As the forces of globalization increasingly create a “space” for adolescence in diverse cultural environments, these same forces present adolescents with new ideologies, constraints, and consequences associated with their emerging sexuality. While anthropological research suggests that adolescents often act as creative navigators of change, an in-depth, integrated approach is necessary to understand the complex ways in which adolescents negotiate these changes within the surrounding cultural environment. This dissertation draws on the long history of scholarship in anthropology on adolescent sexuality and cultural change, as well as multiple theoretical perspectives from psychological anthropology, to examine how the norms, values and expectations surrounding adolescent sexuality are reshaped in the context of change.

Finally, the examination of the relationship between the individual and culture in anthropology has provided multiple theoretical tools for understanding this complex
relationship, and for exploring the nature of individual subjectivity and experience. In the study of sexual subjectivity in particular, anthropologists drawing on the work of Foucault and other poststructuralist theorists have illustrated the way in which individual sexuality is shaped by powerful institutions and discourses, and through resistance to these influences. Though these analyses provide important insights into the role of power and agency in shaping sexual subjectivity, this perspective tends to minimize the role of subjective experience and the existence of individual difference (Hostetler & Herdt, 1998). Recently, anthropologists have called for an intensified examination of the experiential basis of sexual subjectivity to illuminate how individuals change in the context of social transformations, particularly in developing and postcolonial contexts (Biehl, Good, & Kleinman, 2007). This dissertation responds to this call by illustrating the diverse pathways forged by individual adolescents in the process of negotiating their sexual subjectivity within a complex and dynamic cultural environment.

1.3 Overview of Dissertation

In the remainder of this chapter, I outline the general content and key points addressed in each chapter of this dissertation. In Chapter Two, I turn to the literature in anthropology and closely related fields that provides the theoretical and methodological foundations for this research. I first examine the anthropological literature on adolescent initiation rituals cross-culturally. As the literature on this topic is vast, I focus specifically on work that is most relevant to the examination of unyago and jando in this dissertation, including literature examining the role of initiation rituals as a developmental transition and as a means of passing gender and sexual roles from one generation to the next. I then turn to an examination of the literature on the relationship
between the individual and culture in psychological anthropology and closely related disciplines. In this discussion, I focus on the specific theoretical and methodological tools drawn from this field used in this dissertation. Finally, I discuss the anthropological study of cultural change and globalization. I highlight key concepts and ideas that have emerged from this field of study that are directly relevant to this dissertation, with a particular focus on the close relationship between this literature and the emergence and/or extension of the adolescent life stage in many communities around the world. This dissertation will draw from and contribute to these different bodies of literature in examining the relationship between culture – and cultural change – and adolescent sexuality.

In Chapter Three, I provide an overview of the recent history of rural Mtwara, including a description of the environmental, economic, cultural and political characteristics of the region and the ongoing changes currently taking place. The history of the Makonde (the tribe that makes up the majority of the residents) of rural Mtwara is one of periodic encounters with powerful outsiders, from the Arab slave traders of the 18th century, through the colonial rule of the Germans and the British, and finally to the post-independence government of Mtwara. Though this history is marked by outside influence, however, the nature of these encounters played a central role in the “peripheralization” of Mtwara, contributing to the political, economic and cultural isolation of what was already a geographically isolated region. Following this discussion of the history of rural Mtwara, I draw on existing statistical data, as well as ethnographic data collected through this research, to examine the recent period of change that is currently reshaping life in rural Mtwara. The general discussion of the history and
current context of rural Mtwara presented in this chapter is intended to set the stage for the presentation of data in Chapters Five through Nine.

In Chapter Four, I describe the research design and methods used to answer the research questions stated in Section 1.1 above. I describe my sampling and recruitment strategies, data collection methods, and framework used for data analysis. This research involved the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data using multiple methods of data collection, and the analysis of these data were conducted using a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques.

In Chapter Five, I present data on the female initiation ritual of unyago, followed in Chapter Six by a parallel discussion of the male ritual of jando. These two chapters are intended to address Research Question One: What are the salient concepts, values, and meanings related to sexuality that are communicated to youth in unyago and jando? To address this research question, in these two chapters I provide a detailed description of the structure, content and meanings associated with these rituals. Though sexuality is one aspect of these rituals, the descriptions of the rituals are presented in their entirety to contextualize the messages related to sexuality within each ritual as a whole. As illustrated in these chapters, the rituals of unyago and jando are related to adolescent sexuality in two primary ways. First, they serve as a marker of developmental transition from childhood to adolescence and involve preparing the young initiates for this new life stage, including the transition to sexual and reproductive maturity at puberty. Second, these rituals involve communicating the norms, values and expectations specific to male and female sexual roles in their community. In jando and unyago, boys and girls receive
very distinct messages regarding their sexual roles as men and women, and these ideas are reflected in the negotiation of sexual relationships in rural Mtwar.

Data presented in Chapters Seven and Eight are intended to address Research Question Two: What are the salient biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural characteristics of the community of rural Mtwar that serve as underlying influences on adolescent sexuality, and how are these characteristics shifting in response to the ongoing changes in the region? To address this question, these chapters present a broad examination of the multiple influences on adolescent sexuality within the surrounding cultural environment or rural Mtwar, including a discussion of the ways in which the changes currently underway in the region are reshaping adolescent sexuality.

In Chapter Seven, I utilize LeVine’s (1996) cultural mediation framework to examine the biopsychological, environment/economic and cultural factors that act as underlying influences on adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwar and discuss the relationship of the rituals of unyago and jando to these other influences. Specifically, I examine those factors (e.g. puberty, economic status, gendered division of labor, age of marriage) underlying two core cultural scripts guiding adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwar: 1) the scripts defining normative developmental pathways for boys and girls, including the meaning of “adolescence” and, subsequently, “adolescent” sexuality in rural Mtwar; and 2) normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ roles in negotiating sexual relationships. As will be illustrated in this discussion, the rituals of unyago and jando represent one aspect of the broader cultural environment shaping norms, values and expectations of the adolescent life stage, and of boys and girls roles in sexual relationships during this life stage. Therefore, these rituals shape adolescent
sexuality inasmuch as they are embedded within the cultural environment of rural Mtwara.

In Chapter Eight, I return to more closely examine how the changes underway in rural Mtwara are affecting adolescents’ negotiations of sexuality. Drawing on Tsing’s (2005) concept of “friction,” I explore how the interaction of certain aspects of the formal education system with certain characteristics of the cultural environment of rural Mtwara is challenging the normative cultural scripts guiding adolescent sexual relationships described in Chapter Seven. In this chapter, I illustrate how this “friction” is contributing to high rates of pregnancy among school girls and, subsequently, fuelling the emergence of a distinct set of values, expectations and consequences surrounding adolescent sexuality for female students.

Chapter Nine, the final analytic chapter, is intended to address Research Question Three: How do adolescents in rural Mtwara negotiate their own sexuality in the context of these multiple and often conflicting influences? To address this question, I focus on a subset of the adolescent population of rural Mtwara – female students – for whom the changes underway are presenting a particularly complicated set of challenges. Using person-centered ethnography, I examine the diverse ways in which these girls navigate existing cultural scripts guiding female gender and sexual roles, the specific vulnerabilities and constraints associated with secondary education, and girls’ individual desires and circumstances as they negotiate their sexual subjectivity in the context of cultural change. Though these complex negotiations can make female students vulnerable to negative consequences associated with sexual relationships, including pregnancy, their discussions also illustrate the ways in which adolescent girls in rural Mtwara are finding
diverse and creative ways to navigate both their sexuality and their education in the context of change.

Finally, in Chapter Ten, I conclude by summarizing the finding discussed in the previous chapters, the contribution of this work to the anthropological literature, and avenues for future research.
Chapter Two
Background Literature

2.0 Introduction

This dissertation draws on a long history of scholarship in the field of anthropology to address current questions regarding the relationship between culture and adolescent sexuality in the context of change. Since Margaret Mead’s foundational work in Samoa, anthropologists have employed cross-cultural research to advance our understanding of the complex role of biology, culture and environment in shaping the consistencies and variability in adolescent sexuality cross-culturally. As part of this intellectual trajectory, the study of initiation rituals has illustrated the complex ways in which various cultural communities elaborate on and respond to the biological transition of puberty and, in doing so, pass the norms, values and expectations of sexuality, gender roles and reproduction from one generation to the next.

However, the increasing interconnectedness associated with globalization has had a significant impact on these cultural practices and on the communities and individuals who practice them. In many communities, the changes associated with globalization are reshaping the political, economic, cultural, and even the biological aspects of the adolescent life stage and are subsequently changing the parameters within which adolescents must negotiate their emerging sexuality. In addition, the transnational “flow” of people, institutions, technologies and ideas brings complex and contradictory ideologies of gender and sexuality that adolescents must navigate within the context of existing cultural norms, values and expectations. While anthropological research
suggests that adolescents often act as creative navigators of these complex ideologies, the destabilizing effects of social and economic change on communities may also expose adolescents to sexual exploitation or other risks to their sexual health.

Understanding adolescent sexuality in the changing context of rural Mtwara therefore requires a close examination of the diverse ways in which multiple influences shape adolescent sexuality, and in turn how adolescents themselves negotiate these multiple influences in the context of their own sexual relationships. In this dissertation, I draw on literature from anthropology’s longstanding interest in initiation rituals, literature from psychological anthropology examining the relationship between the individual and culture, and current anthropological work examining the impact of globalization on individuals and communities. The topic of sexuality cuts across these three fields, and in the discussion below, I examine the topic of sexuality as it is addressed in each of these three bodies of literature.

First, in Section 2.1, I review the relevant literature from the anthropological study of initiation rituals. As the work on this topic is vast, this review will focus specifically on that literature most relevant to this dissertation, including the work examining the use of ritual as a marker of life stage transition and the role of ritual in shaping gender and sexuality. In this section, I also briefly discuss the increasing politicization of such rituals, a trend which usually focuses on practices involving female circumcision, but is also relevant to changing attitudes toward unyago and jando in Tanzania (e.g. Hernlund & Shell-Duncan, 2007; Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000).
Second, in Section 2.2, I examine the long history of scholarship in psychological anthropology examining the relationship between the individual and culture. Psychological anthropology provides both theoretical and methodological tools for examining the role of culture and environment in shaping individual experience and subjectivity. In this dissertation, I draw on LeVine’s (1996) “cultural mediation” framework to examine the role of biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors in shaping central tendencies in adolescent sexual behavior in rural Mtwara. This theoretical framework is used to identify the core cultural “scripts,” – the norms, values and expectations – guiding male and female sexual roles in rural Mtwara. In addition, I also draw on Hostetler and Herdt’s (1998) concepts of “sexual lifeways” and “developmental subjectivities” to examine how individuals negotiate multiple developmental pathways in the context of existing cultural scripts.

Finally, in Section 2.3, I turn to the literature on cultural change and globalization, a topic which has been intensively debated and theorized in recent years. As this debate has created a large body of literature that spans many disciplines, this review will first provide a general overview of the meaning of globalization itself and the key concepts and theories that are directly relevant to this dissertation. Following this general discussion of the relationship between culture and globalization, I focus specifically on the literature examining the diverse ways in which globalization is reshaping the expectations around adolescent sexuality in many communities around the globe. As the emergence of the adolescent life stage in many contexts – including rural Mtwara – is in part the result of large scale demographic, economic and institutional changes associated
with globalization, understanding adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara requires a perspective that accounts for change.

This dissertation draws on the methodological and theoretical tools of psychological anthropology to pair a quintessentially “traditional” anthropological interest – initiation rituals – with current perspectives on culture and globalization. In doing so, this research contributes to the anthropological literature in three primary ways. First, by drawing on new conceptions of culture emerging from the literature on globalization, this dissertation contributes a contemporary perspective to our understanding of the role of deeply-ingrained cultural practices such as initiation rituals in shaping processes of enculturation under conditions of rapid change. Second, by linking multiple theoretical perspectives on the relationship between the individual and culture from psychological anthropology to addresses the enculturation of sexuality, this dissertation contributes a multidimensional picture of the ways in which culture and environment shape normative “scripts” of adolescent sexuality, and also the way in which individual adolescent negotiate multiple pathways that reflect both these normative scripts and their own individual intentions and constraints. Finally, by applying the person-centered approach of psychological anthropology to the topic of globalization, this dissertation contributes a multi-level perspective on the way in which the macro-level processes of globalization impact culture and individual subjectivity and, conversely, the micro-level process through which individuals negotiate and shape the impacts of globalization on their communities.
2.1 Adolescent Initiation Rituals

Adolescent initiation rituals have been a topic of particular interest to anthropologists studying enculturation processes, as these often-dramatic cultural practices signal a life-stage transition from childhood to adolescence or adulthood. As anthropologists have taken a wide variety of approaches to analyzing these cultural practices, in this section, I summarize the literature on this topic most closely relevant to this dissertation. I first discuss the foundational work on the structure and meaning of these rituals that is directly relevant to the rituals of unyago and jando. Following this discussion, I turn to the anthropological literature examining the impact of initiation rituals on gender, education and psychological change, and sexuality, all characteristics of ritual seen in the practices of unyago and jando. Finally, as part of the examination of the relationship between rituals and sexuality, I discuss recent work examining the politicization of ritual practices. Though this work focuses primarily on rituals involving female circumcision, anthropological analyses of this controversial issue are also relevant to unyago and jando which, as will be discussed further in Chapter Three, have recently come under scrutiny in Mtwara.

Initiation Rituals: Foundational Work

The foundational work on this topic was produced by Arnold van Gennep (1909) in his treatise Les Rites de Passage. According to van Gennep, these “rites” served to transition individuals from one social stage to the next. Van Gennep separated these rites into three distinct components: 1) rites of separation in which individuals are ritually separated from their previous state; 2) marginal or “liminal” rites, during which
individuals transition from their previous state and prepare to enter a new state; and 3) rites of aggregation involving return to the community and reintegration with a new social identity. In the first stage, ritual activities involve symbolically and/or physically changing the individual, including activities such as head-shaving, discarding previous clothes, or changing residence. It is also during this stage that circumcision, if a regular component of the ritual, is usually performed. During the second “liminal” stage, the initiates are considered “betwixt and between,” existing outside of a defined social identity (Turner, 1969, p. 95). This is often considered a dangerous time during which individuals are particularly vulnerable to physical and/or spiritual dangers. The final stage is often celebratory, as the initiates’ families rejoice in their safe passage through the rites and attainment of a new social status.

Significant revision and extension of van Gennep’s work was conducted by Turner (1967, 1969, 1974). In his work, Turner provides a more detailed definition the “liminal” stage as a time during which the initiates previous identity gives way to an ambiguous state. In this state, normal modes and rules of social action and hierarchy do not apply. This social and psychological dissociation with one’s previous state of being is intended to prepare the individual for transition and encourage new models of thought and self-reflection (Turner, 1967). Furthermore, this liminal state, existing essentially outside of the dominant social structure, allows for the development of what Turner terms “communitas,” or the experience of social equality among the ritual participants (Turner, 1969, 1974). As such, Turner considers communitas – and, by extension, ritual – to be a positive and productive force for both communities and the individuals. The stages outlined by van Gennep and further theorized by Turner are also relevant to the rituals of
unyago and jando, as these rituals are also intended to facilitate life stage transition involving a physical, psychological/behavioral and social transformation.

In addition to defining the basic structure of rites of passage, van Gennep was also the first to emphasize that rites associated with the transition from childhood to adolescence, though often occurring around puberty, were focused primarily on a social— as opposed to a biological—transition. Though these rites do tend to occur around puberty, van Gennep argued that the physical changes of puberty were rarely the focus of the rites, which may occur well before or well after puberty depending on the specific goals and meanings associated with this transition. However, Worthman (1987) disagrees with van Gennep, pointing to the many ways in which adolescent rituals are timed around biological changes. Herdt and McClintock (2000) further suggest that the frequency with which such rituals are conducted around the age of ten may point to a cultural recognition of adrenarche, typically occurring around age ten, and the associated experience of first sexual desire that usually occurs at this time. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, the rituals of unyago and jando, though not timed around a distinct physical marker (such as menarche) are specifically intended to occur before any visible physical changes of puberty take place.

Following van Gennep’s work, a number of scholars have attempted to explain the existence of initiation rituals through cross-cultural analysis and using Freudian or neo-Freudian theory. Freud (1966) himself postulated that the circumcision seen in many of the male adolescent initiation rituals represented a relic of the practice of castration in the early period of humanity, carried out by a jealous father on his son, and is therefore used to emphasize the dominance of the father over the son. Post-Freudian theorists have
challenged the primacy Freud placed on the father-son relationship, proposing instead
that initiation rituals serve to address the “conflict of sex identity,” experienced by the
male child (and in some cases female children) because of the close ties he develops with
his mother in childhood (Bettelheim, 1955; J. Brown, 1963; Burton & Whiting, 1973;
According to these theories, male circumcision is intended to break maternal ties and
reinforce on the child his male identity while promoting male solidarity. Cohen (1964)
challenges these theories on the basis that they fail to prove the existence of a universal
conflict between the sexes. Instead, he proposes that that male initiation ceremonies, and
"extrusions," that send adolescent males to sleep away from the home, are designed to
promote male solidarity, prevent brother-sister incest at adolescence, and emphasize the
importance of the kin network.

Cross-cultural studies have also examined the association between female
adolescent initiation and aspects of the social structure. Young (1965) suggests that just
as boys may develop sex-identity conflict if they sleep with their mothers as infants, girls
who sleep with both parents develop a similar conflict and therefore must be initiated to
resolve their sex-identity conflict. Alternatively, Brown (1963) argues that these
ceremonies are more common in cultures practicing matrilocal residence – because girls
do not move away at marriage, she argues, the initiation ceremony serves to mark her as a
full adult in the community where she has both grown up and will bear children. On the
other hand, Richards (1956) associates female initiation with a matrilineal descent
structure, suggesting that these societies (which are also often patriarchal), the girls’
initiation ritual serves to publically dramatizing the girls’ kinship ties and claims to future
children. Still other cross-cultural studies of both male and female rights suggest that these practices serve primarily to consolidate the political status of the father of the child being initiated, regardless of gender (K. Paige & Paige, 1981). In general, these early cross-cultural studies suffered from multiple flaws, including their heavy reliance on secondary data sources and their failure to move away from notion that initiation rites were born out of universal psychological human needs. Indeed, much of this early work relied on psychological theory deemed “universal,” in attempting to explain why initiation rituals exist in some societies but not in others.

Initiation Rituals and Gender

Though these early studies had recognizable flaws, most recognized the central importance of gender in adolescent initiation rituals. Van Gennep (1909) was one of the first to recognize the role of ritual in gender identification when he noted that the female circumcision involved removing the part of the genitalia most resembling that of males, thereby making the girls fully female. Gluckman (1962) later noted that male circumcision essentially accomplished the complementary act, removing the part of the penis most resembling the labia. In these accounts, circumcision is seen as aligning the child’s gender with his or her biological sex and therefore purifying the child’s gender identity (Boddy, 1989).

Other scholars, many using first-hand ethnographic accounts of these rituals, have also emphasized the important role of initiation rituals in actively “gendering” individuals around the time of adolescence. Bettelheim (1955), both drawing on and challenging Freudian theory, proposed that circumcision was driven by “vagina envy,” and that the
blood-letting done in circumcision was symbolically linked to women’s experiences of menstruation and childbirth. Therefore, he argued that circumcision served both to mark boys distinctively as men and to claim symbolic power over women’s experiences by serving as a rebirth, this time by men instead of women. The notion that ritual bleeding in initiation may represent the symbolic seizing of women’s powers of reproduction has been noted in other cultural contexts (e.g. Hogbin, 1970; Hugh-Jones, 1979; Mead, 1949). The work of Gil Herdt also illustrates the role of ritual in “making men.” He notes that, among the “Sambia” of Papua New Guinea, ritual practices including nose bleeding and oral insemination of younger adolescents by older ones are intended to actively promote the development of their male gender and are considered essential to creating and solidifying masculinity through solidarity with other men (Herdt, 1981, 2006).

Strathern (1988), moving away from explaining ritual and toward more general theories of gender and society, suggests that the “gendering” process in some Melanesian societies challenge widely-held assumptions regarding personhood, sex and gender. She argues that in Melanesia a person’s identity is neither singular nor gendered, but is instead composed of the constellation of male and females relationships that make up a person’s kinship network. At initiation, the person is “gendered,” but this transition is from what Strathern refers to as a “cross-sex” person to a “same-sex” one. Furthermore, the initiate’s new identity is still not defined by biological sex, but by his or her gendered reproductive role. As Strathern states, “male rituals do not produce ‘males’ out of ‘females’ but potential ‘fathers’ out of ‘persons.’ What is produced in a sexually activated
person, a potential reproducer, an incomplete person whose identity must be completed in relation with another,” (Strathern, 1988, p. 123).

There is considerably less data on female initiation rituals in this early literature, perhaps due to the predominance of male ethnographers in the field (Montgomery, 2009). Gilmore (1990), among others, has argued that this gender bias in the literature is due to the greater prevalence of male initiation rituals over female, a pattern he attributes to the more “problematic” nature of masculinity created by the close relationship between the male child and his mother. Hearkening back to earlier neo-Freudian work, Gilmore argues that this close cross-gender relationship results in men having a harder time achieving the gender attributes of full male status. Therefore greater cultural intervention – in the form of initiation ritual – is paid to socializing men than women. Furthermore, he suggests that female initiation rituals, when practiced, are often focused on reinforcing girls’ biological destiny through practices such as menstrual seclusions and cleansing rituals. However Roscoe (1995) challenges Gilmore’s conclusions based on the wide variety of ways in which parents socialize both their male and female into gender roles cross-cultural. These data, he suggests, contradict the Gilmore’s argument that only males are in need of socialization in order to adopt gender roles.

The issue of gender, and the use of ritual in socializing boys and girls into specific gender roles, is an important component of the rituals of unyago and jando. As will be illustrated in Chapters Five and Six, these rituals not only involve a life stage transition, but the transition of girls into women and boys into men. In these rituals, boys and girls are taught lessons and skills that are specific to the expectations of men and women in society, and in the context of sexual relationships.
Initiation Rituals, “Education” and Psychological Change

In addition to the intended physical and psychological effects on gender in initiation rituals, other scholars have examined the educational component of many initiation rituals (e.g. Allen, 2000; Fuglesang, 1997; Jennings, 1982; Mbunda, 1991; Precourt, 1975; Raum, 1940; Richards, 1956; Tumbo-Masabo & Liljeström, 1994). Perhaps the most detailed work with this focus was conducted by Raum (1939) among the Chagga of Northern Tanzania. In his detailed account, Raum describes the various “lessons,” provided in the female initiation rituals regarding adult life, including lessons about puberty, marriage and childbearing, and he suggests that education is a “fundamental motive” of initiation.

Though education may represent one important aspect of initiation rituals, analyses such as Raum’s, which focus exclusively on the “educational” aspects of initiation rituals, often fail to address the physical, social and psychological importance of these rituals beyond simply “learning.” Raum’s suggestion that education is the “fundamental motive” of initiation does not explain why elaborate rituals must be used when the primary goal is simply transmission of knowledge. Furthermore, Richards (1956) illustrates in her work with the Bembe of Zambia that much of what girls “learn,” in the context of initiation does not represent new information, but a change in the expectations of the girls themselves as to their responsibility and responsiveness to these duties as adult woman. Richards argues that the girls’ initiation rituals were concerned more with growth than with education, and involved both facilitating and celebrating the physical, psychological and social transformation the girls’ were beginning as they made the transition to adulthood.
Beidelman (1997), in his work among the Kaguru of Tanzania, offers “moral education,” as a conceptual tool for examining “learning” in the context of initiation. Beidelman argues that any successful system of education (including the initiation ritual) is designed to produce and reproduce specific types of “persons” who reflect the social and cultural context within which they are educated. Among the Kaguru, Beidelman notes, individuals are not considered full persons before initiation and therefore cannot be held responsible for their behavior. It is not until adolescent initiation that the key construction of personhood takes. Furthermore, these rituals are designed in such a way that the individual develops a sense of self that is physically, psychologically and spiritually intertwined with the community. The Kaguru accomplish this transformation in personhood using the tools of language, magic, secrecy, pleasure and punishment to provide a “moral education,” teaching the initiates not only the knowledge of a Kaguru adult, but the type of person a Kaguru adult should be. Beidelman’s work suggests that “learning” in the context of initiation involves a psychological transformation linking individuals’ understandings of self with the cultural norms, values and expectations of the surrounding community.

The insights of these scholars regarding the meaning of “education” in the ritual context are also relevant to this examination of jando and unyago. In unyago, and also, to a lesser extent, in jando, the young initiates do receive a wide variety of lessons taught through a range of pedagogical techniques, including song, dance, physical punishment, lecture, and deception. Though these lessons are intended to impart knowledge and skills deemed necessary for their upcoming transition to ukubwa (i.e. adolescence), they are also intended to shape the psychological and behavioral characteristics (referred to as
such that they are consistent with existing cultural values and expectations of individuals in their community.

Other scholars have also pointed to role of rituals in shaping individual psychology. Among the Gisu of Uganda, Heald (1982) discusses the dramatic male circumcision practiced, involving removal of the subcutaneous fat around the glans of the penis, as well as the foreskin. Because of the significant pain associated with operation, the ritual is only performed on post-pubertal boys, and only when the boys themselves insist that they are ready. The Gisu believe that violent emotions (lirima) build up in a boy until he demands to be circumcised, and it is the ability to feel this violent emotion that allows him to withstand the pain of initiation. While initiation does involve becoming a socially recognized man, the individual psychological process through which the boys prepare for circumcision is an equally important transformation brought about by the initiation process.

The recognition of pain as a tool for promoting psychological development or transformation in the context of initiation rituals has been noted across diverse contexts (e.g. Davison, 1996; Gilmore, 1990; Gosselin, 2000; Hernlund, 2000; M. Johnson, 2000; Obiora, 1996; Sargent, 1989; Shell-Duncan, Obiero, & Muruli, 2000), and is also seen in the rituals of unyago and jando. Gilmore (1990), drawing on neo-Freudian theory, argues that fear of a universal human desire to regress to an infantile state of dependency forces communities, particularly those attempting to survive in hostile environments, to design strategies to psychologically “toughen” their members. Anthropologists have also noted similar sentiments among women, who report taking pride in their ability to bear pain and discuss their experience of the pain of circumcision as necessary preparation for
childbirth (Obiora, 1996; Sargent, 1989; Shell-Duncan et al., 2000). Others suggest that pain promotes psychological development, with some explicitly rejecting the idea of using anesthesia during circumcision and suggest instead that they are, “buying maturity with pain,” (Davison, 1996, p. 60; Gosselin, 2000; Hernlund, 2000; Johnson, 2000).

Initiation Rituals and Sexuality

Finally, the initiation ritual has also been examined in its relationship to sexuality, and specifically as it relates to the transformation of an individual from a non-sexual to a sexual person. Ethnographic reports from a range of cultural contexts suggest that overt sexual references, and in some cases sexual practices, are common during initiation (e.g. Beidelman, 1997; Bettelheim, 1955; Gregor, 1985; Herdt, 1981; La Fontaine, 1986; Richards, 1956; Vansina, 1955). La Fontaine (1986) suggests that circumcision is primarily important as a means of identifying between sexually mature and immature individuals, and also notes that individuals’ sexual and reproductive capacity is legitimized through initiation. Among the Pokot of Ghana, she reports that before initiation, casual sexual activity was acceptable and expected. However, once an individual past through initiation, casual sexuality activity was frowned upon, and individuals were instead expected to only engage in sexual activity for reproductive purposes. In this way, the expectation of the individuals’ sexual activity following initiation is bound up with broader cultural norms of gender and reproduction.

In his discussion of gender and sexuality in Kaguru initiation rituals, Beidelman (1997) also suggests that adolescent initiation rituals reinforce the power of sexuality, but in different ways for men and women, in large part because of the different ways that
sexuality relates to parenthood. In Kaguru initiation, sexuality is deemed important because of its direct link to reproduction. However, in male initiation rituals there is an emphasis on men’s abilities to transcend the physical realities of their reproductive system which, in contrast to women, leaves them physically unattached to their children (i.e. they cannot give birth or nurse a child). This separation is done symbolically through physical circumcision and through emphasis on the male’s reproductive role as primarily economic, not physical (i.e. childbirth, breastfeeding) support. In women’s rituals, however, emphasis is placed on sexuality as a core component of the physical aspects of reproduction and celebrated as a highly valued aspect of femininity and the source of or their social status within the community. According to Beidelman, these gendered expressions of sexuality and reproduction, “provide means for expressing male domination but also means by which females elude that domination,” (1997, p. 19).

Beidelman’s work illustrates how the examination of initiation rituals can illuminate complex relationships among sexuality, gender and social structure, which is also a primary goal of this examination of jando and unyago.

Anthropologists examining female initiation rituals have regularly noted, as Beidelman does, the close links between concepts of gender, sexuality and reproduction in ritual practice. In her work on female circumcision in the Sudan, Boddy (1989) illustrates how female circumcision (which, in this region, involves infibulations) is perceived as enhancing women’s femininity. By deemphasizing sexuality, Boddy argues, the women see themselves as highlighting their important reproductive role as mothers because they cannot achieve the status of wife or mother until they have been circumcised. As Boddy argues:
In insisting upon circumcision for their daughters, women assert their social indispensability, an importance which is not as the sexual partners of their husbands, nor – in this highly segregated, overtly male-authoritative society – as their servants, sexual or otherwise, but as the mothers of men. The ultimate goal of a woman is to become, with her husband, the cofounder of a lineage section. (Boddy, 1989, p. 55)

Furthermore, Boddy notes, virginity in the Sudan is conceptualized not as a physical condition, but as a social construct. Women undergo infibulations following each birth or before remarriage in a process which essentially restores her to a “virginal” state. In this sense, “virginity,” while valued, is associated not with sexual inexperience, but with a woman’s reproductive capacity.

Body’s work is also relevant to the politicization of initiation rituals and to the issue of female circumcision in particular. Given the breadth of this literature, both in anthropology and other disciplines, and also given that female circumcision is not part of the adolescent initiation rituals examined in this dissertation, the many complexities of this debate will not be discussed in detail here. However, within this extensive body of literature there are two particularly relevant issues that will be discussed here, specifically, the relationship between initiation practices and broader cultural norms and expectations around sexuality, reproduction and community, as well as the conflict between “tradition” and “modernity” as it is currently playing out in the global debate over female genital cutting.¹

¹ In this dissertation, “female circumcision” and “female genital cutting” will be used interchangeably to refer to all variations of this procedure, including clitoridectomy, excision and infibulation (Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000).
In direct contradiction to the popular portrayal of female genital cutting as primarily concerned with premarital chastity, anthropologists have found that these practices often have many layers of cultural meanings (Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000). Though issues of sexuality and reproduction are commonly at the heart of female circumcision, its practice is also deeply rooted in notions of gender, personhood, and community. As discussed above, Boddy’s work in the Sudan illustrates how infibulations is primarily thought to enhance femininity by emphasizing the protection and sacredness of the woman’s reproductive center (Boddy, 1989). Lutkehaus and Roscoe (1995), together with Strathern (1988) emphasize the important role of circumcision, of both boys and girls, in assigning gender and recognizing sexual maturity. In addition, Ahmadu (2000, 2007), a trained anthropologist who also underwent traditional circumcision in her native Sierra Leone, states that among the Kona, the physical removal of the clitoris symbolizes the physical, psychological and spiritual separation of women from men, and through this transformation, women achieve, “a negation of the masculine in feminine creative potential,” (Ahmadu, 2000, p. 99). The anthropological examination of female circumcision highlights the complex intersection of sexuality, reproduction, personhood and community in these rituals (Hansen, 1972).

The second – and related – issue arising from the female circumcision debate is the underlying critique of “tradition” and cultural practice in favor of “modern” ideas about gender and sexuality. In his article titled, “What About ‘Female Genital Mutilation’?” Shweder (2000) challenges the notion that “female genital mutilation,” represents a legitimate refutation of the anthropological principle of cultural relativism. Shweder examines the common arguments offered by “anti-FGM” activists – specifically
that it reduces female sexual pleasure, perpetuates female oppression, and poses a serious threat to health – but finds little scientific evidence to support any of these claims.

Instead, he, along with a number of anthropologists argue that the controversy over female circumcision, and specifically the suggestion that female genital cutting is synonymous with sexual oppression, stems from an ethnocentric, reductionist discourse that privileges “modern,” Western ideologies of sexuality and gender as it delegitimizes the “traditional” cultural practices of millions of women in the developing world (Abusharaf, 1995; Ahmadu, 2007; Ahmadu & Shweder, 2009; Boddy, 1989; Hernlund & Shell-Duncan, 2007; Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000).

I have included these two issues – the complex and multiple meanings underlying initiation and the Western bias underlying the harsh criticism of this cultural practice – because of the parallel issues that will be presented in the following chapters. As female circumcision has been critiqued as restricting girls’ sexuality, perpetuating female oppression, and harming girls health, the ritual of unyago has also been critiqued as causing adolescent pregnancy though encouragement “promiscuity,” (e.g. Bangster, 2010; UNICEF, 2008; UZIKWASA, 2008). However, the critics of unyago, like the critics of female genital cutting, ignore the deep cultural roots and complex cultural meanings associated with this practice, and instead privilege a Western medico-moral discourse in which all adolescent sexual activity is deemed either “unhealthy” or morally “wrong,” (Arnfred, 2003; Luker, 1996; Pigg & Adams, 2005). As Obermeyer (1999) has illustrated, more systematic research examining the complex cultural meanings of these rituals and the subjective experiences of the women who practice them is still needed to deepen our understanding of the social, physical and psychological effects of these
practices. In Chapter Three, I outline the cultural and historical roots of the recent criticisms leveled at *unyago*, and in Chapters Five and Six I provide a detailed examination of these cultural meanings underlying these rituals. In doing so, this dissertation contributes to this broader discussion of the changing role of initiation rituals – whether or not they involve genital cutting – in contemporary societies.

To close this discussion of initiation rituals, it must be noted that in many societies, the elaborate initiation ceremonies described above no longer exist. Indeed, over the last century much of the substance of these initiation ceremonies, which were closely linked to the development of adolescent sexuality and gender roles, have either been prohibited by larger political bodies, protested by international human rights groups, or dissolved by the destabilizing forces of globalization (Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000; Worthman & Whiting, 1987). This dissertation will contribute to our understanding of the impact of globalization and change on these rituals though a close examination both of the rituals themselves and of the changing context within which these rituals are practiced.

### 2.2 Psychological Anthropology – The Individual and Culture

In this section, I discuss the theoretical work in psychological anthropology examining the relationship between the individual and culture. It is from this body of scholarship that the theoretical tools for this examination of the role of culture and environment in shaping the enculturation of sexuality are drawn. I first provide a brief history of the literature directly relevant to this dissertation and discuss the key concepts that have emerged from this field of study, including LeVine’s (1996) “cultural
mediation” framework. I then briefly summarize the large literature on subjectivity in order to situate Hostetler and Herdt’s (1998) concepts of “sexual lifeways” and “developmental subjectivities,” both used in this dissertation, within this broader literature.

The Individual and Culture in Psychological Anthropology

Perhaps the most cogent description of anthropology's contribution to our understanding of the relationship between the individual and culture was stated by one of the founders of this field of inquiry:

It was a simple – a very simple – point to which our materials were organized in the 1920s, merely the documentation over and over of the fact that human nature is not rigid and unyielding…We had to present evidence that human character is built upon a biological base which is capable of enormous diversification in terms of social standards. (Mead, 1939, p. ix)

As suggested by Mead, the core contribution of anthropology to our understanding of the role of culture in shaping the individual is precisely that culture does, indeed, play an important role. Anthropology, and psychological anthropology in particular, has a long tradition of interest in childhood and adolescence, and the work of psychological anthropologists has played a key role in challenging universalist theories of human development in academic psychology and advancing our understanding of the process of cultural acquisition (R. LeVine, 2007). Indeed, one of the key foci of this early work was the process of child development which (in part due to Freud’s influential work on the primacy of early childhood in shaping adult personality) was conceptualized by anthropologists as an “enculturation” process through which culture “gets inside” the individual (Harkness, 1992). This dissertation draws on the concept of enculturation to
examine the key biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors shaping the process through which individual adolescents learn the norms, values and expectations of sexuality in their community.

The “culture and personality” school was responsible for producing some of the earliest theoretical work on the relationship between the individual and culture. Though this school of thought was comprised of multiple different approaches, scholars in culture and personality were united by their assumption that each society can be characterized in terms of a typical personality, defined as the, “persistent characteristics of an individual inferred from a sample of his or her behavior,” (Bock, 1999, p. 45). Within the culture and personality school, some of the most well know figures were the “configurationalists” (e.g. Benedict, 1934, 1946; Mead, 1928, 1935, 1949; Sapir, 1949). These scholars saw culture as characterized by a configuration of psychological traits specific to that physical, economic and social environment, and subsequently adopted by most members of that cultural community though the process of enculturation.

Scholars taking a different approach within this school developed the related concepts of the “basic” and “modal” personality (Kardiner, 1939; Kardiner, Linton, Du Bois, & Withers, 1945), defined as the core set of personality characteristics shared by individuals in a culture. For these scholars, basic personality was the result of individual adaptations to “primary institutions,” such as subsistence type, social organization, and child training. In addition, these scholars used psychoanalytic theory to explain how this basic personality structure contributed to the development and maintenance of “secondary institutions,” such as religion, ritual, and folklore. During World War II, scholars from diverse approaches within the culture and personality school were also
involved in attempts to characterize the personality type of various nation-states including Japan (Benedict, 1946), Germany (Fromm, 1941), and Russia (Gorer & Rickman, 1949).

In the 1950s the culture and personality school underwent significant criticism and challenges to the basic assumptions inherent in much of this work. Scholars challenged the assumption of a direct causal relationship between childhood experience and adult personality (Orlansky, 1949), the perception of socialization as the “replication of uniformity,” (Wallace, 1961), the use of projective and other psychological tests in non-Western societies (Lindesmith & Strauss, 1950), and the “false dichotomy,” between the school’s core concepts of personality and culture (Spiro, 1951). Despite these criticisms, scholars in anthropology and psychology have continued to explore the relationship between the individual and culture in the process of enculturation.

Some of the most influential work in this field was that of John and Beatrice Whiting, whose work represents a landmark body of scholarship in psychological anthropology. Influenced by the cross-cultural techniques developed by George Murdock (1945) and psychoanalytically-informed social learning theory of Neil Miller and John Dollard (1950; 1941), the Whiting’s work was particularly innovative in its use of systematic, comparative cross-cultural research to test various hypotheses regarding the relationship among aspects of the cultural environment, child-rearing practices, and personality. Their extensive body of work (e.g. B. Whiting & Edwards, 1988; B. Whiting & Whiting, 1975; J. Whiting, 1941; J. Whiting & Child, 1953) provided concrete, systematic data illustrating the importance of culture as a "provider of settings," by identifying relationships between children's immediate social environment and their
behavior (D’Andrade, 1994). Though the Whiting’s work suffered from some of the same weaknesses of earlier work in the culture and personality school (Shweder, 1979a, 1979b), their systematic, comparative examination of the relationship between the individual and their cultural environment has continued to be influential in the field of psychological anthropology.

Since the time of the Whiting’s, scholars have continued to revise their approach to address certain weaknesses. Efforts to address these issues have shifted attention from a focus on understanding adult personality by observing children's behavior and environment toward a focus on understanding the multiple processes of enculturation through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to participate as members of society (Harkness, 1992; R. LeVine, 1999). Work by key scholars drawing on the Whiting’s work has focused on the role of parents’ cultural belief systems to address the issue of intracultural variability (Harkness & Super, 1996), and a focus on the child’s role as an active participant in his or her cultural environment to address issues of individual agency and experience in the developmental process (Rogoff, 2003). Still other scholars have worked to revise the Whiting’s theoretical framework to examine child development as occurring within a developmental or ecocultural “niche,” (C. Super & Harkness, 1986; Weisner, 1997) and to address the role of class and gender in shaping intracultural variation in child socialization practices and individual psychology (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This work has produced a holistic ecological approach to the cross-cultural study of human development that allows for an examination of the biological, psychological, environmental, economic, political and cultural factors that together shape processes of enculturation and human development.
The ecological model developed by Robert LeVine (e.g. 1982, 2007; R. LeVine et al., 1996), which is used in Chapter Seven of this dissertation, is part of this body of scholarship.

LeVine’s Cultural Mediation Framework

The work of Robert LeVine, also a student of the Whiting's, has continued to examine how conditions, processes, and customs of early child rearing shape different people in different cultures through the enculturation process. His recent comparative ethnography of the Gusii of Kenya and middle-class American child-rearing practices is strongly reminiscent of the Whiting's work while simultaneously illustrating the more recent theoretical evolution of their ideas (R. LeVine et al., 1996). In this work, LeVine takes a population-level perspective, developing a “cultural mediation” framework for examining how biopsychological, environmental/economic, and cultural factors together normative cultural “scripts” which in turn shape “central tendencies” in behavior within a population. As LeVine’s cultural mediation framework forms the theoretical basis for this examination of the multiple influences shaping adolescent sexuality, his ideas will be discussed in greater detail here.

LeVine relies on a computer metaphor to illustrate the theoretical relationship between the various biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors and their role in shaping parents’ beliefs and behaviors. He describes biopsychological factors – “organic hardware” – as the biological and psychological potentialities shared by all members of the human species, including reproductive physiology, neurophysiology, and growth patterns. These are the “hard-wired” aspects of
reproduction and human development, and include features that have evolved through natural selection and, though still evolving, are generally not considered changeable except over an evolutionary time-scale (R. LeVine et al., 1996). These factors set the parameters for what is and is not physically possible in terms of human behavior, though they do not necessarily define how populations will react to these constraints or require that all possible behaviors are indeed enacted. On the contrary, the extent to which species wide “hardware,” will affect behaviors is conditioned by the “ecological firmware” and the “cultural software” of a specific population, discussed below. In LeVine’s model, biopsychological factors set the limits for the types of behaviors possible but do not determine which of a range of possible behaviors an individual will engage in. In this dissertation, I examine how certain biopsychological aspects of adolescent sexuality – in particular the biological and psychological changes associated with puberty – act as underlying influences on adolescent sexual behavior in rural Mtwara.

LeVine’s environmental/economic factors – “ecological firmware” – refer to the socioeconomic and physical conditions of a given population (e.g. access to resources and technology, subsistence strategies, division of labor) which also provide opportunities and constraints for various behaviors made possible by the organic hardware. The ecological firmware differs from the organic hardware (i.e. biopsychological factors) in its potential for change; ecological firmware may change within the course of a generation, while organic hardware is only changeable though evolution over many generations. This dissertation will include an exploration of the various characteristics of the physical, economic and social environment of rural Mtwara.
and explore how these characteristics of the environment shape the opportunities and constraints on adolescent sexuality.

Finally, LeVine’s cultural factors – “Cultural Software” – are cultural scripts that associate meaning and value with certain ideas, people, behaviors, and phenomena, including the biopsychological and environmental/economic factors. These cultural scripts prescribe the content and sequence of interaction, provide symbolic codes for interpreting interaction, and reflect that which is considered “common sense” within a specific cultural environment. Understanding the cultural scripts that influence adolescent sexual behavior requires identifying those scripts that are particularly salient in individuals’ discussions of normative or “appropriate” behavior. However, like the biopsychological and environmental/economic factors, these cultural factors still only have an undermining – and not determinative – influence on behavior. Individuals’ actual behaviors are shaped both by the norms, values and expectations of behavior embedded these cultural scripts and by each individual’s circumstances and experiences. Thus, the influence of these cultural scripts on adolescent sexual behavior is to create patterns or “central tendencies” – and not uniformities – in behavior within a population. Furthermore, according to LeVine, these cultural scripts, though rooted in a specific historical and cultural environment, are subject to change as they are communicated from one generation to the next. In this dissertation, I examine cultural scripts guiding normative gender and sexual roles within the context of rural Mtwara, and examine how these scripts guide adolescent sexual behavior.

This dissertation both draws on and seeks to extend the cultural mediation model proposed by LeVine. In this dissertation, LeVine’s model is used to identify and
organize the biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural characteristics of the population of rural Mtwara that shape a specific set of behaviors – adolescent sexual activity – at the population level. However, LeVine’s model is used only as a guide for understanding “central tendencies” in behavior at the population level. To address the issue of intracultural variation, this dissertation will draw on recent theoretical developments examining how individual subjectivity and experience relates to these normative scripts.

**Theorizing Subjectivity: “Sexual Lifeways” and “Developmental Subjectivities”**

In addition to revising the theoretical relationship between the individual and cultural in response to the criticisms of the culture and personality school, scholars in anthropology and closely related disciplines have also contributed theoretically to our understanding of the individual. This expansive body of work has examined the individual through various conceptual lenses, including the self, identity, and subjectivity (G. White & Kirkpatrick, 1985). As the literature on this subject spans decades and disciplines, in this review I focus primarily on the concept of subjectivity as it has been theorized in recent years, and as it is directly relevant to this dissertation.

The concept of subjectivity is historically laden with philosophical presuppositions and controversies, and as a result there exists numerous analytic approaches to examining subjectivity from a range of disciplines. In general, theories of subjectivity which have dominated the last forty years have challenged the Enlightenment-era concept of the subject as, “a completely self-contained being that develops in the world as an expression of its own unique essence,” (Mansfield, 2000, p.
This free and autonomous “individual” subject, the product of the rational process of a conscious mind (as theorized by Kant, Descartes, Rousseau and Heidegger), was initially challenged by Freud’s notion of the unconscious, which produced a split subjectivity that was formed as the conscious mind attempted to repress the impulses of the unconscious (Freud, 1966). Lacan, drawing on Freud’s notion of the unconscious, as well as structural and semiotic theory, proposed a theory of subjectivity in which the self is only knowable in contrast to that which is outside the self, or the “other,” (Lacan, 1978). The work of Foucault, on the other hand, challenged the notion of a knowable and autonomous subjectivity entirely, arguing that the subject as suggested by Enlightenment-era thinkers was not a reality at all, but an imagined entity produced through discursive regimes of power and used as a tool for isolation and control (Foucault, 1973a, 1973b; Rabinow, 1984). Much of the work on subjectivity in the second half of the 21st century has drawn of the work of these core thinkers, either in attempting to define the nature of subjectivity or attempting, as Foucault did, to illustrate how subjectivity itself is the product of culture and power (Mansfield, 2000).

In anthropology, Geertz (1973, 1983) famously articulated a cultural approach to subjectivity, which focused on understanding subjective life by analyzing the symbolic forms used by individuals to represent their unique phenomenal worlds. In subsequent work, scholars have both extended and revised Geertz’s approach, drawing on the insights of scholars like Foucault and Lacan to examine how both culture and power are used in the construction of gender and sexual roles and identities (e.g. Butler, 1990; Duggan, 1992; Rubin, 1984; Sedgwick, 1990; Vance, 1984; Weeks, 1995). Recently, anthropologists have called for an intensified examination of the experiential basis of
subjectivity to illuminate how individuals change in the context of social transformations, particularly in developing countries (Biehl et al., 2007). Ethnographic studies of subjectivity in medical and psychological anthropology have drawn of the heuristic of “the body” to examine the role of medico-scientific discourse, political economy, social networks and global processes in shaping individual experience and subjectivity (e.g. Biehl, 2005; Csordas, 1994; Lock, 2002; Martin, 1994).

In the study of sexual subjectivity, in particular, the development of queer theory has focused on the role of individual agency and resistance in shaping alternative sexual subjectivities (e.g. Elliston, 2005; Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1993; Weeks, 1995). However, this body of work tends to focus on sexual subjectivity as constituted through resistance to hegemonic discourses, and, in doing so, largely ignores the role of subjective experience and fails to explain individual difference (Hostetler & Herdt, 1998). In reaction to the shortcomings queer theory, Hostetler and Herdt (1998) offer the concepts of “sexual lifeways” and “development subjectivities,” as an alternative for examining the way in which sexual subjectivity is formed through the negotiation of cultural norms, political and economic constraints, and individual desires.

In presenting their theoretical framework, Hostetler and Herdt emphasize that across diverse cultural context, norms and expectations surrounding gender and sexual roles are embedded in “frameworks of personhood,” that define normative developmental pathways to which individuals are expected to conform. The authors define these normative developmental pathways as, “sexual lifeways” or, “culturally constituted developmental pathways, embedded within social and symbolic systems, that provide rich and meaningful contexts for the realization of full personhood in society,” (pg. 251)
These sexual lifeways are related to cultural scripts outlining normative sexual and
gender roles, but also include a consideration of the implications of these cultural scripts
across different stages of the developmental spectrum. Though these sexual lifeways
provide normative pathways for development, however, Hostetler and Herdt also
emphasize the importance of examining how individuals, in negotiating the tensions
between cultural norms, environmental constraints and individual desires, devise creative
solutions and forge multiple and diverse developmental pathways. Hostetler and Herdt
refer to the individual’s role in this process of negotiation as “sexual agency,” the
outcome of which is “developmental subjectivity,” or, “the sense of personal efficacy, of
positive self-regard, that emerges from the interstices of culturally patterned ways of
being, individual desires (sexual, affectional, relational, and/or life-course desires), and

Hostetler and Herdt propose developmental subjectivity as one way of
conceptualizing sexual subjectivity as forged in the individual developmental process of
accepting or rejecting culturally patterned sexual lifeways in accordance with one’s own
unique set of experiences, opportunities and limitations. Therefore, developmental
subjectivity refers to a developmental outcome, or the “sense of self in present time,” and
is subject to change across the life course (p. 276). This process of negotiating one’s
developmental subjectivity in relation to existing sexual lifeways is characterized by an
individual’s self-conscious, active engagement in his or her own sexual development. In
this dissertation, the concepts of “sexual lifeways” and “developmental subjectivities” are
used in Chapter Nine to examine the diverse ways in which adolescents in rural Mtwar
are themselves finding diverse and creative ways to navigate both their sexuality and
their education in the context of existing cultural norms, environmental constraints and individual desires.

Before turning to an examination of the anthropological study of globalization in Section 2.3, it is necessary to first examine another aspect of the study of subjectivity with implications for the methods used in this research. Central to the study of subjectivity in anthropology has been the examination of the limits of objectivity in anthropological research (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Manganaro, 1990). This has led to the examination of issues of authorship, ideology and power and contributed to the growing focus on meaning, reflexivity and experience in the study of culture (Mattingly & Garro, 2000, 2000; R. Rosaldo, 1989; Shore, 1996). “Experience-near” approaches to subjectivity and identity emerged as many psychological anthropologists shifted toward ethnopsychological, phenomenological, and symbolic analytic and theoretical frameworks (Casey & Edgerton, 2007). It is from this vein that scholars in psychocultural anthropology developed, “person-centered ethnography,” (Hollan, 2001; R. LeVine, 1982; Levy & Hollan, 1998).

Person-centered ethnography, which is a primary method used in this dissertation, was developed as a tool for examining the relationship between subjectivity and culture. This method is designed to, “Represent human behavior and subjective experience from the point of view of the acting, intending, and attentive subject, to actively explore the emotional salience and motivational force of cultural beliefs and symbols (rather than to assume such saliency and force), and to avoid unnecessary reliance on overly abstract, experience-distant constructs,” (Hollan, 2001, p. 49). In person-centered interviewing, participants are treated both as “informants,” that is, as knowledgeable people who can
talk about behavior, motivation and subjective experience, and also as “respondents,” that is, objects of systematic study in themselves. In conducting person-centered interviews, which take place over multiple sessions, close attention is paid not only to what the participant says, but to how he or she says, and the way in which the participants represents his or her subjective experience by drawing on – or rejecting – symbolic resources and cultural scripts available in the surrounding cultural environment. In this dissertation, I rely on this approach because of its focus on experience as central to subjectivity, and the relationships between representation of subjectivity and dominant cultural norms and expectations.

In this dissertation I use person-centered ethnographic methods to examine how individual adolescents represent their sexual subjectivity in terms of individual desires, motivations, and experiences, and in relation to normative cultural scripts. By examining sexuality through the lens of subjectivity, this work will further our understanding of how individuals blend internal and external dimensions of sexual experience to rearrange, transform, and represent themselves and their communities (Casey & Edgerton 2005).

2.3 Globalization and Cultural Change

In this section, I discuss the key ideas that have emerged in recent years from anthropological examinations of globalization and cultural change in the late 21st century. By many accounts, globalization has become the academic and media buzzword of the 21st century (Edelman & Haugerud, 2005; Inda & Rosaldo, 2008; Lewellen, 2002). Used widely in anthropology and in popular discourse, the term has been called a “megatrope,” as it is used to communicate a complex and wide-ranging set of ideas and processes.
In order to coherently address this large and diverse literature, I first discuss the meaning of the term globalization and briefly outline the theoretical and historical underpinnings of the concept and multiple processes of globalization. This discussion is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the field, but instead to address the major ideas and events that have shaped our current understanding of globalization. Following this general discussion of globalization, I examine the key theoretical contributions that have both shaped and resulted from the anthropological study of globalization. This discussion will include major contributors to the field as well as those scholars whose ideas are drawn on explicitly in this dissertation. Finally, to conclude this section, I focus specifically on the relationship between globalization and adolescence cross-culturally. As will be discussed below, the changes associated with globalization are directly linked to the emergence and/or lengthening of the adolescent life stage in diverse contexts, and this lengthening of adolescence has direct implications for adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwaraw.

What Is Globalization?

Despite a deluge of publications on the subject, much of the analysis of globalization remains conceptually inexact (Lewellen, 2002). The defining characteristic of globalization is variably economic, political, ideological, and/or cultural, and the notion that there is more than one component to globalization has been a primary
motivator of the growth in theory and research on this topic across a range of disciplines. To loosely structure this discussion, globalization will be conceptualized as, "the intensification of transplanetary interconnectivity," as manifest in communication, travel, markets, military, ecology, law, and consciousness and resulting in the deterritorialization of important economic, social, and cultural phenomena from their traditional origins in the nation-state (Appadurai, 1996; Scholte, 2005, p. 60; Suarez-Orozco, 2001). This broad definition has been chosen to allow for the inclusion of literature on globalization from diverse perspectives.

Before examining the historical path that has led to the current process of globalization, it is important to note that globalization is used both to describe a process of increasing global interconnectedness and to reference the theory (or theories) of the meaning and impact of this process (Hannerz, 1996). Scholars theorizing globalization often draw on earlier theoretical perspectives on the relationships between nation-states, including modernization and development theory, as well as dependency and world-system theory, to characterize the defining features of contemporary globalization and to debate the effects of globalization on the economic and social well-being of communities is diverse regions of the globe. Modernization, development, dependency and world-system theory, all theoretical precursors to globalization theory, generally attempt to explain existing global relationships, particularly between pre- and post-industrial countries, and to predict the future state of these relationships. As both the theories and processes of globalization also refer to relationships between nation-states, this earlier work remains relevant to contemporary discussions of the state of global relations.
Modernization theory, based on the work of W.W. Rostow (1964), suggests that all pre-industrial countries will ultimately make an inevitable transition away from “traditional,” collectivity-oriented practices and beliefs and subsistence economic practices toward a “modern,” self-oriented, capitalist society. The related theory of “development,” which dominated international relations in the 1970s and 1980s, was a response to the growing recognition that post-colonial societies were not moving toward modernity in the effortless manner predicted by modernization theory. The goals of development were essentially the same as those of modernization, that is, “The replication, in most of Asia, Africa and Latin America, of the conditions that were supposed to characterize the more economically advanced nations of the world – industrialization, high degrees of urbanization and education, technification of agriculture, and widespread adoption of the values and principles of modernity, including particular forms of order, rationality and individual orientation,” (Escobar, 1997, p. 497). While modernization theory was used in part to justify the pulling back of economic support by former colonial powers following World War II, however, development theory was used to justify intervention into these same “developing” countries by international organizations following the economic crisis of the 1980s, discussed further below.

Before the 1970s, the ideologies expressed in modernization theory (and later in development theory) were essentially considered politically neutral. In the early 1970s, however, Marxist scholars began to level harsh critiques on modernization and development theory by illustrating that capital flows from underdeveloped countries to developed areas generally exceeded developed country exports of surplus capital. Thus
“development” was primarily benefiting developed – as opposed to developing - nations. This analysis, paired with the recognition that developing countries did not appear to be “developing,” provided the seeds for dependency, underdevelopment, and world-system theory. Raul Prebisch first proposed dependency theory, a core-periphery model in which the more developed countries directed the extraction of surplus from the developing countries, in the late 1950s. However, his ideas were later given historical depth and greater influence by Wallerstein’s (1974) world-system theory. World-system theory moved beyond earlier dependency theory through its historical perspective on the unfolding relationship between nations and their colonies and also introduced the concept of the semi-periphery, which allowed for a more de-centered perspective than Prebisch’s dichotomous core-periphery model (Edelman & Haugerud, 2005; Lewellen, 2002).

The critiques of modernization and development leveled by dependency and world-system theories did much to dispel teleological and idealistic notions of the relationship between nation-states. In addition, these critiques solidified the position of historically-oriented political economy within U.S. anthropology (Baer, Singer, & Susser, 1997). Modernization, development and dependency/world-system theories all constitute precursors to modern globalization theory. These ideas continue to be interwoven in current discussion of the meaning and impact of processes of globalization.

Though the process of globalization clearly involves a range of non-economic phenomena, most scholars examining the historical roots of the current era of globalization would agree on the important role of the shifting global economy in this process (Lewellen, 2002). In the decades immediately following World War II, the global economic system was subject to the Bretton Woods regulations. Established in
1944, these regulations emphasized investment in state-based economies, a strategy supported by a system of fixed exchange rates, and limitations on capital movements across national boundaries (Edelman & Haugerud, 2005; Lewellen, 2002). This system was dismantled, however in a series of worldwide economic crises, which led to the current system of global neoliberal economics that characterizes contemporary globalization.

In the West, it was the crisis of over-accumulation in the Fordist system of mass production in the early 1970s that spurred economic change. The highly controlled Fordist system created surplus that saturated markets, causing prices, corporate profits, and ultimately government revenues to decline rapidly (Edelman & Haugerud, 2005). Governments in the United States and Western Europe responded by printing money, resulting in uncontrollable inflation. This crisis initiated the breakdown of Bretton Woods controls on capital movements and the 1971 termination of fixed exchange rates. This allowed governments to look to new models of production and new foreign markets to unload their surplus of commodities (Edelman & Haugerud, 2005). The breakdown of trade barriers and deregulation of currency fueled the shift toward economic neoliberalism, that is, "doctrines and politics that accord the market, rather than the state, the main role in resolving economic and other problems," – in the West (Edelman & Haugerud, 2005, p. 7).

Neoliberalism became official policy in the United States and Europe in the early 1980s. However, the spread of neoliberalism from a primarily Western system to a global system was the result of a somewhat separate cascade of events. The OPEC oil shocks of the mid 1970’s threw the economies of many non-Western countries into crisis,
forcing them to borrow heavily to buy petroleum and, ostensibly, for economic
development. This led to the debt crisis of the early 1980s, when many of these countries
carried debt for which the annual interest exceeded their annual GDP (Lewellen, 2002).
At the height of the debt crisis, the IMF and World Bank stepped in to offer loans to these
developing countries. However these loans came with the condition that developing
countries institute “structural adjustment” programs and essentially required governments
to adopt a neoliberal economic system, including reducing barriers to trade, privatizing
industry, and devaluing their currency (Edelman & Haugerud, 2005).

Though these changes merged the developing world into the global economic
system, the elimination of protections on domestic production sent many developing
countries into economic free-fall and millions into even deeper poverty (Edelman &
Haugerud, 2005; Ferguson, 1999; Lewellen, 2002). This series of events is one reason
many scholars, drawing on dependency and world-system ideas, argue that globalization
– and specifically global neoliberalism – has improved the lives of the rich at the expense
of the poor (Goldsmith & Mander, 2001; Hamelink, 1983). Indeed, the question of
whether globalization has had primarily positive or negative effects on the majority of the
world’s population residing in developing countries remains a topic of vigorous debate.
This debate is further complicated by the fact that globalization is not simply an
economic phenomenon. The growth in the global economy since the 1970s has
facilitated (and been facilitated by) new forms of information, transportation, and
communication technologies, allowing people, ideas, institutions and capital to move
across the globe in unprecedented numbers and at an unprecedented rate (Edelman &
Haugerud, 2005). In the face of this complexity, anthropology has been able to provide
a valuable perspective through examining the impact of the many faces of globalization at the ground level, on the daily lives of individuals and communities.

The Anthropology of Globalization

In anthropology, globalization is most commonly examined as a cultural process tightly linked to political and economic processes. In contrast to theories of globalization that take a macro-level approach focusing, for example, on economic neoliberalism or international political institutions, anthropologists have focused on the articulation of the global and the local in examining, “how globalizing processes exist in the context of, and must come to terms with, the realities of particular societies, with their accumulated – that is to say historical – cultures and ways of life,”(Inda & Rosaldo, 2008, p. 4). The anthropology of globalization examines the situated and conjectural nature of globalization, that is, how the impacts of macrostructural processes of globalization are mediating by the existing cultural environment in diverse contexts.

Because of the large body of work that has been produced on this topic in recent years, for the purposes of this discussion, I focus on those concepts and theories which are directly relevant to this discussion of the way in which adolescents in rural Mtwara negotiate multiple influences on their sexuality in the context of cultural change. I first discuss how the anthropology of globalization has reshaped the core concept of culture within anthropology by forcing scholars to recognize the heterogeneous and mobile nature of culture. This will include a discussion of the debate over the future of cultural diversity, and whether globalization is increasing cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity. I then discuss key ideas that have emerged out of the anthropology of globalization, with
a focus on Tsing’s (2005) theory of “friction” which I drawn on in Chapter Eight of this dissertation. Finally, I turn to the literature on globalization that has specifically examined the impact of change on adolescent sexuality. In general, this discussion is not intended as a comprehensive overview of the large and rapidly growing body of anthropological literature on globalization. Instead, this discussion has been designed to tie the core concepts and directly relevant theoretical and ethnographic work from this literature to this examination of adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara.

Culture in the Age of Globalization

The increasingly rapid movement of people and ideas associated with globalization has played an important role in scholars’ rethinking of the meaning of anthropology’s core concept of culture. The changes associated with globalization, together with the constructionist critique of ethnographic writing (e.g. Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus, 1999; Marcus & Fischer, 1986) and the political economists’ use of world-system theory to critique the notion of bounded, isolated “cultures,” (e.g. Mintz, 1986; Nash, 1985; Wallerstein, 1974; Wolf, 1982) have forced anthropologists to reexamine the “peoples and cultures” approach, that is, the historical tendency within the field to connect culture to the particularities of place (Clifford, 1997; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997a, 1997b). The peoples and cultures approach implicitly conceptualized the world as a mosaic of separate cultures, making it possible to conceptualize “a culture,” as a bounded ethnographic object located in a specific place (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997b, p. 1). The multi-pronged critique of this approach, part of a larger critical trend within anthropology focused on objectivist, essentialist, and reified conceptions of culture, set the stage for current anthropological explorations of culture in an increasingly globalized world (Inda
This critical, reflexive turn in anthropology has provided anthropologists with a range of heuristic tools, discussed further below, which attempt to move beyond the “peoples and cultures” and more accurate conceptualize the future of cultural diversity in an increasingly globalized world.

In addition to rethinking the meaning of the core concept of culture, the changes associated with globalization have also forced anthropologists to consider the future of cultural diversity worldwide. Intense debate has circled around the relationship between culture and globalization, with some arguing that the end of the plurality of cultures is inevitable and others defending the future of culture and arguing that globalization is actually increasing cultural diversity. Furthermore, intertwined in this debate are various opinions on the value of increased homogeneity or heterogeneity – that is, the question of whether one process or the other inherently “good,” or “bad,” for humankind.

Coming primarily from the fields of cultural studies and media studies, some scholars characterize globalization as synonymous with cultural homogenization or cultural imperialism, that is, a process through which traditional ways of life give way to Western ideological, social, political and economic systems. These scholars draw on evidence of the spread of consumerism, mass media, Americana, and the English language to predict “Americanization,” or “Westernization,” through which Western modernity will dominate the remainder of the globe (Hamelink, 1983; Ritzer, 2000; Tomlinson, 1995). However, perspectives are mixed as to whether this homogenization entails either progressive universalism or oppressive imperialism. While some see globalization as creating a “global village,” (McLuhan & Powers, 1992) or marking the
“end of history,” (Fukuyama, 1992) in which global citizens peacefully coexist in their sameness, others view it as a form of neocolonial oppression (Hamelink, 1983).

Though there is indeed evidence of an association of Western commodities with a particular lifestyle and economic status, as well as anecdotal evidence that the spread of Western media and commerce leads individuals to prefer American or Western cultural styles over their own, in general anthropologists have been critical of the view of globalization-as-homogenization. Critics have emphasized that the movement of people, commodities and ideas is not simply from “the West to the rest,” but also moves in the opposite direction, as evidenced by the vibrant and growing immigrant communities in much of North America and Europe (Abu-Lughod, 1991; Rouse, 2002). In addition, these critics point out that the globalization process takes place not only between the West and the rest, but also between countries in the periphery, a form of interaction inconsistent with Western cultural imperialism (Inda & Rosaldo, 2008). For example, as Yang (2002) illustrates, the Chinese government is generally more concerned with the invasion of Hong Kong and Taiwanese national culture, exposing Chinese citizens to new ways of being Chinese that are not those prescribed by the state, than with the impact of Western influences. From this perspective the globalized world is seen, “not in terms of a monolithic core-periphery model but as a complexly interconnected cultural space, one full of crisscrossing flows and intersecting systems of meaning,” (Inda & Rosaldo, 2008, p. 28).

Furthermore, anthropologists have also criticized the tendency of the cultural imperialism perspective to deny the agency of the “receivers” of Western cultural forms, assuming they are a “tabula rasa,” passively swallowing new cultural forms whole
(Hannerz, 1992, p. 16). As Tomlinson (1997, p. 135) states, the problem with the cultural imperialism theory is not that there is no truth in it, but that it, “Makes unwarranted leaps of inference from the simple presence of cultural goods to the attribution of deeper cultural and ideological effects.” The anthropological literature suggests that foreign cultural forms actually tend to be customized as they are interpreted, translated, and appropriated according to local conditions (e.g. *Golden Arches East*, 1997; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Michaels, 2002). In general, anthropological data suggest that the process of globalization is too complex to be characterized as simply “Westernization” or “homogenization.” To the contrary, it appears that globalization is at least maintaining – if not increasing – cultural diversity as global forms take on different variants and have differential impacts depending on local peculiarities (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1992; Inda & Rosaldo, 2008; Robertson, 1992; Scholte, 2005).

Globalization has presented a new challenge to long-held anthropological conceptions of culture. In attempting to address both the critique of the peoples and cultures approach and the claims that globalization will lead to the end of culture, anthropologists have suggested a range of new theoretical tools for examining and explaining the meaning of “culture” when it is neither attached to place nor existing in isolation from other influences. In this vein, Inda and Rosaldo (2008) have suggested that “peoples and cultures” is more now accurately characterized as “cultures in motion,” with cultural subjects and objects dislodged from particular fixed locations in space and time. To further examine this notion as culture as mobile, Appadurai (1996), proposed the concept of “scapes” including ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes. According to Appadurai, these “scapes” are a heuristic tool for
examining how people, media, technologies, economics and ideas become dislodged from their origins and “flow” around the globe. In attempting to characterize “culture” in the context of the rapid movement and mixing of people and ideas across the globe, theorists of globalization have emphasized the importance of attending to the malleability of culture, and the potential role of outside influences in reshaping cultural norms and practices.

The complex process through which cultural forms travel and are reinterpreted, reshaped, rejected, and/or accepted by local communities has also been a primary target of theory within the anthropology of globalization. This process has been variably conceptualized as “localization” (Inda & Rosaldo, 2008), “indigenization” (Appadurai, 1996), “domestication” (Tobin, 1992), “glocalization” (Robertson, 1992), “creolization” (Hannerz, 1992) and “hybridization” (García Canclini, 2005; Nederveen Pieterse, 1995) among others. Though each scholar emphasizes different aspects of this process, all recognize that “culture,” even in the most remote parts of the globe, is connected to and shaped by a diverse set of influences often originating in drastically different cultural environments. Scholars specifically point to this intermixing of cultural forms and populations through globalization in arguing that this process is actually increasing, as opposed to decreasing, cultural diversity.

More recent developments in the anthropology of globalization have shifted away from the examination of globalization in terms of new configurations of culture toward examining a specific range of “global” phenomena, variably referred to as “global assemblages,” “global forms,” or simply as “universals,” (Ferguson, 2006; Ong & Collier, 2005; Tsing, 2005). Like topics in the anthropological tradition, such as kinship
or initiation rituals, these global phenomena are characterized as being both socially and historically constructed. However, unlike kinship or initiation rituals, these global phenomena are also abstractable, mobile, and dynamic, and therefore salient in diverse social and cultural situations (Tsing, 2005). These global phenomena may be ideological or material, including institutions such as schools, various forms of technology, patterns of exchange and production, systems of governance, or regimes of ethics or values, among others. This literature examines of the ways in which these "universals," articulate with diverse situations to create new material, social and discursive relationships. The study of globalization through various global phenomena is intended to bridge the often-dichotomized processes of localization and globalization to examine both the dynamics and outcomes of these processes together in a single analytic framework (Ong & Collier, 2005).

Tsing (2005) similarly advocates for, “an ethnography of global connections,” that examines how global phenomena circulate around the globe and become instantiated in diverse communities. In her ethnography of environmental change in the Amazon, Tsing outlines the various ways in which individuals and communities engage with these global, which she refers to as “universals.” Specifically, Tsing focuses on the points at which the movement of these universals produces “friction,” that is, “the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference,” (2005: 24). According to Tsing, it is through this friction that universals become practically effective in diverse contexts. However, it is also friction that these universals essentially lose their universal quality, becoming diversified as they are integrated into diverse cultural contexts.
By situating a quintessentially “local” cultural practice – the initiation ritual – within the changing cultural context of rural Mtwara, this dissertation draws from and speaks to the anthropological literature on globalization. Specifically, in Chapters Eight and Nine I draw on Tsing’s concepts of global “universals” and “friction” to examine the impact of the rapid expansion of formal, Western-style education on adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara. In Chapter Eight, I examine the specific sites of “friction” that are impacting adolescents’ negotiations of their sexuality in the rapidly-changing context of rural Mtwara. In addition, by pairing Tsing’s theory of the impact of the macro-processes of globalization on culture with the theoretical and methodological tools of psychological anthropology, in Chapter Nine I seek to augment Tsing’s ideas by examining how individual adolescents in rural Mtwara negotiate this “friction” as they navigate their own sexual relationships. In doing so, this dissertation provides a multi-level perspective on the relationship between globalization and cultural change by illuminating the micro-process through which individuals negotiate and shape the changes associated with the macro-processes of globalization.

Adolescent Sexuality and Cultural Change

To close this section, I now turn to the anthropological literature specifically examining the impact of globalization on adolescent sexuality in diverse cultural contexts. Anthropological research has provided significant evidence to suggest that the political, economic and social effects of globalization may have particularly drastic effects on adolescents, who are already in a period of transition and therefore vulnerable to outside influence. One of the primary conclusions of the Harvard Adolescent Project (HAP), still one of the largest and most comprehensive anthropological studies of
adolescence to date, was the observation that adolescence as a life stage only emerged in the relatively recent past in many societies. Indeed, the Whiting's and colleagues titled their series of monographs produced from the HAP the “Adolescents in a Changing World,” series in recognition the close relationship between adolescence and patterns of global change (J. Whiting, Whiting, & Burbank, 1988). Indeed, there is significant historical and cross-cultural evidence to support the Whiting’s claim of the relatively recent emergence of adolescence as a universal life stage (B. Brown, Larson, & Saraswati, 2002; Kett, 1978).

Demographers and historians have documented the way in which shifting demographic patterns toward lower infant mortality and sustained high fertility have changed the social makeup of many countries by producing a large cohort of youth (Fussell & Greene, 2002; Kett, 1978). The spread of formal schooling coupled with the shift from subsistence to wage-based economies has also played a crucial role in the emergence of adolescence by extending the age at which young people are able to be economically self-sufficient while simultaneously exposing them to an all peer environment (B. Brown et al., 2002; J. Whiting et al., 1988). In addition to the socioeconomic and cultural changes shaping adolescence, cross-cultural surveys of human growth indicate a secular trend toward decreased age of menarche that is clearly occurring in the United States and Europe, and also appears to be emerging in other societies as well (Eveleth, 1986; Eveleth & Tanner, 1990; Konner & Shostak, 1986; J. Whiting et al., 1986). The documentation of these large scale demographic, institutional, and biological changes have affected life in many communities in such a way as to create a “space” for an adolescent life stage. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of
“adolescence” across diverse contexts essentially necessitates a perspective that includes the examination of change (Fussell & Greene, 2002).

In addition to creating a “space” for adolescence, research across diverse cultural contexts has also documented significant effects of globalization on both the external aspects of adolescence (e.g. education, clothes, peers, music) and the more internal effects (e.g. identity, stress, mental health) (Bucholtz, 2002). The shifting demographics which have led to a large cohort of adolescents in many countries are making economic issues of investment in youth, both in education and employment, increasingly important for nation-states (Fussell & Greene, 2002; Mortimer & Larson, 2002b). In addition, declining fertility rates and increasing life expectancies are shifting dependency ratios in families, as are processes of migration and urbanization, as adolescents increasingly leaving their natal home to seek out employment or educational opportunities (Cole & Durham, 2007). These large scale demographic changes may affect both the support adolescents have as they transition to adulthood.

Perhaps most importantly, the introduction of schooling, coupled with the shift from subsistence to more competitive, wage-based economies, has played a crucial role in delaying the age at which young people are able to be economically self-sufficient (Cole & Durham, 2007; Mortimer & Larson, 2002a; J. Whiting et al., 1988). This has resulted in a later age of marriage and childbearing and, in some contexts, smaller family sizes (Cole & Durham 2007). Though research has repeatedly documented the positive effects of education on health and well-being, particularly for women and children (R. LeVine, LeVine, & Schnell, 2001), there remains a need for further research into the various mechanisms through which such positive changes take place, particularly at the
level of precollegiate education (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Anderson-Fye (2010) illustrates the benefits of a person-centered ethnographic approach for understanding the role of subjective motivation and cultural context in shaping the impact of education on girls’ lives. Stambach (2000) also provides an ethnographic account of the way in which the introduction of formal education in a community (in her case, among the Chagga of northern Tanzania) can reconfigure gender norms in a community and promote greater economic independence for women. However, as will be discussed Chapter Eight, adolescent pregnancy among female students in Mtwara presents an interesting case for examining the relationship between education, culture and sexuality in the context of change.

The rising age of marriage has also increased the period of time during which individuals are reproductively mature but socially unprepared for childbearing. In this way, the “problem” of adolescent sexuality is itself closely linked to the changes associated with globalization. In the decades immediately following Mead’s (1928) foundational work in Samoa, cross-cultural research on adolescent sexuality focused primarily on identifying patterns in the wide variety of cultural responses to adolescents’ emerging reproductive capacity. Though the cross-cultural literature has shown that adolescent boys and girls are sexually active in the majority of societies around the world, it also indicates significant variation in attitudes toward adolescent sexuality and practices aimed at the regulation of sexual behavior across cultures (Broude, 1975; D. Davis & Whitten, 1987; Murdock, 1964). Cultural variation in attitudes toward adolescent sexual activity ranges from societies in which sexual activity is considered necessary for the attainment of full physical maturity and fertility to those in which harsh
condemnation and punishment are levied on any sexual activity between unmarried young people.

As part of this research anthropologists have documented a variety of cultural rules and strategies used to manage adolescents’ emerging sexual activity, and a number of cross-cultural surveys have statistically examined the relationship between various societal attitudes toward adolescent sexuality (i.e. restrictive or permissive) and characteristics of the social, cultural and economic environment. In these studies, restriction of adolescent sexual activity has found to be associated with a patrilineal descent structure (Goethals, 1971) and bride wealth practices (Schlegel, 1991), while permissive attitudes were associated with “lower social complexity,” including characteristics such as subsistence economy, low degree a social stratification, small communities, polytheism, high female household contribution, and the absence of property exchange at marriage (Eckhardt, 1971; Murdock, 1964; K. Paige, 1983).

Though these early studies played an important role in illustrating the significant variation in cultural attitudes toward adolescent sexuality and providing potential explanations for this variability, the rapidly increasing movement of people and ideas associated with globalization requires examining adolescent sexuality as it is shaped by a range of influences. The global movement of people, institutions and ideas together introduce adolescents to a range of ideologies around sexuality and gender (Altman, 2001; Herdt & Howe, 2007; Padilla, Hirsch, Munoz-Laboy, Sember, & Parker, 2007). As globalization has increased over the last century, local cultural practices designed to regulate and shape adolescents’ emerging reproductive capacity have, in some cases, broken down as new ideas have been introduced (Parikh, 2005; Worthman & Whiting,
1987). In parts of the world where adolescent sexual activity is traditionally restricted, scholars have identified a trend toward the creation of a “double bind,” for girls when the continued high value placed on virginity at marriage is no longer consistent with Western notions of “romantic love,” (D. A. Davis, 1995; Dowsett & Aggleton, 1999)

Scholars have also specifically examined how adolescents are renegotiating sexuality in the context of cultural change. Burbank (1988), in her work among aboriginal adolescents in Australia, illustrates that, in a community where girls used to be married before puberty, premarital pregnancy (the result of lengthening age of adolescence due to policy outlawing early marriage and the introduction of formal schooling) was not objected to on moral grounds, but in terms of the implications of these pregnancies for existing clan-based rules around marriage. Furthermore, Burbank (1995) also illustrates the way in with adolescent girls are using early pregnancy as a way of claiming autonomy in their marriage choices. Condon (1987) also notes an increasing rate of pre-marital sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy associated with cultural change among the Inuit. However, Condon argues that this increase in adolescent pregnancy is not considered problematic by older generations because it is the age of marriage, and not the prevalence of sexual activity among youth, which has changed. Given the unconditional value placed on children, even the offspring of teenagers are equally welcomed by the community. While parents do not express moral disapproval of adolescent sexual activity, however, Condon does note some concern that adolescent parents will lack the economic resources to be able to care for a baby.

As Condon alludes to, the ideological changes associated with globalization cannot be separated from its economic effects. LeVine (1996) illustrates how, among the
Gusii, the breakdown of traditional marriage and exchange processes have given women more freedom to choose their mate, but have made their relationships less stable, as their in-laws often have no incentive to accept or economically support the woman until she bears a son. Kinsella (1995) also discusses the complex interplay between changing economic conditions, gender roles, and culture in Japan. She discusses how “cute” culture is utilized by young women to maintain an attractive “childlike,” persona, prolonging their adolescence in order to work in a rapidly expanding electronics industry and living both socially and economically independently. Finally, Cole’s (2004) examination of transactional sex in Madagascar illustrates how the social and economic changes associated globalization shape the sexual lives of adolescents, and how these choices in turn may remake class and gender hierarchies specifically associated with globalization and neoliberal economics.

The work described in this section is particularly relevant to this examination of adolescent sexuality in the changing context of rural Mtwara. Indeed, as Worthman (2011) illustrates, understanding adolescence in a rapidly changing world requires recognition that both the adolescents themselves and their surrounding environment are in a state of flux. In the following chapters, I draw on the literature discussed above to explore how these adolescents are negotiating their emerging sexuality within a complex and changing cultural environment.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the literature in anthropology and closely related fields most relevant to this examination of adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara. This
examination draws on anthropology’s long history of interest in initiation rituals, and specifically the work of scholars examining the role of these rituals in shaping sexual and gender roles and preparing young people for the transition to adulthood. This research also utilizes the theoretical and methodological tools developed in psychological anthropology to examine the role of biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors in shaping cultural scripts and normative behaviors in rural Mtwara, and also to understand the diverse ways in which adolescent girls are negotiating their own sexual subjectivity within this context. Finally, in this dissertation, I also draw on insights from the anthropology of globalization, including the recognition of the mobile and dynamic characteristics of culture in an increasingly globalized world, and specifically Tsing’s (2005) concepts of “universals” and “friction,” to examine the impact of recent changes in Mtwara on individuals and communities. This research draws from these three bodies of literature to further our understanding of the relationship between initiation rituals and the broader cultural environment, and the multiple and diverse ways in which individual adolescents negotiate their sexual subjectivity in the context of change.
Chapter Three

The History and Context of Mtwara

3.0 Overview

In this chapter, I provide a brief history of the rural Mtwara region, as well as a description of the recent changes that are reshaping this region. As discussed in Chapter One, the rural Mtwara region has often been described as “isolated,” (Seppälä & Koda, 1998). Indeed, when compared to the northern regions of Tanzania, the poor state of the roads both leading to and within this southern region has left rural Mtwara both geographically and economically peripheral (Seppälä & Koda, 1998; UNICEF, 2008, p. 7). However, the description of Mtwara simply as “isolated,” ignores the region’s long history of encounters with powerful outsiders, a history which has played a primary role in shaping not only the physical but also the political, economic and cultural isolation of Mtwara within the Tanzanian state.

The isolation of Mtwara appears to be at least in part responsible for fostering the continuation of the Makonde initiation rituals. However, it has also fostered a “north-south” divide within the Tanzanian state such that these initiation rituals in Mtwara, and the “south” of Tanzania in general, have come to represent the antithesis to Tanzanian progress toward modernization and development (Seppälä & Koda, 1998). Understanding both the initiation rituals and the shifting context in which they are practiced therefore requires going beyond the description of Mtwara as “isolated,” in order to understand how its complex history – including the changes currently underway in the region – has shaped its cultural, political and economic position within the
Tanzanian state. In this chapter I focus on the history and present characteristics of the region and its people that are directly relevant to this examination of initiation rituals and adolescent sexuality in present-day Mtwara.

Before proceeding, it is important to note the limitations of this summary of Mtwara’s history. As the Tanzanian government has long neglected the Mtwara region, so too have scholars and researchers. Indeed, it is only in the last ten years, as the road between Dar-es-Salaam and Mtwara has been improved, that the region has become more accessible to outsiders, including researchers. Before this, working in Mtwara required a grueling week-long journey over unpaved roads through dense forests, and even then the trip could only be accomplished during the dry season. Upon arrival, a visitor could expect little in the way of services, with only a handful of small, rundown hotels and not a single restaurant offering regular meals. Given these conditions, it is not surprising that the majority of the research conducted in Tanzania in the last century has taken place in areas with greater access to resources.

Despite the relative dearth of research on the Mtwara region, a few sources do provide insight into the history and recent changes occurring in this region. Liebenow’s (1971) *Colonial Rule and Political Development in Tanzania: The Case of the Makonde* is unique in its relatively detailed history of the Mtwara region and its people, and Seppala and Koda’s edited volume *The Making of a Periphery: Economic Development and Cultural Encounters in Southern Tanzania* (Seppälä & Koda, 1998) provides a more recent account of colonial and post-colonial Mtwara. General histories of Tanzania also provide some useful background on the Mtwara Region (e.g. Beidelman, 1967; Chittick, 1974; Henderson, 1965; Iliffe, 1979, 2009), and a handful of accounts from colonial-era
anthropologists, travelers and missionaries have also been used (e.g. Cory, 1947, 1948; Dias, 1961; Harries, 1940; Wembah-Rashid, 1975; Weule, 1909). However, these early accounts from individuals of various backgrounds have been treated with caution here because of their sometimes-questionable scholarly rigor and/or because their accounts of the lives of the Makonde focused on those living in the western districts of Mtwara Region. As the western area was settled by missionaries in the late 19th century, it was nominally more accessible to these early explorers. However, as will be discussed in Section 3.2 below, the Makonde is a large and diverse tribe, and those residing in the eastern side of the Mtwara Region (the focus of this dissertation) are in many ways distinct from those residing to the West. Though these few sources do provide valuable information on the history of the Mtwara region, there remains a need for scholars to conduct a systematic examination of the history of this neglected region.

Finally, there are also considerable limitations to the data available for characterizing the current state of rural Mtwara. The most recent national census, which collects the most detailed and disaggregated data by village, was conducted in 2002. As will be discussed in Section 3.4 below, the region has gone through a period of rapid change since that time. Though a few targeted surveys have been conducted more recently (e.g. the 2008 Tanzania HIV/AIDS and Malaria Indicator Survey and the 2010 Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey), much of the data in these reports are presented at the national level, with only some data disaggregated to show difference by region (i.e. the Mtwara Region), and at no point are data for the Rural Mtwara District presented independently. For these reasons, much of the statistical data relied on here is either outdated or aggregate data, and I have therefore attempted to mitigate these
limitations by using ethnographic data collected as part of this research to characterize the recent changes underway in rural Mtwar.

The discussion in this chapter is intended to situate this examination of jando and unyago – and of adolescent sexuality more broadly – within the history of the Makonde and the context of rural Mtwar. This includes a discussion of the treatment of these rituals by government officials, public health organizations and the media in public discourse. As was alluded to in the previous chapter, these rituals – and particularly unyago – have recently come under scrutiny for their alleged contribution to high rates of adolescent pregnancy in the region. This chapter provides the historical background underlying this controversy and, in doing so, illustrates the cultural, political and economic position of Mtwar within the Tanzanian state. This discussion connects the changes currently underway in rural Mtwar to the historical marginalization of this region and also suggests how these changes are beginning to affect the population of rural Mtwar. Indeed, as illustrated below, the history of the Makonde and the Mtwar Region continues to play an important role both in the daily lives of the residents of Mtwar and in their relationship to the Tanzanian state.

In the first section of this review (3.1), I outline the basic geography and demographic profile of the site of this research, the Rural Mtwar District, in order to orient the following discussion. This description of Mtwar will be primarily based on formal statistics gathered in 2002, before the changes currently underway had begun in

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2 In this report, the Rural Mtwar District will also be referred to simply as “Mtwar” or “rural Mtwar.” The Rural Mtwar District is an official administrative area within the larger Mtwar Region. However, where “rural Mtwar” is used, it should be understood as referring to the Rural Mtwar District in which this research took place.
earnest. This is done partially because of a lack of more current data, but also because Mtwara’s poor performance on a number of indicators of health and well-being in the 2002 data illustrate how Mtwara’s history of marginalization has impacted its population over time. In Section 3.2, I then move to a discussion of the history of the Makonde tribe, their migration from Mozambique to Tanzania, and their formation as a community in rural Mtwara. The specific migratory patterns of the Makonde is important in that they are reflected in the subdivisions of the Makonde tribe that still exist today, and in variations in the practice of initiation rituals examined in this dissertation (see Chapter Five for more detail). In this section, I also discuss the important role interaction with Arab settlers, who controlled the coast of southern Tanzania during the period when the Makonde were settling in the region, has played in shaping aspects of Makonde culture, including the initiation rituals. In Section 3.3, I examine how the marginalization of the Mtwara region by modern governing powers – first the colonial governments of the German and British occupiers and then the post-independence government – contributed to the cultural, economic and political marginalization of this region and the development of the “north-south” divide within the modern Tanzanian state. Finally, in Section 3.4, I discuss the underlying catalysts that have spurred the current period of rapid change in rural Mtwara, beginning with the discovery of natural gas of the Mtwara coast in 2000.

3.1 Profile of Rural Mtwara District

In this section, I describe the geography of the Mtwara Region and Rural Mtwara District, the basic characteristics of the population, their economic status, access to transportation and education, and indicators of health and well-being.
Geography

The Mtwara Region is located in the southeast corner of Tanzania, approximately 550 kilometers south of the commercial capital of Dar es Salaam (see Appendix F, Map 2). The region is bordered by the Indian Ocean to the East, Mozambique and the Ruvuma River to the South, Lindi Region to the North and Ruvuma Region to the West. The Lindi and Ruvuma regions, as well as much of northern Mozambique, are characterized by large regions of dense forest that are only sparsely populated. In addition, the Selous Game Reserve, Africa’s largest protected wildlife area spanning over 55,000 square kilometers, is located to the northwest of Mtwara (Hampton & Weston, 2002). These stretches of mostly uninhabited land surrounding the Mtwara Region contribute to its physical isolation from the rest of Tanzania.

The Tanzanian system of local government consists of multiple levels subdivided for administrative purposes. The Mtwara Region is divided into six administrative districts: Masasi, Nanyumbu, Newala, Tandahimba, Mtwara Urban and Mtwara Rural (see Appendix F, Map 3). The Mtwara Rural District, the site for this research, is distinct from the Mtwara Urban District, though the Urban District is geographically surrounded by the Rural District and serves as the site for its administrative offices. Rural Mtwara District is divided into six “divisions”: Ziwani, Dihimba, Kitaya, Nanyamba, Mpopura, and Mayanga (see Appendix F, Map 4). The majority of this research was carried out in the divisions of Ziwani and Kitaya, located in the southeast of Rural Mtwara District, though field visits were made to the other four districts during the course of fieldwork. Each of these divisions is further subdivided into kata (i.e. wards), which are then further
subdivided into villages, totalling 112 in Mtwara Rural District (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

General Population

The 2002 census estimated the population of rural Mtwara at 204,770, up from 167,304 in the 1988 census (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005). Though this comprehensive survey has not been conducted again, official projections using the 2002 growth rate of 1.7 percent (one of the lowest regional growth rates in Tanzania) estimated the population at 219,599 in 2007 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002). However, as mentioned above, the region has undergone a period of rapid change since the 2002 census, rendering any such projected estimates based on the 2002 census data potentially inaccurate, and more recent statistics are unavailable. The population in Rural Mtwara District is, expectedly, primarily rural and has a population density of 52 per square kilometer over a total area of 3,597 square kilometres (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005). The population of the Mtwara Region includes a relatively large immigrant population, which make up 7.5 percent of the total population. The majority of this immigrant population (97.4 percent) come from Mozambique, a result of the many decades of civil war that ended in 1992 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002, p. 155). Finally, the population of Mtwara, like many in rural sub-Saharan Africa, is a young population, with youth under age 24 constituting 61 percent of the population. This population distribution makes the issues affecting youth particularly vital for both the present and future well-being of the community (UNICEF, 2008).
Economic Status

The population of the Mtwara Region as a whole, and the Rural Mtwara District in particular, is extremely poor and lacks access to basic resources. The Mtwara Region has the highest percentage of its population working in agriculture of any region in Tanzania, with 87 percent of individuals ages 10 and above primarily employed in agriculture (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002). Additional employment opportunities in the region include skilled and unskilled labor, small business and fishing (Small Industries Development Organization, 2007). As agriculture is primarily practiced for subsistence and supplemented by only a small number of cash crops, it is not surprising that almost 40 percent of the population of Rural Mtwara District lives below the basic needs poverty line (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002).3 As of 2002, only 0.1 percent of the population in the district had access to electricity, compared with the regional and national averages for rural areas of 2.8 and 9.5 percent respectively (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2009). In addition, only 27 percent of households have access to a safe water source, compared to an average of 42 percent in rural areas nationally (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005). The most commonly used building materials for homes in Rural Mtwara District are mud, tree poles, and grass, with 95 percent of households using these materials for their walls, and 85 percent using these for their roof (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005).4 This is significantly higher than the 34 percent who use these materials for walls and 53 percent who use them for roofing nationally (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002, p. xv).

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3 Since the publication of these data, it has been recognized that the limit used for the “basic needs poverty line” was significantly higher than international standards, resulting in an underestimate of poverty rates across Tanzania (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005).
4 The remaining 15 percent used metal sheeting for roofing.
Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure in Rural Mtwara District also is lacking. As of 2011, there was still no completed tarmac road connecting Mtwara to the capital city of Dar es Salaam. Though travel to Mtwara has improved significantly since the building of the Mkapa Bridge in 2003, and a tarmac road is currently being built from Dar-es-Salaam (see Section 3.4 for more detail), the roadway remains impassable on many days during the rainy season (UNICEF, 2008). Within Rural Mtwara District, there are only two tarmac roads, one leading north to Lindi Region and another connecting to Masasi District in western Mtwara Region. Even the road leading from the region’s capital city of Mtwara to the border crossing only a few kilometers to the south remains unpaved, significantly limiting both personal and business transport in the area.

The poor roads within rural Mtwara are served by vehicles that are generally in the same poor condition, both unreliable and relatively expensive for an average citizen to afford. In recent years, the introduction of inexpensive motorbikes (pikipiki in Kiswahili) has offered another option for transportation, as owners of such bikes often run a business carrying passengers. For the average resident of rural Mtwara, however, the bicycle is the most common form of transportation, and an estimated 36 percent of households own a bicycle a (Small Industries Development Organization, 2007).

Education and Literacy

In 2002, only 46 percent of the residents of Rural Mtwara District over the age of 15 were literate in any language, including 60 percent of men and only 35 percent of women. At this time, Mtwara Region also had the lowest rate in Tanzania of individuals
who were literate in both Kiswahili and English at 3.7 percent.\textsuperscript{5} Access to formal 
education has historically been low in rural Mtwar, and therefore it is not surprising that 
literacy is also low. Though primary schools have been built throughout the Region, in 
2002 Mtwar had one of the lowest rates of school attendance in the country, with only 
18.8 percent of individuals over age five currently attending school. Among individuals 
age 25 and older, 38.4 percent had never attended any formal school, only 42.4 percent 
reached the upper levels of primary education\textsuperscript{6}, and only 2.5 percent received any 
secondary education (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002, p. 71). These are among the 
lowest rates of secondary school enrolment of any region in Tanzania, and strikingly 
lower than northern regions such as Kilimanjaro, where only 11.9 percent never attend 
school, 54.7 percent reach the upper level of primary school, and 16.4 percent receive at 
least some secondary education. As will be discussed further in Section 3.4 below, the 
low level of secondary education in Mtwar is not surprising given that before 2003, 
there was only one public secondary school in the entire Rural Mtwar District (Mtwar 
Regional Administrative Officer, 2007).

Health Indicators

Basic health indicators are difficult to determine for the Rural Mtwar District, as 
these data are most commonly reported in aggregated form, either for the Mtwar Region 
as a whole or for the “Southern” region, including Mtwar, Lindi and Ruvuma Regions 
Report (PHDR) does provide some district level data (i.e. for Rural Mtwar District)

\textsuperscript{5} Lindi Region had the same literacy rate.  
\textsuperscript{6} This statistic includes those who reached grades five and six but does not indicated whether these individuals graduated primary school, which ends at grade seven.
using the raw data from the 2002 Census, but these data are not complete, and therefore
data for the Mtwara Region are used in most cases. However, it should be noted that
these statistics include the urban city of Mtwara, and therefore are not an entirely
accurate representation of the status of Rural Mtwara District.

In the Mtwara Region in 2002, life
expectancy was the lowest in Tanzania at 42
years. The Region with the highest life
expectancy was the northern region of
Arusha at 68 years, and the national average
at the time was 51 years (National Bureau
of Statistics, 2002).7 Indeed, life
expectancy in Mtwara in 2002 was the same
as the national average for life expectancy
in 1967 (National Bureau of Statistics,
2004).

This low life expectancy is closely linked to the high rates of infant and child
mortality in Mtwara. In 2002, the infant mortality rate in Rural Mtwara District was 136
per 1000 live births, higher than all other districts in Mtwara Region and significantly
higher than the national average of 95 (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005). Under-
five mortality followed a similar pattern at 231 per 1000 live birth, again the region’s
highest, the third highest in the nation and far above the national average of 147
(Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005). Figure 3.1 illustrates the under-five mortality

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7 Lindi Region also had a life expectancy rate of 42 years.
The red color marks the districts with the highest under-five mortality rate, followed by the orange, the beige, the light green, and finally the dark green, marking the regions with the lowest under-five mortality rates. This image has been included because it clearly illustrates both the exceptionally high rates of child mortality in southern Tanzania and the “north-south” divide (discussed in Section 3.4 below), which refers to the high degree of disparity between the “north,” and the “south” of Tanzania on a number of health indicators.  

The Mtwara Region also has consistently been characterized by the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the country. For example, in 2004, epidemiological data published by the Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics (TNBS) estimated that 35.5 percent of adolescent in rural Mtwara had begun childbearing compared to 26.0 percent nationally (National Bureau of Statistics, 2004). In 2008, the TNBS similarly suggested that 33.7 percent in rural Mtwara had begun childbearing compared to 23.2 percent nationally (National Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The publication of these statistics on adolescent pregnancy has also been a key driver of the recent criticism of unyago and jando, discussed further below. 

Mortality statistics for Mtwara Region are difficult to come by, but those available do suggest that Mtwara has a relatively high mortality rate. Though age-specific death rates are not available, the crude death rate (CDR) for the region in 2002 was 16.9, the second highest regional death rate in the nation and significantly higher.

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8 As will be discussed below, the “south” generally refers to Mtwara, and often Lindi as well, and the “north” to the Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions, highlighted in dark green on in Figure 3.1.
than the average rate of 14.1 for all other rural areas in Tanzania (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002).\textsuperscript{9} Though the CDR is a crude measure and may be affected by Mtwara’s high child mortality rates, other measures also suggest that adult mortality may not be significantly different than the national average. For example, 9.5 percent of children in Rural Mtwara District in 2002 had lost either one or both parents, a percentage similar to the national average of 10.0, and almost 15 percent have lost at least one sibling (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005).

Though increasingly immigrants from other tribal groups have begun settling in Mtwara in recent years, the Makonde tribe continues to make up for the majority of the population in the Mtwara Region, with only a small percentage of residents of the Masasi District to the west identifying as Makua or Yao (UNICEF, 2008). Because the Makonde and their initiation rituals are the focus of this dissertation, I now turn to a focused discussion of their history, including their migration and settlement in rural Mtwara, the primary characteristics of their political, economic and social organization in the pre-colonial era (including what is known regarding the initiation rituals), and the various ways in which interaction with the Arab populations along the coast of Tanzania has influenced the Makonde culture.

\textsuperscript{9} The CDR is defined as the ratio of the total number of deaths in a population for a specified period to the average total number of person-years lived by the population during that period. It is normally expressed as per 1,000 people. The CDR for a single year is calculated as the total number of deaths during that period divided by the mid-year population of that year.
3.2 Mtwara in the 19th Century: The Making of the Makonde

In this section, I discuss the history of the Makonde migrations into Tanzania, the central characteristics of their social, political and economic system, and the influence of Arab interaction on Makonde cultural practices, including the *unyago* and *jando* rituals.

**The Makonde Migrations**

The origin of the Makonde tribe has been traced to an area just across the banks of the Ruvuma River from Tanzania in northern Mozambique. The migration of the Makonde from Mozambique to Tanzania took place over the course of many decades in multiple waves. The earliest wave of migration occurred in the middle of the 18th century. During this time, Makonde moved from inland Mozambique down the Ruvuma River to the coast and settled along the edge of the Indian Ocean in what is present-day Rural Mtwara District. A large community is believed to have settled near the “Maraba” area on the border of Lindi and Mtwara Regions, and the coastal Makonde of Mtwara still refer to themselves as “Maraba” Makonde and speak a distinct dialect of the *Kimakonde*, the Makonde language (Liebenow, 1971).

The second and largest migration of the Makonde across the Ruvuma is thought to have occurred during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. During this time, war with other tribes and a burgeoning slave trade operating out of the Arab-occupied coastal town of Kilwa and Mikindani pushed the Makonde across the Ruvuma and up the Newala escarpment onto what is now referred to as the “Makonde plateau,” a high landmass rising gradually from the coast to the east and sharply from the banks of the Ruvuma River to the south. By 1884, the plateau, which had previously been only
sparsely occupied, had a fairly large population of Makonde. As the slave trade on the
coast of Mtwara dwindled at the end of the 19th century, this second wave of Makonde
slowly moved down the eastern slopes of the plateau to settle amongst the Arabs and
coastal Makonde who had arrived in the first wave of migration (Liebenow, 1971).

The exact point at which the Tanzanian Makonde began to consider themselves as
culturally distinct from their Mozambican ancestors and later generations of Makonde
immigrants is unclear. However, one likely point of separation is between those
Makonde who immigrated to Tanzania before independence with the intention of settling
in Mtwara, and those who came as refugees during the decades of war in Mozambique.
Indeed, in the second half of the 20th century there has been another wave of Makonde
crossing the border into post-independence Tanzania seeking refuge from the
Mozambican war of independence, which raged from 1964 to 1974, and the subsequent
civil war, which broke out in 1977 and lasted until 1992. Although many of these
Makonde have now lived in Tanzania for multiple decades, as will be illustrated in
Chapter Five, they and their descendants continue to trace their origins to Mozambique
and speak a distinct Mozambican dialect of Makonde. Finally, there remains a sizeable
population of Makonde in northern Mozambique, and it is not uncommon for Makonde
on both sides of the border to interact through trade and even to intermarry, particularly
in the villages closest to the border. Together, these multiple waves of migration have led
to the Makonde populating the majority of Rural Mtwara District, as well as large
portions of Tandahimba, Newala and Masasi Districts to the West (see Appendix F, Map
3).
This fragmented history of migration has produced multiple subdivisions within the Makonde tribe that are still apparent today. Based on ethnography undertaken as part of this research, the Makonde who currently occupy rural Mtwaara generally self-identify as part of one of three subgroups: 1) the Coastal Makonde (i.e. the Maraba) who live along the coast of rural Mtwaara and trace their ancestry to the first wave of migration in the mid-1700’s; 2) the Tanzanian Makonde, who trace their ancestry to the second and largest migration and who now live throughout the Mtwaara Region; and 3) the Mozambican Makonde, a relatively small percentage of the population who tend to live near the coast and along the border with Mozambique. For further discussion of these distinctions, see Chapter Five.

The Makonde in Pre-Colonial Mtwaara

Relatively little is known about the Makonde of Tanzania in the pre-colonial period, however, early accounts do suggest that the Makonde tribe was not centralized but instead existed as dispersed settlements organized by a polycentric political structure (Wembah-Rashid, 1975). Liebenow (1971) notes that, unlike the hierarchical political system organized around chiefdoms seen among tribes of central and northern Tanzania, among the Makonde, political and social life was organized around loyalty to one’s *litawa* (matrilineal kin grouping or clan), and secondarily to one’s *chirambo*, a political grouping made up of overlapping *litawa* living in the same area. These extended kin groups defined each individual’s social and political loyalties and was also the source of one’s economic resources and obligations.

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10 Though exact statistics are unavailable, data collected as part of this research suggest that the Mozambican Makonde make up approximately 12 percent of the Makonde population in the south eastern portion of rural Mtwaara.
The pre-colonial Makonde also practiced matrilocal, exogamous, and often polygynous marriage, requiring a man to marry outside of his clan and to reside to the village of each new wife’s parents until their first child was at least one year of age. This social structure situated each individual within a network of multiple and overlapping social and territorial obligations and sources of support. As there was no centralized leadership system, these networks were economically, religiously and socially egalitarian, without an articulated class system. However, great respect was accorded to the elders of each clan, who took a primary role in community leadership and mediated any disputes that did arise (Dias, 1961).

Early accounts suggest that within the Makonde tribe, material wealth was shared widely within each extended family, greed or hoarding behavior were considered socially unacceptable, and bride wealth usually consisted of small gifts rather than items of significant value (Wembah-Rashid, 1975; Weule, 1909). Liebenow (1971) argues that this egalitarian, polycentric social system was reflected in the high value placed on economic and social cooperation among the Makonde and the low level of intratribal conflict and ultimately helped the Makonde to survive in the otherwise harsh physical environment of rural Mtwara. Indeed, the Makonde primarily practiced stump cultivation, regularly rotating cultivation over a large area, and supplemented their harvest by hunting and gathering. They were unable to raise cattle or other livestock due to the infestation of tsetse flies on the plateau (Iliffe, 1984).

As is common in other non-herding populations, the pre-colonial Makonde practiced a matrilineal descent system (Beidelman, 1967; Wembah-Rashid, 1975). Though the society was patriarchal, Dias (1961) suggests that women did exercise
considerable political, social and economic influence, cooperating with their husbands in agricultural production, and, on occasion, occupying leadership positions within the community. Women were also reportedly free to accept or reject marriage proposals and in general enjoyed nearly the same level of sexual freedom as men, as suggested by early accounts of the initiation rituals of unyago and jando (Dias, 1961; Harries, 1940; Weule, 1909).

Early accounts do confirm that the initiation rituals of unyago and jando occupied a central role in Makonde communities in the end of the 19th century (Dias, 1961; Harries, 1940; Wembah-Rashid, 1975; Weule, 1909). According to these early accounts, the initiation rituals were organized independently by each family or clan, though it was not uncommon for clans with close ties to coordinate the rituals together. According to Liebenow (1971), these rituals served multiple purposes, the most important of which was the creation of bonds of social solidarity and loyalty to one’s clan. Other accounts emphasize the importance of these rituals for acknowledging boys’ and girls’ transitions to adulthood and readiness for marriage, and also as training for the boys and girls in the expectations associated with their new adult roles (Dias, 1961; Harries, 1940; Weule, 1909).

As early accounts of the female ritual of unyago were primarily written by males, these descriptions are generally limited to observations of the public aspects of these rituals and information reported by informants. That said, these accounts, and particularly those of Harries (1940) do provide some useful descriptions and information regarding the practice of unyago in general. These early accounts consistently note that the rituals were conducted as girls approached puberty, and Harries (1940) specifically
mentions the ages from 10-12 as the most common age of initiation (Dias, 1961; Liebenow, 1971; Wembah-Rashid, 1975; Weule, 1909). In addition, these accounts further suggest that this was considered the time when girls were ready for instruction in the obligations of marriage and motherhood, and multiple accounts suggest that girls were married soon after unyago at approximately the age of puberty (Harries, 1940; Liebenow, 1971; Wembah-Rashid, 1975; Weule, 1909). The clan leader was responsible for identifying girls who were approaching puberty, and therefore ready for initiation, and the elderly women in the community were responsible for leading the girls’ though the unyago ceremony (Harries, 1940; Liebenow, 1971).

A number of these early accounts also emphasize the role of unyago as a celebration of women’s sexuality and fertility. Harries (1940) reports that in unyago explicit instructions in sexual “matters” are given, in part through the singing of sexually explicit songs addressing themes such as first intercourse, conception, orgasm, and sex-related taboos. Weule (1909) specifically states that clitoridectomy was not performed as part of unyago, either among the Tanzanian or the Mozambican Makonde living in Tanzania, and he further suggests that, as part of the final ceremony, the girls were symbolically “deflowered” by an older woman who imitated sexual intercourse, lying on top of each initiate in turn and moving her hips back and forth, with a clay rendering of a penis tied around her waist (Weule, 1909, p. 304). Descriptions of the final “coming out” celebration include images of girls dressed in new clothes and rubbed with oil to make their skin shine, dancing by rapidly shaking their hips back and forth during the final ceremony (Dias, 1961; Harries, 1940; Liebenow, 1971; Weule, 1909). Liebenow (1971) hypothesizes that the level of women’s sexual freedom expressed in unyago was related
to their matrilineal descent pattern, arguing that because paternity was not a significant concern, women’s sexual activity was relatively unmonitored. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, these early descriptions include many similarities to unyago as it is currently practiced today.

Information regarding the practice of jando among the pre-colonial Makonde are equally patchy, though still informative. Like unyago, the jando rituals were organized independently by each clan (Cory, 1947). Though early accounts of unyago suggest that a girls’ readiness for initiation was based on individual development, however, accounts of jando suggest that boys were initiated in age sets, with all boys between the ages of 9 and 16 initiated together (Cory, 1947, 1948; Liebenow, 1971). Unlike the highly formalized age sets of the herding tribes of northern Tanzania (e.g. the Maasai) in which loyalty to one’s age set often superseded clan loyalties, these Makonde age sets were only intended to create bonds of social solidarity within one’s own clan (Liebenow, 1971).

Cory’s (1947, 1948) description of jando as practiced by the “Swahili”\(^\text{11}\) of the coastal regions of Tanzania and Harries’ (1940) description of jando among the Makonde of the Newala District in rural Mtwara both bear significant resemblance to the jando ceremonies observed in this research.\(^\text{12}\) Indeed, the jando ritual described in these accounts features essentially the same structure as the Makonde of present-day rural

\(^{11}\) “Swahili” is an inexact but highly salient cultural identifier used in Tanzania to refer to the tribes occupying the coastal regions. These populations are predominately Muslim, and their cultural practices have been heavily influenced by centuries of interaction with Arab settlers on the Tanzanian coast. These tribes, though culturally distinct in many ways, do share some similarities in language and culture as a result of their history of interaction with the Arabs.

\(^{12}\) Cory’s description is intended to capture the central features of jando as practiced across various tribal groups, and he is clear that his description is not specific to any one tribe. Though his research did involve interviews with Makonde informants, Cory himself only observed the jando ceremonies of tribes located in regions other than Mtwara.
Mtwara, and shares many similar details. In these accounts, young boys (all pre-pubertal, Harries suggests ages 10-16) first have their heads shaved and are painted with a white flour paste having protective spiritual properties. They are then taken to a large hut at the jando site (which Cory describes as the kumbi, Harries as the likumbi) and circumcised by an ngariba (i.e. traditional healer). They remain in the hut during the rest of the ritual period (discussed below), sleeping together on the floor with sticks tied between their legs to prevent their wounds from touching their thighs. During this month, the boys learn songs and lessons about adult life, including sexual activity. They are also punished for past misdeeds and instructed on the importance of obedience and respect for elders (Cory, 1947, 1948).

Liebenow’s (1971) account of jando also describes the basic content and purpose of jando. Beyond, circumcision, Liebenow states that the rituals include instruction on hunting, cultivating, proper sexual behavior, respect for the property of others, and good conduct. Liebenow’s account also emphasizes the role of jando in teaching respect for one’s elders. He quotes one of his informants as saying, “If we are not polite to our elders today, then no one will honor us when we are old. When we die we will be nothing,” (Liebenow, 1971, p. 50). Liebenow further notes that any adult male in the clan can participate in the teaching the young initiates in jando, and that this process is also intended to build a sense of male solidarity. According to Liebenow, a group of boys who go through jando together are considered to have a particularly special relationship, helping each other throughout their lives. This introduction into manhood is further symbolized by new clothing and a new name given to the young initiate at the end.
of *jando*, at which time ties with his mother are broken, and, according to Liebenow, a boy may go to live with his maternal uncle indefinitely (Liebenow, 1971).

Though many of the features of *jando* and *unyago* described by these early accounts resemble the rituals as they are currently practiced by the Makonde of rural Mtwara (discussed in detail in Chapters Five and Six), these accounts also suggest the importance of understanding these cultural practices as the product of a long history of cross-cultural interaction and cultural change. Specifically, Cory (1947) and Wembah-Rashid (1975) both suggest that *jando* as currently practiced among the Makonde is in large part due to the long history of interaction with Arab settlers along the Tanzanian coast. According to these accounts, *jando*, defined as a ritual of initiation involving intensive training for adult life, is a practice with deep cultural roots in the majority of the Bantu tribal groups found in East Africa. However, circumcision is only practiced as part of these rituals in two isolated pockets in Tanzanian: among the Muslim coastal populations and among the northern herding tribes found near Lake Victoria. According to Cory (1947) the northern herding tribes traditionally conduct circumcision when boys are past the age of puberty as a part of austere warrior training. This practice is significantly different from that of the coastal tribes (including the Makonde), who conduct their circumcision at a much younger age and in a similar style to their Arab neighbors for whom the practice is a requirement of their Muslim faith. These scholars suggest that circumcision was incorporated into the traditional *jando* ceremony as the Makonde, who were increasingly converting to Islam, integrated Muslim beliefs into their *jando* practice (Cory, 1947, 1948; Wembah-Rashid, 1975). In addition, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, among the Coastal Makonde, who have the longest history of
interaction with Arab settlers, female circumcision (in the form of the traditional Muslim practice of *sunnah*) has largely replaced the traditional *unyago*.

Cory’s historical analysis of the cultural roots of *jando* point to the important role cross-cultural interaction has played – and continues to play – in shaping cultural practices so often deemed “local.” As Cory states:

…”*Jando* is a good example of the way in which Bantu institutions sometimes react to foreign influences. When circumcision was adopted, existing rites were not wholly ousted. The two elements were combined, thus giving birth to a feature which became a bridge between the two cultural spheres. (1947, p. 160)

Though Mtwara has often been described as an “isolated” region, the history of the Mtwara Region – and of the Makonde – is marked by intensive periodic encounters with powerful outside influences that have had wide-ranging effects. Perhaps one of the earliest encounters was with Arab traders, mostly from the region of present-day Oman, who were active on the coast of rural Mtwara long before the Makonde tribe had formed as a recognizable community. This long history of interaction, as Cory suggests with regard to *jando*, had significant effects on Makonde culture (Chittick, 1974; Mathew, 1963).

**Arab Influence in Mtwara**

Arab control of the Tanzanian coast was centralized in 1840, when Imam Sayyid Said, the sultan of Oman, moved his headquarters to Zanzibar and took over the inland trading routes located in Lindi and Kilwa Kivinje, and Mikindani (Chittick, 1974). However, archaeological evidence suggests that Arabs first reached the coast of Tanzania around the year 700, and they have maintained a presence there, primarily through trade,
to the present day. The Arab presence affected the Makonde economy as it was forming in the late 19th century through the introduction of commercial goods such as cloth and steel tools and encouraged the Makonde to collect rubber and ivory and plant coconut and mango trees for trading (Liebenow, 1971).

Though the Arabs did enslave some of the Makonde, their long history of interaction also resulted in the mixing of cultural practices, languages and religions, including the spread of the Swahili language (a mix of local Bantu languages and Arabic), and the conversion of much of the Makonde population to Islam (Liebenow, 1971). In addition, the recognition of paternal control over children by Islamic law slowly shifted Makonde matrilineal customs toward one in which descent was primarily reckoned through the paternal family line (Beidelman, 1967). The Arab influence also affected the traditional egalitarian social structure of the Makonde, creating a racial hierarchy where the Arabs were “on top,” persons of mixed inheritance in the middle, and the Makonde at the bottom (Liebenow, 1971, p. 76).

Contact between Arabs and the Makonde did result in the conversion of the Makonde of rural Mtwar to Islam. However, for a number of complex reasons, this conversion did not begin on a large scale until the Germans’ gained control of southern Tanganyika in at the end of the 19th century (Raum, 1965). A primary factor in this eventual shift in religious practice was the German administration’s difficulties in identifying leaders within the Makonde’s polycentric political system. This difficulty led them to assign individuals of mixed Arab/Makonde parentage to govern local communities (Liebenow, 1971). These leaders brought with them their religion and had a number of advantages over Christian missionaries, who had recently settled in the Masasi
District to the west. These individuals were viewed as Makonde, despite their partial Arab roots, and were therefore more accepted than the Christian missionaries who were often either European or from other tribal origins. In addition, the Muslim proselytizers tended to take a more flexible approach to religious conversion than their Christian counterparts, refraining from condemning traditional practices such as initiation rituals (Anderson, 1954; Cory, 1947; Iliffe, 2009; Liebenow, 1971). These influences together led to the conversion of the vast majority of Makonde in rural Mtwara to Islam and the integration of many Arab cultural practices into Makonde society.

Though the Arabs did control the coast of rural Mtwara, their influence did not extend into the inland areas of rural Mtwara. Unlike their colonial successors, the Arabs were primarily interested in trade with – as opposed to absolute rule of – their Makonde neighbours. In addition, the Arabs inhabited the coastal regions of Tanzania for centuries before the arrival of formal colonialism to the region, making their relationship with the Makonde one characterized by interaction and cohabitation. This was qualitatively different than the relationship of the Makonde to the colonial governments of Germany and Great Britain, and to the post-independence government of Tanzania, through the 20th century. It is to this historical period and its impacts on the Makonde and rural Mtwara that I now turn.

3.3 Mtwara in the 20th Century: The “Making of a Periphery”

German control over the Makonde – and the rest of mainland Tanzania – was made official at the Berlin Conference in 1885, which approved the claims of the German East African Company to the Mtwara region staked a year earlier (Bridgman & Clarke,
1965; Henderson, 1965; Raum, 1965). This control was further consolidated by the payment of a large sum of money by the German government to the Sultan of Zanzibar in return for relinquishing all territorial claims to mainland Tanzania, after which they established an administrative headquarters in Dar es Salaam in 1891 (Henderson, 1965). The Germans controlled German East Africa (including present-day mainland Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi) until their defeat in World War I in 1918. The Treaty of Versailles divided German East Africa among the victorious nations, with Belgium taking over control of Rwanda and Burundi and Great Britain taking control of what is now mainland Tanzania, then called “Tanganyika” (Iliffe, 2009). British control of Tanganyika ended on December 9, 1961, through a peaceful agreement. Two years later, in December 1963, the archipelago of Zanzibar off the coast of Tanganyika also received its independence, and in 1964 the two countries formed The United Republic of Tanzania, as it is known today (Iliffe, 1979).  

Both the German and British rule of southern Tanzania has been described as tenuous at best. The region was not particularly attractive to colonial occupiers in terms of natural resource extraction, and the hot, dry climate did not lend itself to the cultivation of cash crops (Iliffe, 2009). In addition, the polycentric nature of the Makonde leadership structure made it difficult for either the German or the British colonial powers to rule through a central leader, their preferred system of control among other tribal groups (Liebenow, 1971). This continued challenge to colonial

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13 The history of Zanzibar is quite distinct from that of mainland Tanzania. Because Mtwara is located on mainland Tanzania, the history of Zanzibar is not included here. For more detail on the history of Zanzibar, see Middleton and Campbell (1965), Gray (1962), and Bissell (2011).
administration, paired with the physical remoteness of the Mtwara region and lack of infrastructure limited the colonial presence in rural Mtwara (Seppälä & Koda, 1998).

Perhaps the most regular British presence at the time was that of the British Catholic missionaries who established an outpost in Masasi District to the west of rural Mtwara in 1876 (Ranger, 1979). Over time, many of the Makonde, Makua and Yao inhabitants of Masasi were converted to Christianity, and the mission established many of the first schools and a large hospital that remains one of the best in Tanzania. However, the missionaries largely ignored the less hospitable Rural Mtwara District to the east, which was by that time occupied primarily by Muslims. Indeed, the development of the Masasi area has in large part served to turn outside interest away from Rural Mtwara District (Seppälä & Koda, 1998).

Though the presence of German and British colonial powers was limited in Mtwara, this does not imply that the Makonde were not impacted by the decades of colonial rule. Instead, the interactions the Makonde did have with their European rulers tended to take on a particular character, which was in large part shaped by the physically isolated nature of the region. As Liebenow (1971) explains, for both the German and British colonial administrators, success at an undesirable post was necessary for advancement in the administrative ranking system. As the waterless, dusty, and remote Mtwara region was by its very nature seen as undesirable, a long string of colonial administrator initiated project after project with the sole purpose of demonstrating their capability to take on a more desirable post (Swantz, 1998). These “development” projects took a variety of forms and often involved forcing or coercing the Makonde to plant various crops despite their unsuitability to the regions climate, to work strenuous
jobs for little pay, or, in one case, to move their villages closer to roads to be more accessible for trade – and also for taxation (Hydén, 1980; Swantz, 1998).

Perhaps the most large-scale project of this type was the Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme. Proposed in 1948, this project involved planting groundnuts on large tracks of land in the Mtwara Region with the goal of addressing the shortage of vegetable oil during World War II (Wood, 1950). Despite the investment of significant equipment and resources, including the building of a railway to Dar es Salaam and a deepwater port in the coastal town of Mtwara, the project was abandoned in 1951 as a failure. Unbeknownst to the colonial administrators at the time, the groundnut plant requires regular water to grow successfully, and the Mtwara Region, which regularly suffers from drought, was an entirely unsuitable environment in which to grow the crop (Wembah-Rashid, 1998; Wood, 1950).

The Groundnut Scheme was only one in a string of failed interventions conducted in rural Mtwara by the colonial administrations. Though this type of colonial administration was far from unique to the Mtwara region, it is nonetheless worth considering in terms of its effects on Makonde attitudes toward outside intervention in the region and on the position of the Mtwara region within the emerging Tanzanian state. As Liebenow (1971) concludes in his discussion of the Makonde’s perspective on such interventions, “modernization efforts were regarded as a series of meddling acts without any patterns which were logical or meaningful to the Makonde,” (pp. 334-5). Colonial intervention in the region did little to actually improve the livelihoods of the Makonde, often disrupted the people’s own attempts to sustain themselves, and still required the payment of taxes to support the programs’ implementation (Hydén, 1980; Seppälä &
Koda, 1998). Through these interventions, the German and British colonial governments did little to promote economic development in the Mtwara Region or to instil confidence in or respect for formal government institutions among the Makonde (Wembah-Rashid, 1998).

The post-independence government of first president Julius “Mwalimu” Nyerere also did little to improve the livelihood of the Makonde or the development of the Mtwara region as a whole, and these leaders also instituted a number of policies that further isolated the Mtwara Region. Though Nyerere’s government emphasized modernization through rural development, Mtwara was essentially exempt from this effort (Mwakikagile, 2006). Indeed, as Swantz (1998) illustrates, the “peripheralization” of Mtwara in the years following independence was an intentional act by the Tanzanian government in response to the escalating civil war in Mozambique. In the late 1960’s, as refugees and guerrilla fighters increasingly poured over the border, Mtwara was declared an emergency area and travel was restricted to and from the region, including the dismantling of the railroad between Mtwara and the capital city of Dar es Salaam (Small Industries Development Organization, 2007). Despite continued political promises, the road to Mtwara region was left undeveloped, while an update of the road through the Ruvuma region to the north in the 1970s further turned neighbouring regions away from Mtwara (Liebenow, 1971). In this way, the region and residents of Mtwara were left to serve as a buffer against the neighbouring violence, a political act that did little to endear the residents of the south to their new national government (Seppälä & Koda, 1998; Wembah-Rashid, 1998).
In the decades that followed, development efforts in the region have repeatedly failed to flourish, even after the war in Mozambique waned in the early 1990s. During this period, historians have documented that such efforts in rural Mtwara rarely made it past the planning stages, and when they did they soon failed (Armstrong, 1987; Voipio, 1998). In this way, “development” in rural Mtwara during the post-independence era was little more than a continuation of colonial area policies. As Liebenow (1971) notes:

The Makonde area of south-eastern Tanzania was often referred to as the ‘Cinderella region of a Cinderella territory,’ by the British colonial administrators who governed Tanganyika until 1961. By 1969, no one had as yet managed to rescue the one-third-million Makonde from their plight of poverty, illiteracy, and disease. Although they constitute the third-largest of the 120 ethnic groups in Tanzania, size bears little relationship to their economic, social, and political development. (p. 11-12)

Indeed, the few large state-based interventions in the region ultimately served to compromise – as opposed to improve – economic development in the Mtwara region. The villagization program, implemented under the Ujamaa policy across Tanzania in the early 1970s, was introduced even earlier and was practiced more intensively in southeast Tanzania (Seppälä & Koda, 1998). This program, which forcibly relocated individuals and families from their homes to established, state-run villages, was ostensibly a counter-measure to protect the Makonde from armed attacks by Portuguese troops searching for the Mozambican guerrilla fighters (Mwakikagile, 2006). However, the program also explicitly suppressed grassroots development initiatives, including the Ruvuma Development Association of Rural Mtwara, as these community-based organizations were seen as a source of local resistance to state power (Hydén, 1980; Seppälä & Koda, 1998).
Perhaps the largest state-based development project implemented in Mtwara focused on increasing the cultivation of cashews in the region (Seppala, 1990). The project reached a stage in the 1970s during which local factories were built in Mtwara to process raw cashew for export with the support of the World Bank (Wembah-Rashid, 1998). However, the facilities were poorly equipped, and the government parastatal organization that regulated prices did not provide sufficient financial incentive to promote increased cultivation. As a result, by the late 1970s, most of the cashew processing factories had closed (Seppala, 1998). When research for this dissertation was conducted in 2010, only one of these factories was in production, reopened by Indian businessmen who acquired the facility during structural adjustment in the 1990s.

The international NGO community has also maintained some presence in rural Mtwara, though significantly less than in the more accessible regions to the north. Major agencies working in the region have included Finnish and British development agencies (i.e. FINNIDA and ODA, respectively), as well as multilateral donors such as UNICEF and the World Bank (Seppälä & Koda, 1998). Though Voipio (1998) notes that these agencies have produced some studies and a large number of project plans, their actual works has consisted of a “continuous chain of planning exercises” with no concrete implementation on a large scale (p. 78). Indeed, even during the more recent influx of interest in the Mtwara region (discussed in section 3.4 below), the work of development organizations in the region has remained “patchy” at best (Bangster, 2010).

Overall, the history of government intervention – both colonial and post-colonial – in the Mtwara region is one of recurring, failed programs which at best provide no benefit, and more commonly have had negative impacts on the Makonde’s livelihood.
As a result, the region lagged well behind northern regions in many indicators of development at the turn of the 21st century. As noted in Section 3.1, in 2002 life expectancy in rural Mtwara was only 42 years, a full 26 years lower than that of Arusha region in northern Tanzania (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002, p. xv). The probability of a child dying before his or her fifth birthday was between three and four times higher in Mtwara than in the northern regions of Kilimanjaro and Arusha (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2009). Though economic development in post-independence Tanzania as a whole was by no means successful, economic development in Mtwara has continued to lag behind even the modest growth seen in other regions of the country.

The continued underdevelopment of the Mtwara region through the end of the 20th century has clear roots in its long history of destabilizing and artificial efforts to stimulate economic growth in the region. Far from being offered sympathy for their maltreatment at the hands of a series of failed government interventions, however, it is the Makonde themselves who are most commonly identified as the cause of Mtwara’s difficulties. As Seppala and Koda (Seppälä & Koda, 1998) discuss in one of the few books entirely dedicated to the southeast region of Tanzania, the common usage of the term “the South” to refer to Mtwara – despite the location of other regions of the country at equally southern latitude - is not only a physical distinction, but also reflects a widely-held cultural bias within Tanzania in which “southerners” are perceived as “backward” people who value their traditional way of life over economic development and snub outside efforts to stimulate economic development.

In his edited volume, Wembah-Rashid (1998) argues that this prejudice has been perpetuated, in part, because it is a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the failure of the
conveyor belt of poorly-conceived development programs is used as evidence to suggest that the Mtwara Region is incapable of development, and therefore not worthy of further investment of the nation’s scarce resources. As the Mtwara Region has increasingly fallen behind the rest of the country in development indicators, its continued cultural, physical and economic isolation perpetuated the perception of a north-south dichotomy, and Mtwara’s state of supposed “isolation,” has itself been used as evidence that the Makonde are “development unfriendly,” (Seppälä & Koda, 1998; Wembah-Rashid, 1998). The labelling of the southern region as “anti-development,” has subsequently been used to justify the further economic marginalization of “the south” by people from “the north” who – in part because of the poor roads – very rarely set foot in the region (Wembah-Rashid, 1998).

The recent public scrutiny of the rituals of unyago and jando must be understood within the context of this history of peripheralization and the deeply ingrained regional bias in Tanzania. As mentioned above, these rituals – and unyago in particular – have come under scrutiny following the publication of epidemiological data suggesting that 33.7 percent of adolescents in the region become pregnant before age 19, the highest of any region in Tanzania and well above the national average of 23.2 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2008). These data have caused a wave of concern and a media frenzy in which public officials, non-governmental organizations, and private citizens have rushed to voice their opinion as to the underlying cause of this supposed epidemic of adolescent pregnancy, and the rituals have been drawn into the center of this controversy as a key driver of high pregnancy rates (S. Cohen, 1972). Critics claim that the rituals lead to higher rates of adolescent pregnancy by providing youth with the details of sexual
activity, and thus interesting youth in sex at an earlier age, and also by teaching young people – and here critics most commonly focus on girls – specific lessons that lead to “unhealthy” or “promiscuous” sexual behaviors (e.g. Bangster, 2010; IRIN Africa, 2007; Mushi, Mpembeni, & Jahn, 2007; Regional Committee on School Pregnancy, 2007; UNICEF, 2008; UZIKWASA, 2008).

The practice of these rituals in Mtwara (and unyago in particular) is currently being used as further evidence of the “backward” values of the Makonde of rural Mtwara and their supposed resistance to change. The singling out of the Makonde initiation rituals as one of the causes of adolescent pregnancy in the region is consistent with the cultural biases underlying the “north-south divide” in Tanzania and the widely held perception that it is Makonde culture, and not the history economic and political marginalization, that is responsible for their continued failure to develop economically (Seppälä & Koda, 1998). However, it can also not be assumed that these rituals do not contribute to adolescent pregnancy without first examining the detailed meanings and messages associated with these rituals, as well as the other factors that may mediate the influence of these rituals on adolescent sexuality. It is not the intention of this dissertation to provide a definitive answer as to whether or not the rituals of unyago and jando “cause” high rates of adolescent pregnancy in rural Mtwara. However, this detailed examination of the rituals and their relationship to adolescent sexuality has the potential to contribute valuable data to this ongoing discussion by providing an informed perspective on these complex cultural practices.

Though there is evidence to suggest that the Mtwara’s history of marginalization has indeed fostered at least a healthy scepticism – if not an outright distrust – of their
government among the Makonde, the historical record clearly indicates that they are not the primary reason for the lack of economic growth in the region (Wembah-Rashid, 1998). Furthermore, recent events have directly challenged that notion that the southern region of Mtwara is not worth government investment. After decades of focusing its development efforts in other regions of Tanzania, the discovery of large deposits of natural gas off the Mtwara coast in 2000 finally turned Tanzanian attention toward its southern periphery.

3.4 2000 to Present: The Making of Modern-Day Mtwara

The changes currently underway in rural Mtwara have had a range of impacts on the economic status, health, and educational opportunities of the population. In this section, I discuss the underlying catalysts of these changes and discuss existing data illustrating the impact of these changes on the population of rural Mtwara.

The changes currently underway in rural Mtwara have a number of roots, but the discovery of natural gas in 2000, and the subsequent discovery of oil just a few years later are likely to have the most significant influence on the region. The discovery of this wealth of natural resources has led to an influx of people, economic investment and government interest in the region. The 2003 construction of the Mkapa Bridge was one of the first major steps taken by the government (in cooperation with international investors) to reduce the physical isolation of Mtwara from the rest of Tanzania (Small Industries Development Organization, 2007). Since 2003, the government has also made progress toward completing the tarmac road linking Mtwara to Dar es Salaam. Although
sixty kilometres remain incomplete, since 2000 the 560 kilometer overland journey has been reduced from up to six days to less than 12 hours.14

The discovery of natural gas has also increased access to reliable electricity, particularly in areas where existing electrical infrastructure was already in place, and there is the potential to provide electricity for the entire region. Canadian Artumas Group, which has been extracting natural gas at Mnazi Bay off the coast of rural Mtwara since 2003 and processing it in Mtwara since 2005, estimates that there are over 10 million cubic meters of gas at the site, a commodity which is already generating 7.5 megawatts of electricity that supplies many parts of Mtwara region and part of Lindi region (Obulutsa, 2008). Though new power lines to expand access in the Rural Mtwara District had not yet been built as of 2010, managers at Artumas Groups insist that surveys were underway for planned expansion of the power grid into the rural areas.

The reliable supply of electricity now available in the town of Mtwara has also increased the region’s attractiveness to industrial and commercial developers (UNICEF 2008). While Mtwara’s only functioning factory was previously one cashew processing plant, construction of both paper and cement factories is now underway, and Artumas in also planning construction of a second, larger power plant in Mtwara town (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2009). In addition, the deep-water port in the town of Mtwara, which had previously only handled cashew exports, was entirely refurbished in 2010 by Artumas Group together with the British oil company Ophir Energy. The port now has the modern equipment necessary to handle a range of different types of goods, including oil and gas for export, and is expected to act as an important secondary access point to

14 As of January 2011.
help reduce severe congestion at the port of Dar-es-Salaam (Masato, 2010; Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2009).

The town of Mtwara is the economic hub for the surrounding Rural Mtwara District, and though exact statistics are unavailable, ethnographic research suggests that business in Mtwara town is visibly booming. From the time research for this dissertation began in 2008 until its completion in 2010, no fewer than ten new upscale guest houses had been built in Mtwara town (there was previously only one), and countless numbers of new shops and cafés had also been opened to accommodate the increasing number of business travelers coming to the region. Transportation has also improved to serve this influx of visitors. A regional air carrier has begun daily flights from Dar es Salaam to Mtwara, and the number of ground transportation options, both from Dar to Mtwara and within the town itself, has also rapidly increased in the form of hundreds of new motorbikes, small taxis, and buses available to transport visitors to, from and around the region. Though the incomplete state of the Dar-Mtwara road continues to be a problem – it was impassable for a number of weeks in both 2009 and 2010 during the rainy season, at which time the city suffered from gasoline shortages as the large tankers were unable to get through – economic activity in Mtwara town is clearly up.

Despite these visible changes in the urban area of Mtwara, the impact on the surrounding rural population requires closer examination. According the 2010 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 92 percent of women and 77 percent of men in the Mtwara Region still identify agriculture as their primary means of economic support, and these percentages remain significantly higher than the national average of 68.5 percent for women and 62.3 percent for men (National Bureau of Statistics, 2004, pp. 45–
6). In addition, though exact estimates of income are not available, according to a wealth index\textsuperscript{15} calculated by the Tanzanian Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS), the Mtwara Region still has the third largest percentage of its population in the lowest wealth quintile at 35.5 percent, falling only behind Lindi Region (40.6 percent) located immediately to the north of Mtwara, and Dodoma region (37.7 percent) in central Tanzania (National Bureau of Statistics, 2004, p. 27).

These indicators suggest that the rural areas surrounding Mtwara town have yet to experience significant benefits from the economic growth underway in the urban core. However ethnographic data collected as part of this research suggests that rural Mtwara has been impacted – in both positive and negative ways – by the recent economic investment in Mtwara town. First, in recent years Rural Mtwara District has experienced an influx of people, specifically workers employed by the gas company working off the coast of rural Mtwara. From 2003 to 2007, workers flooded the district to take part in the natural gas excavation and construction of the pipeline leading from the well site in rural Mtwara to the power plant in Mtwara town. This wave of outsiders, primarily men from other regions of Tanzania and East Africa, rapidly increased small business opportunities for local residents, particularly in those villages located near the road leading from the town to the well site. Villagers reportedly sold lunches, snacks, clothes, and water, and some even rented space in their homes to the new arrivals. In addition, significant numbers of local men came from villages around rural Mtwara to be employed by

\textsuperscript{15} The wealth index was constructed using household asset data and principal components analysis. Asset information was collected in the 2010 TDHS Household Questionnaire and covers information on household ownership of a number of consumer items, ranging from a television to a bicycle or car, as well as information on dwelling characteristics, such as source of drinking water, type of sanitation facilities, and type of materials used in dwelling construction.
Artumas performing basic jobs, including security for the various drilling sites, cooking and cleaning, and other forms of manual labor. Finally, in order to complete the gas well, Artumas had to buy significant tracts of land owned by villagers located along the path from the well site and build new, improved homes for villagers to replace those that were in the path of the project.

Though measuring the economic impacts of such changes was not feasible within the scope of this dissertation, ethnographic data suggests that this influx of business and employment opportunities has significantly impacted the local economy in rural Mtwara, and particularly the areas closest to the gas well site. Specifically, in an environment where almost 40 percent of families are living on less than 1,000 TSH per day and the vast majority does not receive regular cash income, the gas project increased the opportunities available for individuals to enter into the cash economy (Research on Poverty Alleviation, 2005). This influx of cash resources have since been visibly put to use in a variety of ways – as startup capital to open a shop, to replace a grass roof with iron sheets, to buy a small motorbike for transportation, or to send children to school, among many others. In addition, Artumas also funded a number of development projects, including a school, health clinic, market, and a number of wells which serve various communities around rural Mtwara (Artumas Africa Foundation, 2011).

However, these reported economic benefits of the natural gas project have not overshadowed its negative effects on villagers. Specifically, as one villager put it, “during the drilling, everyone’s wife was a whore.” Indeed, statistics gathered in local

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16 As will be discussed further in Chapter Four one of the primary sites for this research was the village located closest to the drilling site.
voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) centers suggest that the village closest to the gas well site now has the highest rate of HIV infection of any village in Mtwara Region. Though the nation’s HIV prevalence rate is estimated at 5.7 percent, and the rate for Mtwara Region is just 3.6 percent, data from the VCT location closest to the well site suggest an infection rate of just over 10 percent (Mtwara Rural District Health Officer, 2010; National Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

The relatively high rate of HIV infection is an issue of significant concern to the residents of rural Mtwara living in this area. During the course of this research, it was common for both interviewees and villagers in casual conversation to express their bitterness toward the gas company, often emphasizing that for a time it was beneficial because it brought jobs, but, as one villager put it, “then the jobs left, and the problem of HIV remained.” Though gas is still being extracted from the wells off the coast of rural Mtwara, after the major infrastructure had been put in place, employment opportunities for the local community all but disappeared (see Chapter Seven for more details). Though the full impact of the changes underway in the Mtwara Region is not yet clear, ethnographic data suggest that the residents of rural Mtwara are not experiencing a rise in permanent economic opportunities, and those short-term opportunities that were available appear to have come with significant consequences. I will return to the question of the impact – and lack of impact – of the oil and gas industries in rural Mtwara in Chapters Seven through Nine.

Finally, it is important to note that the discovery of oil and natural gas is not the only source of change in rural Mtwara. To the contrary, Rural Mtwara District has also been impacted by a national government campaign to improve education across the
country. Before 2003, there was only one secondary school serving the 92 primary schools within Rural Mtwara District. As of 2008, there were 22 (District Education Officer, 2008). The impetus for this rapid expansion of education infrastructure was President Benjamin Mkapa’s 2002, “Development Plan for Secondary Education,” a national program to improve the public secondary education system. Among other requirements, this program mandated the building of a government secondary school in every ward in the entire country of Tanzania (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2005). Regions were prioritized based on their rate of secondary school enrollment, at which time Mtwara had one of the lowest rates in the country (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002). As a result, over the past decade 21 new schools have been built and filled with students, such that all but one ward in rural Mtwara now has a secondary school (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010a).

Though many of the schools suffer from a severe shortage of teachers, books, and other critical resources, they do not lack in students, with 4,280 students enrolled in secondary school in Rural Mtwara District as of 2008 (District Education Officer, 2008). In response to this increase in access to secondary education, rates of enrollment in primary schools in Mtwara have also increased dramatically, rising from 48 percent for boys and 39 percent for girls in 2000 to 99.9 percent for boys and 96 percent for girls in 2007 (UNICEF 2008). In addition, in 2005 the first university – the privately owned St. Augustine University – opened its doors in Mtwara and now offers two terminal bachelor degrees with plans for expansion. Despite the poor quality of many of these new secondary schools, as evidenced by their students’ low scores on standardized national examinations, formal education has for the first time become an option for adolescents.
In Chapters Eight and Nine, I discuss in further detail how this change is affecting adolescents – and adolescent sexuality – in rural Mtwara.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter was intended to situate this examination of the rituals of *jando* and *unyago* within the history of the Makonde and the context of rural Mtwara. The poor state of the roads both leading to and within the southern region has left rural Mtwara isolated from the rest of Tanzania (Seppälä & Koda, 1998; UNICEF, 2008, p. 7). However, the description of Mtwara simply as “isolated,” ignores the region’s long history of encounters with powerful outsiders, a history which has played a primary role in shaping not only the physical but also the political, economic and cultural isolation of Mtwara within the Tanzanian state. This history has also fostered a “north-south” divide within the Tanzanian state such that the initiation rituals in Mtwara, and the “south” of Tanzania in general, have come to represent the antithesis to Tanzanian progress toward modernization and development (Seppälä & Koda, 1998). Understanding both the initiation rituals and the shifting context in which they are practiced therefore requires going beyond the description of Mtwara as “isolated,” in order to understand how its complex history – including the changes currently underway in the region – has shaped its cultural, political and economic position within the Tanzanian state. In Chapters Five and Six, I closely examine the practices of *unyago* and *jando* in rural Mtwara today to understand multiple and complex components of these elaborate rituals, including the specific messages related to sexuality communicated in this context.
Chapter Four
Research Design and Methodology

4.0 Overview

Research for this dissertation was conducted over an 18-month period from March 2009 to August 2010 in Rural Mtwara District in southern Tanzania. In this chapter, I discuss the research design and methods utilized for sampling, data collection and analysis. As this research included multiple samples and data collection techniques to address each research question, in Section 4.1, I first provide a brief summary of the core questions guiding this research and the methods used to address each question. This overview is followed by a summary of the pilot research conducted for this project in 2008 in Section 4.2. In Section 4.3, I discuss the community ethnography, including the methods used for site selection and data collection, as well as the targeted interviews with community leaders that were conducted as part of this ethnography. In Section 4.4, I discuss the in-depth interviews conducted with adolescents, including the definition of the population, sampling methods used, and the details of data collection. In Section 4.5, I discuss the participant observation that was conducted in the rituals of *jando* and *unyago*, including the process used for identifying these sites, and the methods of data collection used in the observations and in interviews with ritual leaders. In Section 4.6, I discuss the Barabara village survey, a structured survey conducted in the final phase of data collection to more closely examine the relationship between the different types of *unyago* rituals and various ethnic subgroups within the Makonde tribe. In Section 4.7, I
describe the methods used for data management and analysis, and in Section 4.8, I summarize the limitations of this study.

4.1 Summary of Research Questions

As discussed in Chapter One, this research is intended to address three research questions:

Research Question One: What are the salient concepts, values, and meanings related to sexuality that are communicated to youth in unyago and jando?

Research Question Two: What are the salient biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural characteristics of the community of rural Mtwara that serve as underlying influences on adolescent sexuality, and how are these characteristics shifting in response to the ongoing changes in the region?

Research Question Three: How do adolescents in rural Mtwara negotiate their own sexuality in the context of these multiple and often conflicting influences?

To address Research Question One, I conducted participant observation in the rituals of unyago and jando (relying on male research assistants to gain access to the male rituals) and targeted interviews with the walombo, the traditional leaders of these rituals. These observations were conducted by a small team of researchers (myself and three research assistants) in four separate field sites in order to explore potential variability in the practice of the rituals (see Chapters Five and Six for more detail). In addition, I also conducted a structured survey (the Barabara village survey) to more closely examine the origins of the various types of unyago rituals.
To address Research Question Two, I conducted community ethnography both in my home field site of Mnazi and in the four “satellite” field sites in the surrounding rural Mtwara area.\footnote{All village names are pseudonyms.} The process for selection of these field sites will be discussed in sections 4.4 below. To conduct this community ethnography, I resided in my home field site of Mnazi for 17 of the 18 months of field research. I kept detailed field notes on daily life in my field site and during my regular visits to the satellite field sites. I also conducted targeted interviews with community leaders both to collect existing demographic information on all field-sites and to examine the leaders’ perspectives on the salient biopsychological, environment/economic and cultural characteristics of the community. Finally, data to address this question were also collected as part of the in-depth interviews with adolescents.

Finally, to address Research Question Three, I conducted sequential in-depth interviews with adolescents from rural Mtwara. These interviews, conducted over four separate sessions, involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data on the adolescents’ lives and their perspectives on and experiences of sexuality in rural Mtwara. In order to more closely examine individuals’ relationships to cultural norms, values and expectations around sexuality, these interviews were conducted using person-centered interviewing techniques (R. LeVine, 1982; Levy & Hollan, 1998).

4.2 Preliminary Research

The development of these research questions and methodology was guided by ten weeks of pilot research in Tanzania from June through September 2008. This research
was conducted in collaboration with Femina HIP, a non-governmental organization that produces sexual health oriented media designed specifically for adolescents in Tanzania. During pilot research, rural Mtwara was identified as a particularly interesting site for examining the role of culture in shaping adolescent sexuality, in part because of the ongoing controversy surrounding the relationship between initiation rituals practiced in the region and the high rates of adolescent pregnancy reported there (discussed in the previous chapter). During pilot research, I examined multiple field sites in rural Mtwara and identified the village of Mnazi as the primary field site for extended field work. The rational for choosing Mnazi is discussed in Section 4.3 below.

During this time, I also conducted ethnographic interviews with 51 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 living in four different villages in rural Mtwara, including Mnazi. During these interviews, adolescents were asked to reflect on those factors which they felt were influential in shaping sexuality in the Mtwara region. Specific questions regarding the practice of unyago and jando were also included, and this preliminary research confirmed that the rituals of unyago and jando were widely practiced in the villages of rural Mtwara. These data were also used to inform the definition of “adolescence” used in this study (see Section 4.4 below for further detail). These interviews were transcribed and thematically coded for factors identified by participants as potential influences on adolescent sexuality. This analysis was used to guide the development of interviews for this research.

Finally, pilot research also provided the opportunity to collect ethnographic data on a range of recent economic and social changes underway in the Mtwara region and to establish contacts with local government officials for future collaboration. These
contacts and observations also informed the development of the research design described below.

4.3 Community Ethnography

In this section, I outline the specific techniques used to conduct the community ethnography. I discuss the rationale used for selection of the villages that were the sites for this research, the specific activities conducted as part of this ethnography, and the techniques used for documentation through ethnographic field notes.

Community Ethnography: Site Selection

To conduct this research, a home field site was first chosen to be the primary residential site and location of intensive community ethnography, as well as the in-depth interviews with adolescents and the participant observation in the initiation rituals. The village of Mnazi was chosen because it offered a particularly interesting site for examining the relationship between culture, sexuality and change. Since 2005, the village of Mnazi has been inundated with outside people and (to a more limited extent) resources following the discovery of natural gas reserves just off its shores (Small Industries Development Organization, 2007). In preliminary research conducted in Mnazi in 2008, participants reported that this event introduced new sexual practices and values. Furthermore, government statistics suggest that Mnazi also has the highest rate of HIV of all villages in the rural Mtwara area (Halmashauri ya Wilaya Mtwara Vijijini, 2008). As the issue of cultural change is of particular relevance to this research (see Chapter Three for more detail), the characteristics of Mnazi were particularly appropriate for this research. In addition, Mnazi also exhibited a number of characteristics of
practical importance to carrying out this research, including access to secure housing and communication infrastructure.

Though Mnazi served as the home field site, research was also conducted in an additional four “satellite” villages. These four villages, Barabara, Mlimani, Mtoni, and Mchanga, were not chosen immediately, but were instead identified after six months of living and conducting ethnographic research in Mnazi. Following this initial research period, these additional sites were incorporated for two key reasons. First, during the first six months of research it was determined that the primary version of *unyago* practiced in rural Mtwara was not regularly practiced in Mnazi and, furthermore, that there was significant variation in the *unyago* ritual itself across different ethnic subgroups of the Makonde tribe (discussed further in Chapter Five). Therefore, these four additional field sites were chosen based on the affiliation of the population with various subgroups of the Makonde tribe in order to conduct ritual observations in each type of *unyago* ritual. A detailed discussion of the variation in the practice of *unyago* across these different subgroups is discussed in Chapter Five.

Second, these additional field sites also were used to address limits on sample size in the home field site. The original research plan was to recruit a random sample of 50 adolescents from Mnazi to participate in the in-depth interviews (see Section 4.3 below). During the recruitment process, however, it became clear that, given the small size of the village, a sample size of 50 would be too large to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. Specifically, as recruitment numbers neared 30, it became clear that the highly interconnected family structure of the village meant that an increasing number of our participants, though randomly selected, were closely related to each other. Given the
sensitive nature of the research, I did not feel it was appropriate to continue recruiting from this small community, and therefore participant recruitment in Mnazi was capped at 34 participants. The addition of the satellite villages allowed for recruitment of a larger number of adolescent participants while still protecting the privacy of the research subjects.

Community Ethnography: Data Collection

Data collection for the community ethnography portion of this research included two methods: participant observation in daily life and targeted interviews with community leaders. Participant observation in daily life involved a range of activities and routines through which I was immersed in village life (Kutsche, 1997). In Mnazi, I made every possible effort to integrate into village life, including living in a local home, cooking using traditional methods and eating local food, volunteering at the village school, bartering for food and supplies with my neighbors, and using public transportation. For a number of complex reasons not relevant here, I also lived for the majority of my time in the field with Tanzanian roommates, either students from the school where I volunteered or fellow teachers. This was advantageous for multiple reasons. In living with Tanzanians I was forced to essentially live the routines of the typical Tanzanian household together with my roommates, including the cleaning, washing clothes, cooking, and other daily tasks. Though the first few meals were nothing less than disastrous, this situation also provided innumerable opportunities to learn about the most quotidian aspects of life in a Tanzanian household. In addition, my Tanzanian roommates also acted as generous emissaries to the surrounding community, fielding innumerable questions from neighbors and providing them an outlet to voice concerns.
and receive explanations on my behalf. This living arrangement allowed me to experience as close to normal daily life as possible given my status as a foreigner and a researcher.

In addition to the basic activities of daily living, I also volunteered part-time at the local secondary school in Mnazi. The experience teaching English not only improved my own language skills in Kiswahili, but also provided me with a support network and allowed me to be surrounded by adolescents, the focus of my research, on a daily basis. Though volunteering did take up a significant portion of my time while in the field, the experiences and contacts that I gained through this volunteer work greatly increased the productivity of my time spent away from school. In particular, when it came to the difficult task of gaining access to the unyago rituals, on multiple occasions I learned that it was the relatives of my students who had vouched for my character and ultimately played a key role in helping the research to move forward. In addition, my role as teacher also allowed me to actively engage with the community in a defined role in a way that was mutually understood (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Although I was careful to always make clear my primary identity as a researcher, for many rural Tanzanians this concept was entirely foreign, and I often noted that my dual role as teacher greatly eased social interactions and my integration into the community as a whole.

My daily routines, then, consisted of cleaning my house, bathing in a bucket, cooking over a coal fire stove, teaching English (using a lot of Kiswahili), sitting and chatting with my neighbors and roommates, bargaining for food with the local fisherman, often attending a wedding, birth celebration, or a funeral and then, of course, trying frantically to write it all down at the end of the day under a mosquito net by the light of a
kerosene lamp. My field notes were prepared using multiple steps. First, I carried a notebook at all times in which I jotted quick notes regarding events, observations, or ideas that I felt were particularly interesting. Second, at the end of each day, I would write a longer note by hand to contextualize the jotted notes in the events of the day. Finally, during trips to the nearest city (Mtwara) and source of electricity, I entered all field notes electronically.

In general, my daily field notes were kept in two separate forms. I first made a bulleted list of the events of the day in chronological order, including both the routine activities and any interesting or unusual events or interactions. I then summarized the day using the simple but, I found, surprisingly effective, “who, what, where, when, why” framework. Specifically, following the narrative description of the days’ events, I summarized:

- Who provided an interesting piece of information or interaction that day?
- What was an interesting experience that day?
- Where did I see something or do something interesting?
- When (what time of day) did it happen?
- Why did I find certain events or experiences interesting?

Though initially my field notes only included a chronology of each day’s events, when training my research assistants on writing field notes for participant observation in the initiation rituals (see Section 4.5), I found this to be a useful exercise. This strategy also resulted in excellent field notes by my research assistants, and I subsequently adopted the strategy myself. In addition, I also kept a separate set of field notes to record broad ideas
and hypotheses as they developed from my daily field notes, both for the purposes of preliminary data analysis and to guide subsequent stages of research.

In addition to these daily field notes, targeted interviews also were conducted with community leaders in the all field sites. The villages of rural Mtwara have a well-organized system of local government, with a village executive officer appointed by the district headquarters to manage the relationship between the village and higher levels of government, as well as a locally elected village chairman and a village committee who manage the daily affairs within the village. In addition, interviews were conducted with the administrators of local schools, health clinics, and development organizations when available. In these interviews, any available census data regarding the village were collected, as well as information on transportation and communication infrastructure, water supply, active development projects in the area, school, clinics, and any other community resources. Table One below outlines the number of community leaders interviewed from each field site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mnazi</th>
<th>Mchanga</th>
<th>Barabara</th>
<th>Mtoni</th>
<th>Mlimani</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Leaders</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview responses were initially recorded by hand and then entered into a computer. These interviews provided general information regarding the various field sites and also served as a clear introduction of ourselves and our research to the community leaders, who then acted as liaisons, answering questions about our research on our behalf.
Finally, targeted interviews were also conducted with a number of community leaders and policymakers at regional government offices in Mtwara. These interviews focused both on gathering statistics on various characteristics of rural Mtwara, including health, education, and infrastructure development and other information regarding development projects and government policies targeting adolescents in rural Mtwara. In total, seven different interviews were conducted with officials from both governmental and large non-governmental development agencies including: the District Office for Education, the District Executive Officer, the Committee to Address Adolescent Pregnancy, Ligula Regional Hospital, the District Office for Community Development, the Small Industries Development Organization – Mtwara Branch, and the Regional Office for Youth and Development.

4.4 In-Depth Interviews with Adolescents

Individual in-depth interviews with adolescents make up the second core component of the research design. In this section I discuss how “adolescents” are defined as a population in this research. I then outline three different sampling frameworks used for identifying adolescent participants for this research. Finally, I discuss the interview techniques, interview schedules and instruments used in conducting these interviews.

Adolescent Interviews: Defining the Population

In planning to conduct interviews with adolescents in rural Mtwara, one of the first key issues that arose was the appropriate definition of “adolescents” for this population. As discussed in Chapter Two, cross-cultural research has suggested that the ages at which individuals are considered “adolescents” are expanding in many
communities, suggesting the need for a definition of this life stage relevant to the context of rural Mtwara (J. Whiting et al., 1986). Following the example set by the Harvard Adolescent Project (J. Whiting et al., 1986), one of the goals of this research was to identify the culturally-salient markers of the transition from childhood to adolescence, and from adolescence to adulthood, in rural Mtwara.

In pilot research, 82.3 (n=42) percent of participants (n=51) described initiation in *unyago* or *jando* as marking the transition to *ukubwa* (adolescence) while only a small percentage (n=9, 17.6%) identified puberty as the beginning of adolescence. Furthermore, in pilot interviews, participants indicated that these rituals must take place before a girl or boy enters puberty, and are usually conducted between the ages of seven and 12. Therefore age 14 was chosen as the lower limit for participants to ensure that all interview participants had already gone through the rituals, the culturally relevant marker of transition to adolescence. Unfortunately, questions on the culturally salient marker (or markers) for the upper boundary of adolescence were not included in pilot interviews. For this reason, common markers of adulthood seen in other cultural contexts (e.g. marriage, childbearing) were not used as exclusion criteria in order to explore which markers were relevant in rural Mtwara. Instead, a specific age was chosen – age 24 – as the upper age of exclusion. This age was chosen in order to capture the full range of the “adolescent” experiences and to further explore the culturally salient markers of transition from adolescence to adulthood.
Adolescent Interviews: Sampling

I will first describe the sampling framework and process used for the home field site of Mnazi, and will then move to a discussion of sampling for the satellite field sites, and finally the school-based sample.

Sampling: Home Field Site

Adolescent participants from Mnazi were recruited by household using a simple random sample. The choice of a random sample was made in order to reduce the possibility of sampling bias and increase the likelihood that the sample would be representative of the larger population of adolescents in Mnazi. During the first two months of research, I created a map of the three central vitongoji (administrative designation, similar to a “hamlet”) of the village of Mnazi by household (See Appendix A: Map of Mnazi). The sampling frame was limited to these three vitongoji because they make up the central geographic area of the village. The other three, remote vitongoji that make up Mnazi were excluded because they are located many kilometers from Mnazi, and their residents do not participate in the daily life of the village. Their distance from the village also made mapping the houses impractical given the time and resources allocated for this research.

Once mapped, these households were numbered (total 615), and then houses were chosen one-by-one using the random number generator function of SPSS 17.0 for PC. When a house's number was drawn, its members were approached to inquire whether any adolescents between the ages of 14 and 24 resided in the house. If not, another house was randomly selected. If more than one adolescent was living in the house, the
adolescents themselves were assigned a number, and one was chosen randomly. Once identified, a research assistant and I discussed the research with the individual and his or her family to assess his or her willingness to participate. Following the consent process, a short interview consisting of short-answer demographic questions (see Appendix B) was conducted and plans for future interviews were made. As discussed in the section on site selection above, the original goal was to recruit 50 adolescents from Mnazi, but concerns about participant privacy resulted in capping the number of participants recruited from Mnazi at 34.

**Sampling: Satellite Field Sites**

Mapping, as was done in Mnazi, was not done in the satellite field sites due to constraints on time and resources. Sampling in the satellite field sites used a purposive quota sample (Bernard, 2005) stratified by age (grouped as younger = 14 to 18 and older = 19 to 24) and by gender. The original goal was to recruit two boys and two girls in each age group for each of the four satellite field sites, resulting in a total sample of 32 participants. However, difficulties encountered during the recruitment process (discussed below) resulted in a total of only 20 participants recruited. Whenever possible, recruitment was done such that approximately even numbers were obtained in each age and gender category, even if total recruitment numbers were not reached. This resulted in only one participant being recruited in each category (as opposed to the desired two) for both Mchanga and Mlimani field sites, and only one of the desired two participants recruited in two of the categories for Mtoni (see Table 2 below).
Table 2: Number of Participants by Age and Gender in Satellite Field Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys 14-18</th>
<th>Boys 19-24</th>
<th>Girls 14-18</th>
<th>Girls 19-24</th>
<th>Total Included in Sample</th>
<th>Total Loss to Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mlimani</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mtoni</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barabara</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchanga</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total All Satellite Field Sites</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned above, the reduced sample size was the result of difficulties encountered in working in these field sites. Specifically, transportation costs and the state of the road infrastructure in rural Mtwara, particularly during the rainy season, were significant barriers. These barriers limited the time that could be spent in each field site and essentially required that all participants be interviewed at each visit because additional visits were both unaffordable and potentially hazardous. This, in turn, limited the number of participants to those who could be interviewed in a single day. In addition, in Barabara we encountered significant difficulties in recruiting boys in the younger age group. Though the exact reasons for this are not entirely clear, in the process of seeking out these boys, we were often told that they were in school (if a weekday) or away working in the fields or fishing (if a weekend). Though we encountered this explanation (more so for boys though sometimes for girls) in this age group in other sites, we were successful in recruiting at least one young boy and girl in all other sites. In Barabara, after significant effort spent to find a young boy of this age group, we decided to exceed
our quota sampling criteria and recruit three older boys to compensate for our inability to recruit a younger boy participant.

**Sampling: School-Based Sample**

After completing recruitment and moving through the initial interview stages with the home and satellite samples of adolescents, the issue of formal education, and particularly secondary education, arose as a key issue of interest. As discussed in Chapter Three, there has been a rapid expansion of the secondary school system in rural Mtwara since 2003. Although only nine of the participants in the home and satellite samples had reached secondary education, in interviews it was evident that these adolescents were exposed to different ideas and constraints around sexuality than their counterparts who had not continued to secondary school (discussed in Chapters Eight and Nine). To further explore this issue, in the final stage of field work, an additional school-based sample of students currently studying in secondary school was recruited.

The school-based sample of 24 adolescents was drawn from enrollment records from Mnazi Secondary School using a stratified random sample. Each student was assigned a number, and then numbers were chosen randomly using a random number generator from SPSS 17.0 for PC. However, as boys outnumbered girls approximately three to one in the school, the sample was stratified by gender to ensure that girls were included in sufficient numbers. Therefore, as soon as 12 male participants had been selected, participants continued to be randomly identified, but only female students were approached for participation until a sample of twelve boys and twelve girls was complete.
Table 3 below outlines the total number of participants recruited in each of the three samples (home site, satellite sites, and school-based) separated by gender and school status. As can be seen in the bottom row of the table, among all adolescents recruited for participation in this research there are approximately equal numbers of participants in all four categories: boys in school, boys not in school, girls in school, and girls not in school, for a total of 69 total participants.

**Table 3: Number of Participants by Gender and School Status in All Samples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment Site</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total Included in Sample</th>
<th>Lost to Follow-up (Boy, Girl)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In School(^\text{18})</td>
<td>Not In School</td>
<td>In School</td>
<td>Not In School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellites Sites</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Site</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Based</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total All</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though three different sampling frames were used to recruit adolescent participants, all participants were identified using the same parameters (adolescents between the ages of 14 and 24 living in rural Mtwar) and therefore the samples will be aggregated for the purposes of analysis. Though in aggregate this sample is not random, which limits the extent to which it can be considered representative of all adolescents in rural Mtwar, the changes made to the sampling procedures during the course of fieldwork allowed for the recruitment of a larger and more heterogeneous sample of adolescents from multiple sites in rural Mtwar.

\(^{18}\) Currently in secondary school.
Loss to Follow-up

Table 3 above also includes data reported for loss to follow-up. As shown in this column, loss to follow-up was highest in Mnazi at 23.5 percent, only five percent in the satellite field sites, and zero in the school-based sample. The high rate of loss to follow-up in Mnazi can primarily be attributed to the length of time between the final two interview sessions. While the initial recruitment visit, first and second interview sessions were completed in a relatively short period of time, the third (and final) interview session was not completed until almost six months after the second session due to time constraints. Unlike in Mnazi, interviews in the satellite field sites were begun in a later phase of data collection, and therefore the initial recruitment visit and three interviews were conducted at a closer interval, reducing the chance that an individual might move away before all interviews were completed. Finally, the school-based interviews were completed in the shortest interval because they were begun near the end of the research period and therefore had to be completed more quickly.

The most common reason for loss to follow-up (as reported by participants’ families) was moving away from Mnazi, either permanently or for an extended period of time (8 of 10 participants). For boys lost to follow-up (n=4), family members most commonly reported that the move was either work-related (n=3) or family-related (n=1) (going to live with another family member). For the girls (n=6), the move was most often the result of marriage (n=3) or moving to live with another family member (n=1). The reason for loss to follow-up could not be established for two female participants, because no members of the family were present in the home during any of the follow-up visits conducted.
Adolescent Interviews: Data Collection

For all adolescent participants, the interview process was essentially the same. This process involved a basic demographic interview conducted at the initial recruitment visit followed by three separate interview sessions. These interviews involved both quantitative structured and open-ended qualitative components interwoven throughout the multiple interviews.

Person-centered interviewing techniques were used in conducting these interviews. As discussed in Chapter Two, person-centered interviewing is characterized by sequential, in-depth interviews in which the interviewee is treated both as an “informant,” providing general information about the broader cultural context, and as a “respondent,” expressing his or her individual perspectives and experiences in relation to these broader cultural norms, values, and beliefs. Interviewees are guided through a series of topics by the interviewer, but particular attention is paid to any topic for which the respondent expresses a heightened emotional response or interest. When this occurs, open-ended probing techniques are used to explore the individual’s experiences related to this issue (R. LeVine, 1982; Levy & Hollan, 1998).

Person-centered interviewing was chosen for this research for two reasons. First, one of the primary goals of this research is the examination of individual adolescents’ negotiations of sexuality within a complex cultural environment. Person-centered interviewing is specifically designed to collect experience-near data on personal meaning and experience, allowing the researcher to explore the relationship between the individual and the norms, values and expectations present in his or her surrounding cultural context.
Second, person-centered interviewing involves multiple extended interviews through which the interviewer and interviewee are allowed to develop a degree of interpersonal comfort and trust such that particularly sensitive or deeply personal topics – in this case sexuality – may be addressed. In this research, the individual’s own sexual experiences were not directly discussed until the final interview session, while previous sessions were used to discuss sexuality in the community more generally, as well as other, less sensitive issues.

The interview schedule of questions used to guide the series of person-centered interviews conducted with adolescents is included in Appendix B. However, these questions were intended to act as a guide and therefore do not include the various probes used to explore issues of specific relevance to individual participants. In general, the questions included in these interviews were intended to collect information relevant to all three of the core research questions for this dissertation. Participants were asked a series of questions regarding their experiences in the initiation rituals, including the various ways in which issues of sexuality were discussed in these rituals, which contribute to answering Research Question One. They were also asked many questions regarding the biopsychological, environmental/economic, and cultural characteristics of their community. This included questions regarding both their community as a whole, as well as questions specific to the individual’s household and family life. These questions were intended to provide data to address Research Question Two. Finally, the interviewees were asked a number of questions regarding their own lives, perspectives and experiences as adolescents in rural Mtwara. These questions address issues of money, family, puberty, education, peers, and, of course, sexual relationships. These questions were
woven into discussions of village life more generally to encourage the participants to reflect on their relationships to and perspectives on various aspects of their surrounding cultural environment. These questions were intended to contribute data to address Research Question Three.

Woven throughout these mostly qualitative, open-ended interviews are a series of structured questions drawn from the Male, Female, and Household Questionnaires that make up the Tanzanian Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2004). The TDHS questions were incorporated into this research for a number of reasons. First, the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) on which the TDHS is based is used in more than 75 developing countries around the world. Though there is some variation from country to country, the core questions of this instrument remain consistent. This provides the potential for comparison of the data collected for this research not only with the data for Tanzania as a whole, but with countries around the world. Second, this instrument has been used multiple times over almost two decades in Tanzania, and through this process it has been well-adapted to the cultural and linguistic context in which it is used. Third, this survey is not limited to issues of sexuality and reproduction but instead takes a broad approach, addressing a wide range of topics of interest to this research (e.g. education, family structure, household economics, health care, employment, pregnancy and childbearing, marriage, contraception, STDs, circumcision, sexual behavior). Finally, the TDHS is designed to be used with a wide age group, including adolescents as young as 15. Though 15 is not quite as low as the age of our youngest participants, no other survey found was both designed for the lower end of our age range and included appropriate questions for this research.
It was originally planned that the questions drawn from the TDHS be asked during a separate interview session. However, in the course of conducting the interviews it was decided that these questions would need to be woven into the other interview sessions due to time constraints on the number of interview sessions that could be conducted. Therefore, these questions were included in the other interviews such that they were asked together with other open-ended questions on the same topic, providing consistency in the interview experience for participants.

In the interview schedule found in Appendix B, an asterisk indicates questions drawn from the TDHS. The survey was not used in its entirety but in select segments as was deemed appropriate for this research. The sample and method for administering the survey questions used here are not as intended by the TDHS developers, thus limiting the interpretation of comparison to existing data from previous TDHS surveys. However, the data that were collected are useful in estimating certain characteristics of this sample and comparing this sample the data on the population of Tanzania as a whole.

With the exception of the initial demographic interview conducted at the recruitment visit (which was recorded by hand), all other interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. This was done both to ensure that all data were captured and to allow for later examination of the nuances in the way respondents interacted with the interviewer in discussing different issues. In analysis, transcripts remained linked to the original audio file for easy reference.
4.5 Participant Observation in Initiation Rituals

Participant observation in unyago and jando was conducted during two different periods, from December to January 2009-2010, and from June to July 2010. In this section, I first discuss the preparation required to conduct research in these rituals, including identifying sites, gaining access to these rituals, recruiting participants, and preparing a research team. Second, I discuss the various methods used for data collection, including the strategies used to conduct the participant observation itself and targeted interviews with the ritual leaders.

Participant Observation: Preparation

As these rituals are primarily practiced from December through January, and only occasionally from June through July, increased efforts were made to collect the maximum amount of data possible in these limited time periods, with the primary data collection efforts made during the months of December to January. The number of rituals observed by field site is outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Type and Number of Rituals Observed in Each Field Site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mtoni</th>
<th>Mlimani</th>
<th>Barabara</th>
<th>Mnazi</th>
<th>Total Number of Rituals Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unyago(^{19})</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jando</td>
<td>2(^{20})</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{19}\) There are multiple different subtypes of unyago that were observed, and details of these differences are discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

\(^{20}\) These two rituals were conducted through the cooperation of two large extended families with whom we were working, and therefore the jando ritual could be observed for two separate groups, both in Mtoni.
In total, participant observation was conducted with four different groups of boys undergoing jando and five different groups of girls undergoing unyago. Though scheduling issues prevented us from conducting participant observation in jando in Mnazi, we were able to conduct observation of two separate jando groups in Mtoni. For details regarding the number of initiates observed in each ritual, see Chapters Five and Six.

Ritual observations were conducted in the home field site of Mnazi and in three of the four satellite sites: Barabara, Mtoni, and Mlimani. In Mchanga, the only satellite site where we did not conduct participant observation, significant efforts were made to obtain community consent to observe these rituals. This was particularly difficult, however, because the village had organized their rituals such that all initiates in the village would be initiated together in a large group. Therefore, consent from a large number of people was necessary.\(^{21}\) Furthermore, a group of villagers who were not among those required (by IRB protocol) to give consent were nonetheless very vocal in voicing their opposition to the research. Though every measure possible was taken to ease their concerns so that the research could go forward in this site, it was to no avail.

In later visits to Mchanga, we were informed by a number of residents that the root of the opposition was not concern with our research per se, but a persistent rumor that the local village officials (who had recently been accused of corruption regarding another issue) had been paid a large sum of money to convince the villagers to allow our research. This rumor, coupled with a lack of strong village leadership, appears to

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\(^{21}\) This was also the case in Mlimani, but in that case we were able to obtain consent from all involved individuals. This was thanks in large part to significant assistance received from the village leadership.
account, at least in part, for our failure to conduct research in Mchanga. In all other field sites, villagers also initially expressed significant apprehension regarding our research. However, these issues were resolved over the course of multiple meetings in which villagers and community leaders were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding our research. Fortunately, the inability to conduct research in Mchanga did not have a significant negative impact on the success of this component of the research, as the sites that were accessible provided ample opportunity to conduct participant observation in both unyago and jando.

As mentioned above (and discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five), the December/January period is the primary time during which these rituals are practiced. In order to collect data in multiple rituals during this limited window, a research team of four members was assembled, including two male research assistants, one female assistant and myself. The research team was split into two male-female pairs, with one pair focused on observing rituals in Barabara and Mnazi, and the other team working in Mtoni and Mlimani. The field sites of Barabara and Mnazi are relatively proximate, as are the sites of Mtoni and Mlimani, which made it possible for each team to move between its two sites without difficulty. Of the nine ritual observations conducted, eight were conducted during the December/January initiation period, and one (an unyago observation) was conducted during the June to July period.

Research assistants were provided with the tools and training necessary to complete these observations. Each had access to sufficient writing materials, a digital voice recorder, and a digital camera for documenting events in the rituals. They were also instructed in strategies for writing field notes and given clear expectations of what
should be included in these field notes. These instructions were similar to those
described in section 4.3. The research assistants also took turns going on trips to the
satellite field sites, both to meet village leaders and to assist in portions of the adolescent
interviews conducted in these field sites. Each research assistant was asked to write
“practice” field notes about observations made during these trips, and they were provided
with comments and suggestions for improvement on these practice field notes.

**Participant Observations: Data Collection**

Data collection in the initiation rituals involved four key activities: 1) participant
observation of the rituals documented through field notes; 2) quantitative demographic
data collected on ritual participants through informal conversations during the rituals; 3)
informal conversations with adult family members of the participants to gather general
information on the rituals; and 4) targeted interviews with ritual leaders.

Participant observation of these rituals required full commitment by the
researchers to both observe and participate. Indeed, it was clear that the ritual
participants, both the adults and the young initiates, were more comfortable when I or the
other research assistants made efforts to be actively involved in the ritual events.
Therefore, participant observation in these rituals often involved staying up all night,
learning dances, singing songs and eating with the other ritual participants.

Informal conversations were also conducted between the young initiates and the
researcher. In these conversations, the researcher discussed with the young initiates their
own perceptions of the rituals as they progressed to gauge his or her understanding and
experience of the ongoing events. In these conversations, basic demographic data on
each participant’s age, education level, family structure, household socioeconomic status and cultural and religious affiliations were also documented in field notes. During lulls in the activity of the first and last days, and during the more calm middle days of the rituals, myself or a research assistant would conduct informal conversations with other adults involved in the rituals to clarify the meanings of various ritual activities and ceremonies.

Field notes were kept in a style similar to that described in Section 4.3 above, with myself or a research assistant jotting quick notes when possible and then writing longer field notes in the evenings or during lulls in the ritual activities. Though the time to write field notes was limited during the intensive ceremonies that take place on the opening and closing days of the rituals, in all but one case, participants did allow the use of digital voice recording. When preparing the final version of field notes, these audio recording were invaluable for filling in the details of the many songs, dances, and ceremonies that take place during these complex rituals. The original field notes were taken by hand, and entry into the computer was done as a team (myself and one research assistant at a time) following the completion of the observation period.

In a follow-up visit after all of the rituals were complete, semi-structured interviews were conducted with at least one mlombo (ritual leader, plural – walombo) from each ritual observed. These interviews were primarily focused on clarifying the meaning of certain aspects of the rituals that were identified as unclear during entry of the field notes. Most of the questions in these interviews were specific to the ritual conducted by each mlombo. However, the interviews did include a series of ten standard questions for each mlombo (see Appendix C). The interviews took from thirty minutes to
Table 5 outlines the number of walombo interviewed from each field site.

**Table 5: Number of Walombo Interviewed by Field Site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field site</th>
<th>Number of Walombo Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mnazi</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barabara</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mtoni</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mlimani</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total All Sites</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 Barabara Village Survey

The final data collection method used in this research was a structured household survey intended to cover every household within Barabara village. This survey was added in the final phase of research to provide a larger sample for testing hypotheses that arose in the course of research regarding the relationship between the types of unyago rituals practiced, cultural affiliation and religion (see Chapter Five). Barabara village was chosen as the site of this survey because interviews with community leaders suggested that it was a diverse community.

The survey was designed as a short, structured interview to be administered to the female head of every household in the village. In our survey, a household was defined broadly as at least two individuals related either through birth or marriage living together in a single home that was their primary residence. Adult female heads of household were
selected to answer questions regarding the household for two reasons. First, the women are more likely to remain in the home during most of the day, and therefore they were more accessible than the men, who are more often away from home during the day doing business. Second, women usually have at least some basic knowledge regarding the way in which *jando* is practiced in their household. On the contrary, men rarely have even basic knowledge of *unyago*. Therefore, it was determined that women would most easily and accurately be able to answer our survey questions regarding their households, which included questions about both *unyago* and *jando*. However, in the case where there was no female head of household or she was unavailable for an extended period of time, the male head of the household was asked to answer the survey questions.

With the help of two research assistants, every house in each of the five *vitongoji* (hamlets) that make up Barabara village was approached in turn. When approached, the residents who were present were asked if the “mama” was home. If she was available, the research was explained to her and her consent obtained. Each woman was then asked a series of 15 short-answer questions about her household (See Appendix D). Each interview took no more than 15 minutes. When one interview was complete, the next household was approached. If neither a female nor a male head of the household was available, a note was made regarding the location of the house, such that it could be returned to at a later date. In conducting the survey, attempts were made to vary the time of day during which we approached households in order to reduce sampling bias (e.g. to avoid excluding households where both adults worked outside the home) and also to include as many households as possible.
In the two weeks during which this survey was conducted, 239 households in Barabara village were successfully surveyed. Though official village statistics put the total number of houses in the village at 443, these statistics were eight years old, and our survey only identified 403 separate house structures (Afisa wa Mtendaji Kata, 2010). Furthermore, of these 403 houses, 53 were reported as completely unoccupied by neighbors when approached. An additional 38 houses were occupied by unrelated friends living together and therefore did not qualify as a “household.” Finally, 25 homes were reported as occupied only seasonally, with the residents maintaining a primary residence in a different location. For the remaining 48 households, though three separate visits to the home were attempted, no adult head of the household was ever available. Therefore, of the 287 eligible households identified in Barabara, we were successful in surveying 239, or 83.3 percent.

4.7 Data Management and Analysis

In this section I describe the analytic process used in this research. I first discuss the methods used for management of the data collected by each of the methods described above. I then discuss the three phases of data analysis as they have been used to address the three research questions. The analytic methods used for this research are mixed method, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analytic techniques. Furthermore, the three phases of analysis are intended to be iterative, with each phase of analysis contributing ideas and hypotheses to guide the other phases.
Analysis: Data Management

The data collected as part of the community ethnography consisted of ethnographic field notes and interview notes from interviews with community leaders. First, all notes were entered electronically using a basic word processor. Field notes were organized by date, and interviews were organized by the participants’ assigned study numbers. These documents were then imported into QSR NVivo 9.0, the qualitative data analysis program used for this research.

The data collected as part of the in-depth interviews with adolescents included both qualitative and quantitative data. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed using NVivo. This software allows for both the transcribed text and the section of audio it references to be simultaneously coded and to remain linked throughout data analysis. Quantitative and categorical data collected for each adolescent participant, including the structured survey questions drawn from the TDHS, were entered using SPSS. In addition, a number of responses to open-ended, qualitative questions were also categorized when appropriate and entered using SPSS. A copy of this spreadsheet of individual categorical data was imported into NVivo, which allows categorical data to be linked to other qualitative data sources, including transcripts and interview recordings.

The data collected as part of the participant observation in the rituals included the field notes and audio recordings from all field sites, quantitative demographic data on the ritual participants, as well as the audio recordings of the follow-up interviews with the ritual leaders. The recordings from the interviews with ritual leaders were transcribed using NVivo, and the information contained in these interviews was used to clarify any
portion of the field notes from the ritual observations necessary. The quantitative demographic data on the ritual participants were entered using SPSS. Finally, the quantitative data collected as part of the Barabara village survey were also entered using SPSS.

**Analysis Phase One: Content and Thematic Analysis of Unyago and Jando**

Phase one of data analysis was intended to address Research Question One: What are the salient concepts, values, and meanings related to sexuality that are communicated to youth in *unyago* and *jando*? This phase of data analysis drew on the field notes from participant observations in these rituals, transcripts of interviews with ritual leaders, and portions of the adolescent interviews pertaining to the rituals.

Once imported into NVivo, a qualitative content analysis was used to identify the key themes present in the different stages of the rituals (Bernard, 2005; Bernard & Ryan, 2009). The data were first read in order to develop a code book of themes, organized as relating to either the structure, content, or meaning of various aspects of the rituals. The data were then coded using this code book, and additional codes were added as needed. This method was used to identify the consistencies and variability in the content of the various stages of the rituals across the multiple observations conducted in different field sites.

In addition, quantitative and categorical data drawn from the demographic information gathered on ritual participants, adolescent interview participants, and the Barabara household survey were used to examine patterns in the basic characteristics of
these rituals including age of initiation, size of initiation group and relationship between initiates, and type of initiation practiced by cultural affiliation and economic status.

**Analysis Phase Two: Mediating Influences on Adolescent Sexuality**

Phase two of analysis was intended to address Research Question Two: What are the salient biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural characteristics of the community of rural Mtwara that serve as underlying influences on adolescent sexuality, and how are these characteristics shifting in response to the ongoing changes in the region? This phase involved utilizing both the qualitative and quantitative interview data collected in the in-depth interviews with adolescents, field notes taken in the community ethnography, and notes from interviews with community leaders.

The qualitative data were used to conduct a thematic content analysis to identify underlying influences on adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara as identified by participants (Bernard, 2000; Bernard & Ryan, 2009). This analytic technique involved reading through the qualitative data to identify themes that repeatedly arose across data drawn from these different sources. Using this technique, a codebook of themes was developed and organized based on LeVine’s (1996) “cultural mediation” framework. As the data were coded, key themes that emerged from the data were categorized as constituting biopsychological, environmental/economic or cultural characteristics of rural Mtwara that represented potential influences on adolescent sexuality. This process was both deductive and inductive in nature – while data collection was deductively organized based on LeVine’s model, the exact elements included in these three categories for this research were identified inductively through the data analysis process. In addition, the
answers to specific questions related to the biopsychological, environmental/economic or cultural categories were coded separately by theme in order to examine the percentage of respondents that answered questions in various ways.

This qualitative analysis was also used to identify specific characteristics of the individual adolescents’ for further examination in quantitative analysis. Specifically, biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural variables identified as important potential influences on adolescent sexuality in the qualitative analysis (e.g. age of puberty, education, family structure, and household economic status) were examined for their statistical significance using the quantitative data collected in the in-depth interviews. This analysis primarily consisted of bivariate statistical tests conducted using SPSS.

In particular, household economic status was one theme that emerged in adolescents’ discussions as a particularly important influence on adolescents’ lives in general. Measuring household economic status in an accurate and comparative way is highly complex in any context (Bingenheimer, 2007; Rutstein & Johnson, 2004). For this dissertation, a household wealth score was developed using questions drawn from the TDHS Wealth Index, part of the larger TDHS survey (Rutstein & Johnson, 2004). As discussed in Section 4.4 above, this tool was chosen because it was designed for use in Tanzania and therefore has been adapted to address many of the specific characteristics of this context.

However, this and many other tools for measuring household economic status were designed to capture differences within a larger and more varied population (i.e. the
entire population of Tanzania), and therefore many of items in the TDHS Wealth Index were not useful in the context of rural Mtwara because they were intended to distinguish among households having a much wider range of economic status. Therefore the TDHS Wealth Index could not be used in its entirety. Instead component questions that were both relevant markers of household wealth in the context of rural Mtwara and also variable within this generally poor population were used to calculate a household wealth score.

The markers used to calculate the household wealth score are listed in Table 6 below. In addition to the markers below, data were also collected on household ownership of a radio, bicycle and cell phone. However, in conducting a reliability analysis to determine the internal consistency of the different markers, these other three markers were excluded from the wealth score because the internal consistency (measured using a Cronbach’s alpha) was the highest when just the four measures in the table below were used. The Cronbach’s alpha of the four items in Table 6 together was $\alpha = 0.76$, indicating a high degree of internal consistent among these four measures.
Table 6: Markers of Household Economic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator of Household Economic Status</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants in Each Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – Tree and Grass</td>
<td>63.8% (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Tree and Metal</td>
<td>23.2% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Brick and Metal</td>
<td>13.0% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Meals/Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – One</td>
<td>11.6% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Two</td>
<td>58.0% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Three</td>
<td>30.4% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Source</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – Open River/Pond</td>
<td>17.4% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Well</td>
<td>76.8% (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Piped Water</td>
<td>5.8% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Source</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – Open Flame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Enclosed Gas Lamp</td>
<td>43.5% (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Electric/Solar</td>
<td>13.0% (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To calculate the total household wealth score, each individual was given a score from one to three on each of the above markers (e.g. for light source, 1=open flame, 2=enclosed gas lamp, 3=electric/solar). Individuals’ scores on each of the markers were then added together to calculate a total household wealth score, with a maximum possible score of 12. The mean score among participants was 7.2 (SD=1.9), with scores ranging from four to 12. This score was used to examine differences in various characteristics and behaviors of the adolescent participants by level of household wealth, and it is examined specifically in Chapters Eight in the discussion of household wealth among those participants who continued to secondary school and those who did not.
Phase Three: Person-Centered Analysis of Adolescents’ Negotiations of Sexuality

Phase Three of this analysis was intended to address Research Question Three: How do adolescents in rural Mtwara negotiate their own sexuality in the context of these multiple and often conflicting influences? This phase of analysis draws primarily on adolescents’ discussions of their individual sexual experiences from the in-depth interviews, though it was informed by other analysis phases and data sources.

Person-centered analytic techniques (Levy & Hollan, 1998) were used to conduct this phase of analysis. This analysis focused on the various cultural symbols and meanings individual adolescents relied on in representing their own sexual values, beliefs and experiences in the interview context. This analysis examined the ways in which adolescents locate themselves within their community, reflect on their relationships with others, exhibit various emotional responses in discussing specific topics or events, and express their personal ideas and opinions in relation to broader cultural norms and expectations.

Conducting this analysis involved close reading of interview transcripts and reviewing audio recordings to identify the consistency and variability in the way in which adolescents represent their own sexual experiences in relation to existing cultural norms and expectations, environmental constraints, and individual desires and circumstances. Unlike the previous phases of analysis, which focused on aggregating data across multiple participants with the goal of identifying patterns, this type of analysis is primarily focused on close examinations of each individual adolescents’ narratives. This case-by-case approach was done to identify the symbols and references individuals relied
on in describing and assigning meaning to their own sexual experiences relative to their surrounding cultural environment.

4.8 Limitations

The results of this study are subject to potential limitations due to sampling and methodology. First, the sampling method for identifying adolescent participants had to be modified in the course of research due to concern for the privacy of participants. The resulting sample of adolescents used in this research is therefore not exclusively random and may not be representative of all adolescents in rural Mtwara. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, this was a necessary step. Furthermore, by moving participant recruitment out of one village (Mnazi) to multiple satellite villages, the heterogeneity of the sample increased, resulting in a more diverse sample of adolescent participants from rural Mtwara.

Second, the sensitive nature of the research topic increases the likelihood for underreporting of sexual activity among adolescent participants. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter Nine, in a small number of cases there were clear discrepancies in participants’ reports of their own sexual behavior. Though comparative methodological research suggests that in-depth interviews are the most effective way to collect “mostly true” data on sexual activity, the possibility for underreporting cannot be entirely eliminated (Plummer et al., 2004).

Finally, the instrument used in this research (the TDHS) was not utilized in the exact way intended by its developers due to limitations on the number of separate interviews that could be conducted and the need to adapt the survey for use in the
population of rural Mtwara. However, the data that were collected do provide an estimate of certain characteristics of this sample relative to the population of Tanzania.

**4.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a detailed account of the research design and methods used to conduct this research. In this research, I relied on multiple methods, including community ethnography, in-depth interviews with adolescents, participant observation and a structured survey. Using these multiple methods, I collected both quantitative and qualitative data to address my three research questions, and used both qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze these data. In the following chapter, I turn to a discussion of the data collected, specifically those pertaining to the female initiation ritual of unyago.
Chapter Five

Girls’ Initiation Rituals – Unyago

5.0 Overview

In this chapter, I present a detailed description of the female initiation ritual of unyago as practiced by the Makonde tribe of rural Mtwara. The discussion in this chapter addresses three main issues. First, I outline the various types of unyago practiced by the Makonde of rural Mtwara, which is a reflection of the history of the Makonde tribe described in Chapter Three. Second, I examine unyago as a marker of life-stage transition in the context of local categories of child and adolescent development and provide a detailed description of the structure and content of the various stages of this ritual. Finally, within this detailed description of the structure and meaning of unyago as a developmental transition, I also illustrate the various ways in which specific messages related to female sexual roles are communicated in this context.

This chapter will be organized in multiple sections. In Section 5.1, I discuss the ritual’s overall prevalence in the region and variation in the ritual’s practice among the subgroups of the Makonde tribe found within rural Mtwara. In Section 5.2, I describe the structure of these rituals, including their general timing, age of initiation, and the stages that make up each ritual. Then, in Section 5.3, I provide a step-by-step description of the unyago ritual, providing a detailed account of various songs, dances, cleansing rites, ceremonies and other components that make up each stage. This will include a discussion of variation among the different types of rituals described in Section 5.1. Finally, in
Section 5.4 I conclude this chapter by summarizing the aspects of unyago that relate to sexuality and the specific messages communicated in the ritual context.

5.1 The Practice of Unyago in Rural Mtwarad

In this section, I discuss the prevalence of unyago in general and the various types of unyago rituals practiced in rural Mtwarad.

Prevalence of Unyago
d

The word unyago is actually a fairly non-specific word in Kiswahili, used generally to refer to the adolescent initiation rituals that were historically practiced in a wide variety of forms across Tanzania. Until the late 1950s, almost all of the 120 ethnic groups in Tanzania practiced some version of unyago for girls either shortly before or at the time of puberty. However, new socio-economic patterns, urban-to-rural migration and formal education systems have led groups in most other areas in Tanzania to abandon these practices (Beidelman, 1997; Janssen, 2004; Mbunda, 1991; Setel, 1999; Tumbo-Masabo & Liljestrom, 1994). Rural Mtwarad, often referred to as the “last frontier” of Tanzania due to its long history of geographic and economic isolation from the rest of the country, is one of the few areas in which these rituals are still widely practiced (Allen, 2000; Fuglesang, 1997; Mzinga, 2002; Seppalä & Koda, 1998).

With a few important exceptions (Beidelman, 1997; Cory, 1947, 1948; Harries, 1940; Ntukula, 1994; Swantz, 1966), the various forms of unyago (and jando) historically practiced in Tanzania have not been subject to detailed ethnographic examination. Recent accounts produced by non-governmental organizations working on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Tanzania do attempt to describe these rituals (e.g. Bangster, 2010; Tumbo-
Masabo & Liljeström, 1994; UZIKWASA, 2008). However, this research is often approached from a “problem-oriented” perspective based on the underlying assumption that these rituals promote “unhealthy” sexual practices, and therefore cannot be taken as an unbiased description of the rituals. This literature does confirm, however, that the term unyago encompasses a wide variety of adolescent initiation rituals that were practiced among many of the tribal groups of Tanzania, and still continue to be practiced in isolated pockets along in the coastal regions, including Tanga and Lindi (Bangster, 2010; UZIKWASA, 2008). However, the available data are not sufficient to determine whether any versions of unyago still practiced in other regions bear significant similarity to unyago in rural Mtwara.

The data collected as part of this research do confirm that unyago continues to be widely practiced in the rural Mtwara region. Among female interview participants (n=33), 93.9 percent (n=31) reported going through some version of unyago shortly before puberty. Furthermore, of the 293 households included in the Barabara village survey, 98.4 percent (n=289) of households reported that their female children were initiated through some version of the unyago ritual. Before continuing with a description of the rituals, it is necessary to first clarify the different types of unyago that are practiced in the region.

The Four Types of Unyago

As discussed in Chapter Three, the Makonde tribe in rural Mtwara is made up of multiple subgroups, including the Tanzanian Makonde, Mozambican Makonde, and Coastal Makonde. These subgroups reflect the multiple waves of migration that formed
the present-day Makonde tribe, and the ritual of *unyago* also varies across these subgroups. Each version of *unyago* practiced in rural Mtwara takes its name from its final *ngoma* (traditional drumming and dancing ceremony), which takes place in the late afternoon on the second-to-last day of *unyago*, and which also contains the majority of the differences between the different types of *unyago*. The Tanzanian Makonde, who make up the majority of the Makonde in rural Mtwara, practice a version of *unyago* commonly referred to as *chivelevele*. The version of *unyago* practiced by the Mozambican Makonde is almost identical in structure and content to that of the Tanzanian Makonde except for the final *ngoma*, referred to instead as *mkomango*, which is quite distinct in content from the Tanzanian Makonde’s *chivelevele*. Though these two versions of *unyago* do differ in their final *ngoma*, their similarities greatly outnumber their differences, a pattern that likely reflects the close cultural-historical roots of these two groups (Liebenow, 1971).

The Coastal Makonde, on the other hand, are more culturally distinct from both the Mozambican and the Tanzanian Makonde (see Chapter Three for details), and their version of *unyago* reflects these differences. Though the term *unyago* is used to refer to the Coastal Makonde ritual, more often the Arabic term *sunnah* is used. The term *sunnah* in Arabic refers to actions and/or physical or moral attributes that were either done or approved of by the Prophet in his teachings (as opposed to in the Quran) and therefore are considered necessary for all devout Muslims (Matar, 1992). In the case of *unyago*, the term *sunnah* is used to refer to the female circumcision that is done as part of this version of the *unyago* ritual. This may be attributed to the Coastal Makonde’s direct and sustained contact with Arab occupiers during their extended rule of the Tanzanian coast.
lasting until the late 19th century, and their subsequent resistance to attempts at conversion by Christian missionaries in the early 20th century (Liebenow, 1971; Voipio, 1998).

Though participant observation was not conducted in sunnah for reasons discussed below, reports from those participants who went through the circumcision (9 of 33) suggest that the version of circumcision practiced involves a minimal amount of cutting of the female genitalia. The girls described the procedure as painful but quick, involving a small incision in the clitoris or, some reports suggested, in the clitoral prepucce. Such a circumcision would be categorized as either a Type One (partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce) or a Type Four (all other procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes) by the World Health Organization, making it one of the least invasive forms of the practice (World Health Organization, 2011). Though the actual type was not confirmed through participant observation, the girls who had experienced sunnah described only a short length of time spent in unyago following the circumcision (usually one and not more than two weeks). This short period allowed for healing suggests that the cutting involved in the procedure is not extensive. The girls themselves confirmed that they were entirely healed within the period of a week. Indeed, as Salama (age 23) said, “Our circumcision is not a big thing – I felt fine after just three days. The boys have it much harder. They have to stay in jando for over a month just to heal.”

The practice of female circumcision in sunnah represents a departure from the versions of unyago practiced by both the Tanzanian and Mozambican Makonde. In addition, these rituals also differ significantly from the other versions of unyago in their
length and content. *Sunnah*, as practiced by the Coastal Makonde, lasts only one to two weeks in length (as compared to the other versions, which last an entire month) and also does not include the intensive teaching regarding adulthood that the other versions of *unyago* do include. Also in contrast to the other versions of *unyago*, it is not uncommon to conduct *sunnah* without a public “coming out” for the girl. This is in large part related to the recent law making female circumcision illegal in Tanzania and moving many to conduct the practice in secret (The United Republic of Tanzania, 1998). Both for this reason – which represented a significant barrier to access – and because *sunnah* does not involve the teachings regarding sex that were the focus of this research, participant observation in *sunnah* was not conducted.

In addition to varying by tribal subgroup, practices of *unyago* also vary within these subgroups based on religion. Though the majority of Mozambican Makonde are Christian, a small minority of them are Muslim, and this group practices the *chivelele* version of *unyago* similar to that practiced by the Tanzanian Makonde, the majority of whom are also Muslim.22 In addition, Mozambican Makonde will sometimes (but not always) include female circumcision into their *chivelele*. Though two female participants had reported going through *chivelele* and also being circumcised, it was only after conducting participant observation in the final round of initiation rituals (June/July 2010) that this version of *unyago* became clear.

22 The majority of Mozambican Makonde are Christian, reflecting the work of missionaries in Mozambique through the late 19th and early 20th century; see Dias (1961) for more detail. The majority of Tanzanian Makonde are Muslim due to their long history of integration with Arab settlers on the coast of Mtwara, as discussed in Chapter Three.
In attempting to conduct the final participant observation in a *chivelele* version of *unyago*, I inadvertently found myself in the midst of a family dispute over whether circumcision would be performed as part of the ritual or not. The father’s side of the family was Muslim Mozambican Makonde, while the mother’s side of the family was Muslim Tanzanian Makonde. The father’s family wanted circumcision to be included as part of the ritual. However, when the mother’s family protested on the grounds that the mother herself had not been circumcised, the father’s family relented, and the girl passed through *chivelele* similar to that of other Tanzanian Makonde. In addition, in final interviews with two female participants who identified as Muslim Mozambican Makonde, the girls stated that they had gone through *chivelele*. When asked whether they had been circumcised, however, they both said that no, their families had discussed the matter and decided that it was not necessary. The identification of this fourth variation of the *unyago* ritual highlights the high level of diversity within the Makonde tribe, suggests the complex interplay between religion and culture in shaping the *unyago* ritual, and illustrates the flexible and diverse nature of the *unyago* ritual itself.

The distribution of types of *unyago* experienced by all female participants divided by tribal subgroup and religion is listed in Table 7 below.
Table 7: Number of Interview Participants Practicing Each Type of *Unyago* (n=33)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Ritual</th>
<th>Mozambican Makonde</th>
<th>Tanzanian Makonde</th>
<th>Coastal Makonde</th>
<th>Total Number of Interview Participants n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chivelelele</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mkomango</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnah</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chivelelele + Circumcision</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown²⁴</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequencies listed above are not representative of the relative prevalence of each type of ritual practiced in rural Mtwaraw because the home field site of Mnazi – from which one-third of all female participants were drawn – is primarily populated by Coastal Makonde (see Chapter Four for explanation). Therefore the practice of *sunnah* is much more common in Mnazi than in rural Mtwaraw as a whole, in which the majority of residents are Tanzanian Makonde. This is reflected in the *unyago* experiences of females in just the Mnazi sample (n=11), 54.5 percent (n=6) of which experienced *sunnah*, while

²³ All Coastal Makonde participants identified as Muslim.
²⁴ One of these participants went through an unusual, shortened version of *unyago* that seemed to be meant to be “contemporary.” The second participant referred to her experience as *unyago*, but the structure of the ritual she described was similar to *sunnah*. However, the participant herself denies being circumcised. That may indeed be the case, or she may have chosen to hide her circumcision because such action is illegal.
only three (27.2%) experienced *mkomango* and two (18.1%) experienced *chivelele*. In addition, those two individuals from Mnazi who experienced *chivelele* had, in both cases, traveled inland to conduct the practices with relatives. The home field site is, however, located only a few kilometers from the border with Mozambique. Therefore, the Mozambican Makonde do make up a small percentage of the village population, as reflected by the three *mkomango* participants in the Mnazi sample.

These data suggest the following typology, outlined in Table 8, of *unyago* practice based on tribal subgroup:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribal Subgroup</th>
<th>Coastal Makonde</th>
<th>Tanzanian Makonde</th>
<th>Mozambican Makonde</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritual Type</td>
<td>Sunnah</td>
<td>Chivelele</td>
<td>Mkomango</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Barabara survey, conducted in the final stages of research in part to test this typology (see Chapter Four), provides an additional window into the various versions of the *unyago* ritual that are practiced in rural Mtwara. First and foremost, it confirms the widespread practice of *unyago* in general: of the 239 households surveyed, 98.4 percent (n=235) practiced some version of *unyago* and only 0.8 percent (n=2) practiced none.\(^{25}\) As discussed in Chapter Four, Barabara was chosen for this survey because of its diverse population. Indeed, Barabara is a “crossroads” village, literally situated at the crossroads

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\(^{25}\) Data was missing for two households
between the road to Mozambique, the coast, and the inland plateau, and therefore is populated by a mix of different subgroups of the Makonde tribe. The data collected therefore allowed for further examination of the frequency of the four different *unyago* rituals described above and their association with tribal subgroup and religion.

To examine this relationship, the data were subdivided by households which stated a cultural identification as either Mozambican, Tanzanian, or Coastal Makonde. These three groups were then examined separately by religious affiliation and type of *unyago* practiced (*Chivelelele*, *Mkomango*, *Sunnah*, or *Chivelelele* with Circumcision). Of the 239 households interviewed, 196 were included in this analysis because they identified as one of the three subgroups of Makonde (others were emigrants from other regions) and had complete data for all variables under investigation.

Table 9 illustrates the type of *unyago* practiced by just those participants who identified as Mozambican Makonde.

**Table 9: Type of *Unyago* Practiced by Religion for Mozambican Makonde (n=31)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Chivelelele n (%)</th>
<th>Mkomango n (%)</th>
<th>Chivelelele Circumcision n (%)</th>
<th>Total n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>5 (16.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (16.1%)</td>
<td>10 (32.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21 (67.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21 (67.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5 (16.1%)</td>
<td>21 (67.7%)</td>
<td>5 (16.1%)</td>
<td>31 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, the majority (67.7%, n=21) of households that stated their cultural affiliation as Mozambican Makonde also identified as Christian, and all reported
mkomango as the version of unyago practiced in their household. An additional 32.2% (n=10) were Muslim, but none practiced mkomango. Instead it was found that all practiced chivelevele, with 50.0 percent (5 of 10) choosing to include circumcision as part of the ritual. These data are consistent with the typology outlined in Table 8 above.

Table 10 illustrates the type of unyago practiced by just those participants who identified as Tanzanian Makonde.

Table 10: Type of Unyago Practiced by Religion for Tanzanian Makonde (n=132)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Chivelevele n (%)</th>
<th>Mkomango n (%)</th>
<th>Total n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>126 (95.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>126 (95.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>5 (3.7%)</td>
<td>1 (0.8%)</td>
<td>6 (4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>131 (99.2%)</td>
<td>1 (0.8%)</td>
<td>132 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, this population outnumbers both Mozambican and Coastal Makonde, with 132 of 196 households (67.3%) identifying as Tanzanian Makonde. Among all Tanzanian Makonde (n=132), 95.4 (n=126) identified as Muslim, and all of these households reported practicing chivelevele, with no households reporting including circumcision. There were, however, five Christian households that reported practicing chivelevele and one case in which a household identified as Tanzanian Makonde but is Christian and practices mkomango. These data are discrepant with the typology outlined above. Though these data were collected anonymously and therefore could not be examined in follow-up, it is likely that these discrepant cases are the result of the close
cultural ties among the various subgroups of Makonde who all live together in small villages, intermarry (although not frequently across religious lines) and celebrate these rituals together. Indeed, it is possible that these cases are the result of marriage across religious or sub-groups of the Makonde and therefore the type of *unyago* ritual practiced may be negotiated by the families.

Finally, Table 11 illustrates the type of *unyago* practiced by just those participants who identified as Coastal Makonde.

**Table 11: Type of Unyago Practiced by Religion for Coastal Makonde (n=33)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Chivelevele n (%)</th>
<th>Sunnah n (%)</th>
<th>Total n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>4 (12.2%)</td>
<td>29 (87.8%)</td>
<td>33 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4 (12.2%)</td>
<td>29 (87.8%)</td>
<td>33 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All households which identified as Coastal Makonde also identified as Muslim, and of these households, 87.8 percent (n=29) reported practicing *sunnah*. The remaining four households, which all report practicing *chivelevele* without circumcision, are discrepant with the typology outlined in Table 8 above. Again, this may be the result of intermarriage between Tanzanian Makonde and Coastal Makonde, both groups which are Muslim and often do intermarry, but could not be explored through follow-up.

Table 12 illustrates the total frequencies of the different types of *unyago* practiced based on the three tribal subgroups of Makonde and religious affiliation:
Table 12: Type of *Unyago* Practiced by Religion for All Survey Participants (n=196)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Chivelele n (%)</th>
<th>Mkomango n (%)</th>
<th>Chivelele with Circumcision n (%)</th>
<th>Sunnah n (%)</th>
<th>Total n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>135 (68.9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (2.5%)</td>
<td>29 (14.8%)</td>
<td>179 (91.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>5 (2.5%)</td>
<td>22 (12.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27 (13.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140 (71.4%)</td>
<td>22 (12.2%)</td>
<td>5 (2.5%)</td>
<td>29 (14.8%)</td>
<td>196 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though this sample was not collected randomly (see Chapter Four for details), and therefore cannot be taken as representative of the exact frequency of each type of *unyago* practiced in rural Mtwara, it does suggest that the typology outlined in Table 8 above is consistent with the different types of *unyago* practiced in rural Mtwara. Furthermore, it also suggests that *chivelele* is the most common type of *unyago* practiced in rural Mtwara, both because the majority in this sample practice *chivelele*, and because the majority of the residents are Muslim Tanzanian Makonde, who, according to this typology, most commonly practice *chivelele*.

**Participant Observation of Different Types of *Unyago***

As discussed in Chapter Four, in order to collect data in multiple *unyago* rituals in a limited time, a research team was assembled and positioned in multiple different field sites during the December/January *unyago* season. These efforts resulted in data collection through participant observation in the *chivelele* ritual of the Tanzanian Makonde in two field sites, and in the *mkomango* ritual of the Christian Mozambican
Makonde in two other field sites. Furthermore, one additional observation of the *chivelelele* ritual of the Muslim Mozambican Makonde was conducted during the June/July *unyago* season. As mentioned above, observations in the *sunnah* ritual of the Coastal Makonde were not conducted for both practical and theoretical reasons. The total number of female initiates (called *wali*) observed in these *unyago* rituals was 34, with a breakdown by village where the observations were conducted, type of ritual, and cultural group illustrated in Table 13 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Group</th>
<th>Tanzanian Makonde (Muslim)</th>
<th>Mozambican Makonde (Christian)</th>
<th>Mozambican Makonde (Muslim)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ritual Type</td>
<td>Chivelelele</td>
<td>Mkomango</td>
<td>Chivelelele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Name</td>
<td>Mlimani</td>
<td>Mtoni</td>
<td>Barabara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Wali</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high number of *wali* observed in the Mlimani ritual was related to the way in which the ceremonies were conducted in this village. In Mlimani, village leaders coordinated all families who were initiating their girls to share costs and responsibilities, making it possible to observe a large number of *wali* who had been assembled together in one location. In Mtoni, two extended family groups also chose to join together to coordinate their rituals, resulting in a larger group of eight initiates. These large groups do not appear to be the norm, however. Among female participants who went through *unyago* (n=24\(^{26}\)), 87.5 percent (n=21) went through *unyago* in a group of four or less *wali*, with two *wali* being the median for all girls. The mean number of *wali* is 3.9 (SD=4.8), however, because three of the girls went though *unyago* with groups of *wali*.

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\(^{26}\) Includes all participants who went through either *chivelelele* or *mkomango*, but not *sunnah*. 
numbering between 10 and 20. This suggests that large group initiations, such as the group observed in Mlimani, do occur in other parts of rural Mtwara.

In the following two sections, I turn to a close examination of the structure and content of the unyago ritual. As mentioned above, the structure of the different types of rituals is virtually identical, with the main difference observed in the final ngoma between the chivelelele and the mkomango rituals. Therefore, the close ethnographic examination of the structure and content of the unyago ritual presented in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 below is relevant to both chivelelele and mkomango, with the exception of the content of the final ngoma, for which a separate explanation of chivelelele and mkomango will be provided. Furthermore, from this point forward, the term “unyago” will be used to refer only to the chivelelele/mkomango rituals in all cases where the rituals are similar in structure and content.

5.2 The Structure of Unyago

In this section, I discuss the various aspects of the structure of the unyago ritual. I first examine the timing of the ritual, which is practiced during two distinct periods of the year. I then examine the typical age of initiation for girls in rural Mtwara and discuss the relationship between age of initiation and locally-salient markers of human development. Finally, I describe the primary stages involved in unyago and the key events and ceremonies that take place during each stage.

Timing of Unyago

Unyago is usually conducted over the period of approximately one month, most commonly from mid-December to mid-January, but also on occasion from mid-June to
mid-July. Among all female participants who went through *unyago* (n=24), 70.8 percent (n=17) had gone through the ritual in December/January, 8.3 percent (n=2) had gone through the ritual in June/July, and 20.8 percent (n=5) could not remember. In interviews with adolescents, community leaders, and ritual leaders, the most common reason given for conducting the rituals primarily during the December/January time period was to ensure that the children do not miss school. In Tanzania, the school year runs concurrently with the calendar year, with public primary schools opening in mid-January and closing in mid-December, and a break of approximately one month from mid-June to mid-July. Girls typically begin *unyago* within a week of closing school and often come out just one or two days before schools opens.

Available accounts of *jando* and *unyago* (in particular Cory, 1947, 1948; Harries, 1940; Liebenow, 1971; Weule, 1909), suggest that during the colonial period, both *jando* and *unyago* took place over a period lasting between two and three months, which is significantly longer than the one month period used for these rituals today. As the December/January and June/July periods are the only times during the year when girls (and boys going to *jando*) are free from school for an extended period of time, it is possible that the rituals were adapted to fit within these time periods with the introduction of primary education following independence. While the length of these rituals does explain the need to conduct them during school breaks, it does not explain the preference for the December/January time period.

Indeed, though the practice of the rituals is synchronized with the formal education schedule, the preference for the December/January time period over the June/July period is also linked to agricultural cycles. Late June through September is the
harvest season for the primary crops in the area, and this makes a June/July unyago ceremony difficult for two reasons. First, it is simultaneous with the beginning of the harvest season during which all family members’ labor is typically needed on the farm, and therefore is not available for planning and carrying out rituals. Second, although it is simultaneous with the beginning of the harvest, it is also the end of the “hungry season,” when families’ food supplies from the previous year are low, and cash is also scarce. Because the unyago rituals require families to have significant amounts of cash and food supplies on hand to feed hungry guests and buy necessary supplies, a June/July unyago ritual is difficult to conduct for most families in rural Mtwara, the majority of which depend primarily on farming for their livelihood.

Age of Initiation for Girls

The exact age at which a girl goes to unyago can vary significantly, from as young as six up to age 12. This variation can be explained by a number of factors. First and foremost, in rural Mtwara as a whole, age is not a characteristic which individuals closely track. Most people live without calendars or clocks but instead run their lives by the rise and set of the sun and the cycle of tilling, planting and harvesting. This was made particularly apparent during the consent process: when signing consents, individuals almost invariably did not know the date, or even the month, and many also did not know the calendar year. Participants often struggled to state their age in interviews, and on multiple occasions participants stated their age as up to three years different in separate interviews conducted only a couple of months apart.
Given this lack of focus on age in the community as a whole, it is not surprising that in interviews with walombo (ritual leaders) and in discussions with the wali’s family members during participant observation, the appropriate “age” for a girl to go to unyago was virtually never stated quantitatively, but always qualitatively. Indeed, the responses given in interviews with walombo (n=9) all indicated that a girl should be initiated when she is mkubwa kidogo, which translates to “a little bit big.” The women then listed events that unyago needed to occur before, most commonly before kuota matiti, meaning, “to begin to grow breasts.” This physical change is one of the earliest visible markers of the onset of puberty, occurring an average of two years before menarche (W. Marshall & Tanner, 1969). Indeed, unyago is intentionally conducted before puberty in order to prepare girls for their transition to reproductive maturity.

Among all female participants who went through unyago (n=24), the mean age of initiation was 10.3 (SD=1.3), with the youngest girl initiated at age 7 and the oldest at age 12. The mean age of menarche was 14.6 (SD=1.1), with the youngest participants reaching puberty at age 12 and the oldest at age 16. When girls’ age of puberty was compared with age of unyago (n=18), a mean difference of 4.1 (SD=1.9) years was found, with a minimum of one year and a maximum of nine years between these two events. Given that the age at which girls develop breast buds is two years before menarche, an average age of menarche of 14 would put the average at which girls begin puberty at 12. Furthermore, the youngest participant reported an age of menarche of 12, suggesting that breast growth is visible in some girls as young as ten. Given the importance of completing the rituals before any appearance of breast growth, it appears
that girls go through *unyago* around age ten to ensure that the rituals do occur before the onset of puberty.

For *wali* observed through participation in their *unyago* rituals, age of initiation was significantly lower than the 10.3 average from the adolescent interview sample, with a mean age of initiation of 8.4 (SD = 1.9). The youngest girl initiated was six years old and oldest 12. This difference can be understood, however, when examining age differences by field site. In Mlimani, where the rituals were coordinated at the village level, girls were initiated significantly younger than in the other field sites. The mean ages of the *wali* when compared by field site are illustrated in Table 14 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Site</th>
<th>Mlimani (n=21)</th>
<th>Mtoni (n=8)</th>
<th>Barabara (n=4)</th>
<th>Mnazi (n=1)</th>
<th>Total All Sites (n=34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age (SD)</td>
<td>7.4 (1.5)</td>
<td>9.5 (1.3)</td>
<td>10.5 (1.3)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.4 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the average ages of the initiates in the other three field sites do not differ from the ages reported in person-centered interviews with adolescent girls, Mlimani is considerably lower. Though the exact reasons are unclear, two issues identified during the course of participant observation may in part explain this difference.

First, in interviews with *walombo* and discussions with women during participant observation, the primary emphasis was placed on ensuring that the rituals were done *before* puberty. While there is a clear “ceiling” signaling when *unyago* would be too late, there is not an equivalent physical marker that must be observed before a girl can go to *unyago*. When *walombo* and the families of the *wali* were questioned as to how they...
knew a girl was “ready” to go to *unyago*, descriptions were inexact. In addition to being, “a little bit big,” as mentioned above, eight out of nine *walombo* also mentioned that a girl should also *kuwa na akili zake*, meaning, “to have his/her sense.” However, there is no physical or cognitive test given to children to measure whether they meet these criteria, and it is left to the child’s adult relatives to decide when they will go to *unyago*.

The characteristic of “having sense” does suggest a convergence of local developmental timescales and the “5 to 7 shift,” the term used in developmental psychology to refer to the cognitive shift that occurs between the ages of five and seven in which children gain additional skills related to thinking and learning (R. LeVine & New, 2008; Piaget, 1973; Vygotski, 1962; S. White, 1970). Indeed, such a shift has been identified across a wide variety of cultural environments, with the most common characteristics including increased household responsibilities, a shift in the severity and types of punishments for social transgressions, and the general expectation that the child is now “teachable,” (Rogoff, Sellers, Pirrotta, & White, 1975). In addition, the expectation that a child be “a little bit big,” is consistent with the physical growth spurt that usually occurs in tandem with this cognitive shift, around age six or seven (Meredith, 1969). The wide recognition of this shift cross-culturally, as well as the description of “having sense,” and being “a little bit big,” as signs of readiness to go to *unyago*, suggest that this 5 to 7 shift may mark the lower “floor” for age of initiation.

If the “5 to 7 shift” and its associated growth spurt are indeed the markers of readiness for *unyago*, then the age range within which girls in Mlimani were initiated – ranging from six to 11 years – does fall within the same developmental window (between the cognitive shift/growth spurt and the first signs of puberty) as other sites. This lower
average age may simply reflect regional variation in the practice of *unyago*, or an unusually large cohort of girls initiated during this given period, but it does not appear to reflect a significantly different belief structure regarding the developmental stage at which *unyago* should be practiced. Regardless, it is clear that the majority of girls go through *unyago* sometime during middle to late childhood, with all *wali* observed reporting a current age between six and 12 years old, and all adolescent interview participants reportedly initiated between the ages of seven to 12.

Passage through *unyago* in rural Mtwara represents the transition of the young girls from *anahaku*, translated as “childhood,” to a new developmental stage referred to as *ukubwa*, which translates as “bigness.” Among all female interview participants who went through *unyago* (*n*=24), 91.7 percent (*n*=22) recognized *unyago* as marking their transition to *ukubwa* in their interviews. For example, as Sihami (age 15) described, “Once you have gone through *unyago*, you know that now you are in *ukubwa*, and you are not longer a small child.” This stage of *ukubwa* is similar to “adolescence,” as it is the stage during which individuals are transitioning to adult life. However, the *unyago* ritual is not done at the time of puberty, a marker typically used to indicate the beginning of adolescence, but in preparation for puberty (Schlegel & Barry, 1991; J. Whiting et al., 1986). This means that in Mtwara, girls make the social transition to adolescence before the biological transition of puberty. This is consistent with the cross-cultural literature on initiation rituals, which suggests that in many societies where initiation rituals are practiced, these rites are actually conducted in preparation for – and not in response to – the physical changes of puberty (Herdt & McClintock, 2000).
In rural Mtwara, therefore, the adolescent life stage for girls begins before the first signs of puberty, and is marked by the initiation in unyago. In interviews with female walombo (n=9), all emphasized the importance of going through unyago before reaching puberty because (as will be discussed further in Chapter Seven) puberty is the common point at which girls in rural Mtwara become sexually active. In addition, seven of the nine walombo interviewed also mentioned that unyago must occur before puberty because once she reached puberty, a girl is ready kuolewa, meaning “to be married.” Indeed, historical accounts of unyago suggest that during the colonial period Makonde girls were married soon after reaching puberty. As will be discussed further in Chapter Seven, even today girls in rural Mtwara who do not continue to secondary school are still married in the mid to late teenage years, soon after reaching puberty (Harries, 1940; Liebenow, 1971; Weule, 1909).

Interviews with adolescent participants indicated that, as in many other cultural contexts, marriage is considered the primary marker of the transition out of ukubwa and into utu mzima, meaning adulthood (Schlegel & Barry, 1991; J. Whiting et al., 1986). Among all male participants (n=36), 86.1 percent (n=31) identified marriage as a marker of adulthood for boys, and among female participants (n=33), 90.9 percent (n=30) identified marriage as the marker of adulthood for girls. In this cultural environment, then, the normative developmental pathway for girls includes a relatively short adolescent life stage beginning at unyago, shortly before puberty, and ending in marriage, soon after puberty. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, this is different for boys and girls, in part because of differing expectations of economic independence. I return to this topic of normative developmental pathways in Chapters Seven and Eight to discuss additional
biopsychological/environmental/economic and cultural influences underlying these developmental norms, as well as the impact of recent changes on these norms, particularly for girls.

The Stages of Unyago

Before examining the ritual of unyago in detail, I will first give brief overview of the basic stages of unyago as a guide for the more detailed discussion of the content of each of these stages in Section 5.3 below. The ritual of unyago includes an opening ceremony intended to prepare the wali for their initiation, continues with a month-long period of seclusion from the community, and ends with a celebration reintroducing the girls to the community. This structure reflects the three-stage processual view of ritual (see Chapter Two Background), with the first stage involving separation from society, a second transitional (“liminal”) period of transformation, and a final celebration to mark the initiates’ reincorporation into society as individuals with a new social status (Turner, 1967, 1969; van Gennep, 1909).

The ritual of unyago begins when the girls who will be initiated are called together by their parents and close female relatives into a designated room in the family’s house (or in a nearby house that has excess space, if possible). This room, called lipanda, will be the room where the girls will come together with the walombo (ritual leaders), and their female family members ranging in age from their older sisters to great-grandmothers, to conduct the core ceremonies of unyago.

The first of these core ceremonies is the opening ngoma. This ngoma begins late on the first evening after the girls have been put in lipanda and continues through the
night until dawn the next morning. This opening *ngoma* is composed of a series of cleansing and protective rituals performed by the *walombo* to prepare and protect the girls for the period of *unyago*, as well as an introduction to a series of key concepts, ideas, and skills that the girls will be expected to master while in *unyago*.

At dawn on the second day of *unyago*, each *mwali* (singular for *wali* or initiates) is taken back to her home by her female relatives and put in a designated room where she will sleep, eat, and spend much of the rest of her time in *unyago*. When she leaves the *lipanda*, she will be wearing a single *kanga* (traditional cloth) crossed and tied around her neck, and another draped over her head to hide her face, such that she must be led by hand to her home.

For the next three weeks, each *mwali* remain in the company of only females, and will spend most of her time in a designated room in her family’s house that male relatives are not allowed to enter. If there are other *wali* living close by, the girls will gather together in an empty room of one of the family’s houses or, if the families live near the edge of the village, in a designated clearing in the ubiquitous dense forest that surrounds the village. This space, referred to as *chiputu*, is the space used for *kushinda*, meaning to practice the many songs and dances of *unyago* so that they are ready for their performance at the closing ceremony.

Whether a *mwali* is alone or in a group, the initiates will be regularly visited throughout these middle days by *wakolomwali*, girls not much older than the *wali* who have passed through *unyago* in recent years. It is these girls who conduct the majority of the teaching in *unyago*. The wali themselves only meet with the *walombo* once during
these middle days for a brief ceremony called *kuloweka mtama*. This ceremony is done in the afternoon two weeks before the final *ngoma*, and its main purpose is to bless and soak the sorghum that will be used to make a porridge used in the final *ngoma*.

During this time the girls, who would usually be responsible for a significant portion of the household labor, including cooking, cleaning, fetching water and childcare for younger siblings, are not allowed to do any such work. Their meals are brought to them and their dishes cleared when finished. In addition, the girls regularly apply a mixture of ash and water to their skin, which is believed to cause the skin to lighten. They also have a white cloth tied in a wide band across their foreheads just above their eyes such that they have to tilt their head up to see straight ahead. These provisions of *unyago* are intended to cause a physical transformation of the child. It is intended that a girl gain weight and become lighter in skin color while she is in *unyago*, both considered markers of beauty and health among the Makonde. Indeed, as the girls perform no labor, are fed as generously as their family can manage, stay out of the sun, and cover their bodies and faces, there is a visible, physical change in the appearance of these girls after the month of *unyago*. The girls are not allowed to leave the house except to go to *chiputu* or to the bathroom, both of which must be done while covered from head to toe to escape any nearby male eyes.

The *wali* will typically not see the *walombo* again until the final *ngoma*. It is here that the rituals of *chivelevele* and *mkomango* differ in a number of ways. Indeed, as mentioned in section 5.1 above, the words *chivelevele* and *mkomango* also refer specifically to this final *ngoma*. The final days of *unyago* are structured a bit differently for the two rituals and these differences will be explained in greater detail below. In
general, though, both final *ngoma* are conducted in a designated place in the forest far from houses and regularly traveled paths. The *ngoma* are conducted in the late afternoon on the day before the ending of the *unyago* ceremony. After completing *chivelele* or *mkomango*, the *wali* return from the forest as the sun in setting and the women stay up until dawn the following morning singing, dancing, drinking and celebrating.

After the sun has come up on the final day of *unyago*, the *walombo* conduct a closing series of ceremonies with the sleepy *wali* to prepare them to *kuaruka*, meaning to come out of *unyago* and be reintroduced to the community. When they have finished, the girls are ritually bathed, oiled, perfumed, and dressed in all new clothes, shoes, and jewelry. The ritual leaders then lead them out of the house to the cheers of the waiting crowd. They are positioned in front of the dancing, singing crowd, the members of which come forward one by one *kufupa*, to contribute money, to the *wali* and their *walombo*. Though the girls must look solemn, all ritual participants (n=34) reported that this was a joyful occasion for them. For all of the girls, this was the first time in their lives they had ever had access to money of their own to spend as they wished, and for many it was also the first time they had worn brand new, store-bought clothes.

When the ceremony of *kufupa* is complete, all of the guests are offered large trays of rice with a sauce of fish or greens, and then the celebration continues in earnest. The party will include music (either contemporary music played over speakers, traditional drumming, or a Muslim *mauridi* ceremony) and dancing, and often conspicuous consumption of significant amounts of locally-brewed beer. Depending on the size of the cohort of *wali* who are coming out on a given day, the celebration may last late into the night, or even to the following day. However, the ritual of *unyago* is officially complete
following the ceremony kufupa, and the now “big” wali are left to run free around the community, playing with their friends, showing off their new clothes, and trying to get additional contributions out of friends and neighbors.

5.3 Detailed Description of Unyago

In this section, I provide a detailed description of the content of each stage. Unless otherwise specified, ethnographic examples described below are representative of events occurring in both the chivelevele and mkomango versions of unyago. These examples are drawn both from participant observation in the rituals and from discussions with the wali, their families and the ritual leaders.

Notes on the Presentation of Data

The ethnographic descriptions of the opening and closing ngoma of the unyago ritual presented below consist of long excerpts drawn directly from observers’ field notes, and therefore analysis or explanation will not be interwoven into the descriptions of these two stages. The reasons for this presentation style are as follows:

First, this presentation of “thick” ethnographic descriptions of these rituals as experienced in participant observation are intended to provide the reader with the opportunity to “experience” the details of unyago as the observers themselves did – that is, as a series of seemingly chaotic, rapidly-occurring sequence of activities that appear at first both disorganized and fraught with deep and opaque layers of meaning (Geertz, 1973). In the many ceremonies that make up unyago, the walombo employ a variety of pedagogical techniques, including songs, dances, riddles, play-acting, physical violence, and deceit to teach the lessons of unyago. They do so using language heavily-laden with
symbols and metaphors, which must be interpreted using broader cultural scripts of meaning relevant to the cultural environment of rural Mtwarra. Therefore, many of the conclusions regarding what is “taught” in these rituals are necessarily based on interpretation of complex, symbolic expressions of these basic “lessons.” By presenting the description of the rituals as essentially raw data, it is intended that that the reader gain a better sense of the ritual environment as experienced by the researcher, and therefore be able to follow the process of interpretation and analysis of the events of unyago presented in the following chapters from beginning to end.

In addition, the context in which the events of unyago are conducted is also described in detail because, as will be discussed further in Section 5.4, it is the context of these rituals themselves that in part gives them their influence over their young participants. The environment of this “rite of passage” creates a “liminal” space in which initiates are considered to be “betwixt and between,” life stages and thereby existing essentially outside of the normative social structure (Turner, 1967, 1969; van Gennep, 1909). In this liminal space, behavioral taboos and norms of social interactions are often broken, and it is the breaking of many of these social rules in unyago that gives particular weight to the ritual events and ensures that the young wali will pay careful attention to the messages communicated therein. Indeed, as Richards (1956) emphasizes in her study of Bemba initiation, transmission of knowledge cannot be the primary goal of ritual because this does not explain the need for the elaborate practices surrounding this form of “education.” On the contrary, Richards argues that the purpose of rituals is to lend symbolic weight and psychological salience to the learning of otherwise normative
cultural norms and values. For this reason, extended descriptions of these rituals are used to illustrate the role of context in teaching the “lessons” of unyago.

These descriptions of unyago are intended to provide a picture of the rituals as seen by the researcher. There are a few exceptions, however. In describing the rituals, I have incorporated, when possible, indications of how the young initiates themselves perceive these events as they unfolded. This is done to provide insight into how the initiates themselves experience these rituals. Segments of the description which suggest how the girls may be feeling or perceiving certain aspects of these rituals are based on discussions with the girls themselves during the many days spent together in unyago. In addition, I have, when describing events of particular significance, included a brief explanation of the symbolic meaning of these events in parentheses. Unless indicated below, this information was not explained during the ritual but was elicited through interviews with ritual leaders at a later time. It is important to keep in mind that the symbolic meaning of many of these practices of unyago were not given to the wali themselves, and therefore are not understood by them. Finally, the middle (and longest) stage of unyago is presented in a slightly different format for reasons discussed in the introduction to that part of the discussion.

Part One: The Opening Ngoma

I begin with an extended description of the events of the opening ngoma that signifies the official start to the unyago ritual. This description is drawn from a single observation conducted in Barabara village, but it was chosen because it contained all of the key elements documented in the other ritual observations.
Tatu suspected her time was coming, but was still surprised. It was a Saturday morning, December 19th. School had been out for almost a week, and Tatu was sure that this would be her year to go to unyago. She was already going to be in fourth grade when the school year started in January, and some of her classmates had already passed through the ritual last year, leaving her curious about what actually went on in the rituals and anxious to join the social status of her peers. She was also jealous of the many presents, new clothes and money that were showered on her peers who went to unyago last year. Tatu had never known what it was like to have money of her own to spend as she pleased, and when she thought about it, she became impatient with anticipation.

But that morning it all started happening. Tatu’s mother called her into her grandmother’s house next door. Tatu entered and found her mother, her aunt (her father’s sister), and her grandmother sitting in the dim light on the woven straw mat on the dirt floor of her grandmother’s house with her cousin Asha and her friend Rehema, who were both around her age, and their mothers. Tatu’s aunt solemnly told the girls that under no circumstances were they allowed to leave the room for the rest of the day. If they needed to use the toilet, they were instructed to cover their heads with a kanga and have Tatu’s older cousin, Hawa, lead them to the toilet out back and quickly to return inside. Tatu knew that this was it – her time to kuwekwa ndani (to be “put inside”) – and did not question her aunt’s instructions.

Before the women left them alone, they sat each girl on the floor in turn and carefully shaved her head, and then the mother of each girl had her head shaved. The
hair was collected as it was shaved off, and Tatu’s aunt threw the hair in the forest where no one could find it. (If a *mchawi*, a witch, found the hair, he or she could use it to harm the girls through witchcraft, and because the period while young girls are in *unyago* is considered a spiritually vulnerable time, every precaution was taken to protect the girls.)

After their heads were shaved, the girls were left alone in the house, and the older women left to cut firewood in the forest and harvest leaves from their cassava fields to be cooked for the many guests who would be coming over the next few days. They returned home around 3pm, and by this time more women had started to gather behind Tatu’s grandmother’s house. Some brought their large mortars and pestles made from the trunks of sapling trees and used them to pound the cassava leaves that had been gathered that morning. They also set to work pounding large quantities of dried cassava root, which Tatu’s mother had been saving for this occasion over the course of the year, into flour for *ugali* (a stiff porridge made from flour and water). Other women brought winnowing trays and home-made sieves for sifting the small bits of hard cassava out of the newly-ground flour so that the *ugali* would not taste as though it had sand in it. The women, who now numbered more than 20, worked in efficient coordination, with the older women sifting the flour and singing as the younger women hoisted the heavy pestles to grind the cassava in time with the beat of the songs.

They filled a 20-gallon bag with flour, and Tatu’s mother left the group to start cooking a portion of the *ugali* together with the *kisamvu* (fried cassava leaves). By this time Tatu’s male relatives and neighbors had returned. Tatu’s young male cousins were also going through the rituals this year, and the men had gone to build the tree and thatch hut in the woods where the boys would stay as they recovered from their circumcision.
(see Chapter Six). All of the men ate in the front of the house, while the women dug into pots of *ugali* and *kisamvu* in groups in the back, and Tatu and her friends ate inside the house.

When they were full, the women dispersed to their homes to cook the evening meal for their families, and the men sat on logs in front of the house talking and slowing getting drunk on *gongo*, the distilled local liquor Tatu’s mother had made from the fruits of the cashew tree to sell during the opening *ngoma* and help fund the final celebration that would come at the end of *unyago*. At 9pm, Tatu and her two fellow *wali* were given a large meal of *kisamvu* and *ugali*. They sat on the dirt floor and listened to the people who were beginning to gather outside. One of the men picked up an old bucket and began to bang out a rhythm. Peering through the small spaces in the mud walls of the house, the girls could see men and women begin to dance in circles, and they giggled with embarrassment as they watched their relatives chant as they danced:

> She laid on her back for the money, eeh  
> She laid there just for the money!

The girls laughed even harder as the mother of one of their friends who lived nearby jumped in the middle of the circle and began to *kukata viuno* (to shake one’s hips back and forth) rapidly while she sang:

> Don’t ask, don’t ask if I leave  
> [I am] Jastini wa Malamba  
> Don’t ask if I leave  
> Don’t ask when I leave  
> Who was that woman who was dancing inside [the circle]  
> Don’t ask behind me  
> [I am] Jastini wa Malamba  
> Don’t ask behind me!
The dancing continued to increase in intensity until almost 11pm, when the *walombo* finally arrived to officially begin the ceremony. As the *walombo* approached the crowd the group erupted in a chorus of *vigelegele* and *ndelembo*. As they cheered, the women, who were now numbered almost 30, danced in a line following the *walombo* into the house where the girls waited.

The women, old and young, crowded into the small room and shut the door against the crowd of men outside, who continued with their singing, dancing and drinking. The women packed themselves together in a circle, leaving a small opening in the middle of the group. The *walombo* passed the two carved wooden drums they had arrived with to the surrounding women, two of whom immediately straddled and began to play a synchronous beat on the taught animal skins pulled across the rims of the drums.

The women joined in song, clapping their hands to the beat of the drums:

Eeeh sing mama!
I want to dance, my legs are itching!
Sing eeeh!
Dance this way and sing so you know!

As the women sang the chorus over and over, the women took turns dancing furiously in the small circle made in the middle of the tightly packed group of women.

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27 Refers to different styles of ululation used in Makonde celebrations. They are traditionally done only by women.

28 The style of dancing did differ slightly by the *chivelevele* and *mkomango* versions of the rituals. For the *chivelevele*, the women danced upright and moved their hips rapidly side to side, a style referred to as *kukata viuno*. In the *mkomango* version, on the other hand, the style of dancing, called *kucheza mgongo*, involved bending forward with a straight back until the torso is almost parallel with the floor, and then shuffling in opposite directions, one forward and one backward, while holding the shoulders completely still. This has the effect of making the buttocks and lower back swing side to side, though not as quickly as in the *chivelevele* style. In the *mkomango* style, the women will also do the *kukata viuno* style of dancing, but not as frequently.
Initially, the women seemed to ignore the three wali, who were looking at them with wide eyes from the corner of the room. But after a few rounds of dancing, the walombo called the girls to sit in front of them. They removed all of the girls’ clothes, laid a large black cloth, called a kaniki, down on the floor and ordered the girls to lie side by side on their stomachs on the cloth. (The walombo explained that the wali must be completely naked to imitate the state they were in at birth, signifying the girls’ rebirth into a new stage of life through the ritual process.) The walombo removed a small clay pot containing a black paste from their bag and, moving from one girl to the next, rubbed their bodies from head to toe with the paste. (This dawa (spiritual medicine) was made from the seeds of a watermelon that had been finely pounded and blessed, giving it the power to remove uchafu (both spiritual and physical dirt) from the girl’s body.) This activity continued for each girl in turn until all three were cleansed and sitting on the kaniki in a row, legs outstretched in front of them. During the half-hour that this activity continued, the women randomly broke out in chanting or singing to amuse themselves, and then would fall quiet and chat with each other and watch the girls as they were scrubbed with the paste.

By the time this activity was finished it was almost midnight, and the walombo retired to the backyard of the house and waited for the wali’s mothers to bring them food. The girls were left lying naked on black cloth and, with the women sitting and chatting around them, they fell asleep as they waited for the walombo to return.

The walombo ate heartily and then returned inside. It was only now, at almost 1am, that the ngoma began in earnest. The wali, who were still lying naked on their stomachs in a line on the black kaniki, were now told to turn over onto their backs. The
walombo removed all of their clothes except their underwear, and each mlombo straddled one of the girls. The girls were now fully awake and stunned to see the old women standing, unashamed of their nakedness, in front of a crowd of women. Both of the walombo then squatted and began to rub her backside back and forth across the girl’s legs, slowly moving up the girl’s body from her ankles to her hips. This continued until each mlombo had passed over each mwali, and was accompanied by drumming as one of the women sang:

To walk at night isn’t good
Because you might catch someone
Lying on his/her\(^{29}\) back!

The women responded enthusiastically, “Eeeh eeeh eeeh!” after each chorus. (In this song, “lying on his/her back” refers to sexual intercourse and marks the beginning of many activities intended to teach the girls about the norms of sexual activity.) Tatu and the other wali remained stoic but fully attentive as the walombo conducted their dance.

When they were done, the wakolomwali, the girls who were initiated the previous year and whose job it was to guide the new initiates, were also told to remove their clothes and lie down between the girls to play liyanga. To play liyanga, the girls were instructed to lie on their sides in pairs (one mwali, one mkolomwali) and when the music started, the wakolomwali showed the wali how to move their hips back and forth in a motion that resembled sexual intercourse. The women watching laughed and shouted encouragement at the girls, singing:

If the fire glows strong
They can’t have sex

\(^{29}\) See Appendix E, Notes on Translation #2.
But if the fire goes out
They can have sex
Eeeh eeeh eeeh!

The girls finished, and the women went right into teaching the *wali to kukata viuno*.³⁰ To do this, the *walombo* first tied a rolled *kanga* around each girl’s hips to accentuate the width and movement in this part of her body. They then instructed the girls to line up side by side on their hands and knees, and one of the *walombo* kneeled in front, facing them. The drummers picked up a beat, and the *mlombo* began to *kukata viuno* as the girls attempted to imitate her. (The dance *kukata viuno*, while performed by individual women at public celebrations, is also regularly used in sexual intercourse, as the rapid side-to-side movement is believed to increase sexual pleasure for the man.) The women clapped along with the beat, ululated loudly and threw coins to the girls who were performing the best. This encouraged the girls to dance harder and faster, both to please their mothers and to get their contributions.

When the *wali* were tired, the other women took turns demonstrating their dancing as they sang a variety of songs. Some of the songs were celebratory in tone, for example:

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Let’s dance
Let’s dance here when we have the chance
Before we are eaten by dirt!
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While other songs were specific to *unyago* and its ritual context in which even taboo subjects may be openly discussed. For example:

³⁰ See footnote number eight for difference between *mkomango* and *chivelevele* on this point.
Let her dance for you!
Let her dance for you!
If you are afraid to say dirty words
Where you come from is a vagina!
If you are afraid to say dirty words
Where you come from is a penis!
Eeeh, if you are afraid to say dirty words!

Still other songs emphasize the value of tradition and the importance of preserving these traditions from generation to generation, for example:

I have been defeated (I am dying)
I who knows how to dance
Child of the Kumwanga clan
My coconut tree, my coconut tree
   The day I die
Don’t forget my coconut tree.

When the *wali* were well-rested, the *walombo* again called on the *wakolomwali* to teach the *wali* some of the other dances that they would need to know *kuweka mwili sawa*, or to “make the body right.” One of the *wakolomwali* demonstrated the first dance. She came into a full squat, and then shuffled her feet side to side while remaining in a squatting position, extending one leg to the right, and then the other to the left in alternating rhythm while keeping the beat of the music by slapping her hands on the ground. As she demonstrated this highly strenuous dance, the women chanted over and over:

Chicken scratch scratch on the side scratch scratch
chicken scratch scratch on the side scratch scratch
chicken find (food) chicken find
   chicken find, chicken find
chicken find, chicken find
   chicken find, chicken find
chicken find, chicken find.
The *wali* were then made to try this dance, which mostly resulted in them falling down or moving too slowly for the *walombo*’s liking. Girls who did not appear to be putting their full effort into the task were hit on the back with a stick by one of the *walombo*.

When the old women were satisfied, they removed the cloth that had been tied around hips of the *wali* and instructed them to squat in a circle around one of the *walombo*. The *mlombo* removed her underwear, and was now completely naked. She called to one of the mothers to bring clean water in a bucket, and then proceeded to explain to the girls that now that they were “big,” it was very important for them to take care of their *sehemu za siri* (literally “secret/private parts”). She explained, demonstrating on herself, that appropriate cleaning of the genitals should be done using the thumb and ring-finger on one hand to spread the labia apart, and using the other hand to splash water up into the vagina. The *mlombo* told the girls that this should be repeated whenever a girl bathes and always after sexual intercourse. The bucket of water was then passed around for the girls to try this cleansing technique.

When each girl had demonstrated her understanding to the satisfaction of the *walombo*, the cloths were tied back around the girls’ hips and they were again taught to *kukata viuno*, this time standing instead of on their hands and knees, and the *wakolomwali* joined in as the women sang. The women were taking turns pounding the large drum that gave off a deep sound and straddling the tall, thin drum that gave off a high, rapping beat. When they played in unison, the beats filled the small house, and the sound was deafening. The room was lit by only one small oil lamp, giving the room a soft yellow glow that reflected off the sweaty faces of the drummers and dancers.
Around 4am, the kanga were re-tied around each girl’s waist such that it formed diaper-style clothing, called mkokoto, which functioned as underwear covering the girls’ genitals and buttocks. A large woven mat was laid out on the floor, and the girls’ mothers were called forward to sit in a circle, legs outstretched, to conduct the cleansing ritual of kukulavya. (This ceremony is intended to cleanse the relationship between parents and children.) Each girl was instructed to sit between her mother’s legs with her back to her mother and her legs outstretched. The walombo brought out a small clay pot that held leaves (gathered by the walombo for their medicinal properties) mixed with water and a long string of small white beads. One by one, each mother was instructed to take the beads from the water and rub them on the forearm of her child and herself. Then the mwali was instructed to lick her mother’s arm where the medicinal water had been applied, and the mother did the same, licking her daughter’s forearm.

When this had been completed for all three girls, the fathers of the girls were called inside from the front porch where they had not ceased dancing, singing and drinking. They were told to sit where the mothers had, behind their daughters, and repeat the same actions, cleansing and licking each others’ arms. Then the walombo turned to the fathers, and told them solemnly that in order for the girls to truly be “clean,” the men were not allowed to have sexual intercourse with their wives for seven days, and that they also should not have sex with any other partners outside of marriage during this period. If they did so, the walombo warned, their child would die. After this grave warning, the men were sent back outside.

The walombo then turned back to the mothers of the wali. They asked the mothers to tell them about the bad personality characteristics of their children. The
women stated various flaws, including laziness, disobedience and lack of respect for parents, and running around carelessly like a small child. The women recounted their children’s flaws with great enthusiasm and anger, recounting various times when their children had acted badly, stating repeatedly that their girls “don’t have any courtesy or respect.” The *walombo* listened carefully, and then one *mlombo* went to the corner of the room and came back with a knife and small plastic spider. She came toward the girls and told them that because of the bad behavior their mothers had described, she would have to cut off the clitoris of each girl and would put the spider inside her vagina as punishment. When the *wali* heard this, they appeared very frightened and began to cry and beg their mothers to forgive them, saying that they would change their ways and should not be punished. The *walombo* continued to insist that this must happen, and the girls cried harder.

Then the *walombo* put down the spider and took a long piece of *miaa* (rope woven from grass) in her hand. She cut it into three pieces and handed one piece to each girl. She instructed each girl to remove her *mkokoto* and tie the piece of rope around her clitoris. To do this, the girls had to sit down with their knees up in front of them. The *walombo* then came to squat in front of them and told the girls that because they had been bad children, they would clip off the clitoris by pulling the rope tight and put the spider inside their vaginas. The girls were crying hard now with fear. They did not understand why their elders were acting like this, but they had already done so many strange things that night, it seemed very possible that they would do this too. The girls were looking to their mothers and begging them to stop the *walombo*, but the mothers were instructed to turn their backs. (This was done so that the mothers were not tempted to show pity for
their child and undermine the walombo’s authority. It is also the first stage of accomplishing a core goal of unyago – teaching the children to fear and respect their parents while simultaneously illustrating that the girls can no longer depend on their parents to protect them.)

After almost an hour of insisting that they would have to punish the girls while the girls begged forgiveness, the walombo told them that if they did not want these bad things to happen to them, each girl should take the hand of her mshikamkono (literally meaning “the one who holds the hand,” traditionally the aunt on their father’s side) and ask her to be the witness to the girl’s promise to change her behavior after unyago. The walombo said that if the aunt reported that the girl had not changed her behavior, next year her clitoris would be cut off. The aunt of each girl was then allowed to remove the rope from the girl’s clitoris, and the rope was given to the mother as a symbol of the child’s commitment to change.

The girls themselves were each given a cup that held a small amount of chibuku (local beer). They were instructed to bring it to their mothers. The mothers, however, were instructed to refuse the beer, chanting together:

This girl doesn’t carry water  
She swears at me all the time  
And today she brings me beer?  
I won’t drink it!

Then the women all sang together enthusiastically:

Ngoma for your child!  
Will I hit your child?  
Let me hit our child!
At this the mshikamkono of each girl took a stick and began to hit the girl on her buttock, back and hands. The girls cried loudly, and when the hitting stopped a few minutes later, the women begin to chant repeatedly:

    Study, study!
    Stop playing and study!

(This song was intended to encourage the girls to leave behind childish games and focus on learning the lessons of unyago during their time there.)

By this time, the sun had started to rise, and the walombo began the final stage of the opening ngoma. They took a thick white paste that they had prepared by pounding unripe sorghum grains. They rubbed the white paste all over the arms, legs, and face of each girl, giving them a ghostly appearance. As they did, they sang:

    Today we decorate our mwali eeh!
    Decorate our mwali at daybreak eeh!

They then retied each mwali’s mkokoto, and also tied a thick white band over her forehead, so low that the girl could only see the ground a few feet in front of her. Finally, the girls were made to sit in a row and drink from the clay pot containing the bitter water in which the medicinal leaves used in the kukulavya cleansing ritual were soaking. Then, without much ceremony, the tired women began to disperse. Tatu was sent to sleep in the room in her grandmother’s house that had been prepared for her to spend her month in unyago, and the mothers of the other two wali each took their child by the hand, covered her from head to toe with a large cloth, and led her through the dawn to her home to sleep.

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The opening *ngoma* of the *unyago* ritual is intended to prepare the *wali* for the physical, psychological/behavioral and social transformation that they are expected to undergo in the following month. In this opening *ngoma*, the girls are physically and spiritually cleansed to both prepare them for the upcoming challenges and protect them from any supernatural powers or *wachawi* (witches) that may attempt to harm them during their time in *unyago*. In addition, the *mwali*’s relationship with her family is also cleansed, with the mother allowed to air her grievances against her child and the child forced to take the punishment without the sympathy of her mother. This event marks the starting point of one of the central psychological and behavioral transitions girls are expected to make in the course of *unyago* – reshaping the child’s relationship with her parents such that she both respects them and does not depend on them. The girls are severely punished for their past misdeeds and threatened with further punishment (including removal of their clitoris) if they do not change their behavior, and the mother is intentionally not allowed to show her child sympathy. In an interview with one of the *walombo* who conducted the opening *ngoma* described above, the purpose of this practice was explained as follows:

“In *unyago* a girl needs to learn to live right with people. She must learn to have respect and courtesy for all of her elders and especially her parents. And she needs to learn that she cannot depend on her mother and father for everything. She must know that now she has already grown up, she is about to be big, and she needs to depend on herself. And girls here, they can be very stubborn, and if you aren’t harsh they will have a bad *tabia* later on.”

Here the *mlombo* lays out the primary goals for the transformation of the girl’s *tabia* – a term referring to the general characteristics of her personality and behavior. The harsh
treatment provided to the initiates is intended to provoke change in the girl’s *tabia* such that she becomes less dependent and more obedient and respectful toward her parents and other elders. This intended transition of *unyago* is also reflected in the songs learned during the middle days of *unyago* and reinforced during the final *ngoma*.

In addition, some (but not all) of the lessons and skills that a young girl is expected to master in *unyago* are introduced in the opening *ngoma*. In the description above, the girls are introduced to some of the basic physical aspects of sex, including the *liyanga*, *kukata viuno* and the genital cleansing, as well as songs emphasizing the importance of privacy in sexual matters. Though some of these lessons are introduced in the opening *ngoma*, many more are taught during the middle phase of *unyago*. In learning these lessons and skills, a girl is preparing to make the social transition from childhood (*anahaku*) to adolescence (*ukubwa*).

Finally, the context and methods used in *unyago* give what occurs in this space its symbolical and psychological weight. The ritual space is in part defined as a place in which normal social rules and taboos can be broken, and the breaking of taboos has the subsequent effect of enhancing the *wali*’s feeling of uncertainty as they face the breakdown of cultural norms and increasing feasibility of the *walombo*’s threats. Outside of *unyago*, the girls would see the *walombo*’s threats as impossibilities, but inside *unyago*, anything becomes possible. As described by Nasra (age 15), an adolescent interview participant, “You know, in *unyago*, you believe anything they say, and do anything they say, because they are doing things that are so shocking, and you don’t understand, but you just know that you should do what they say.” The opening *ngoma*
prepares the *wali* for their month-long journey through *unyago* by setting the expectations for this transition.

**Part Two: The Middle Days**

The days spent in *unyago* between the opening and closing *ngoma* are much less busy and more routine. However, it is in these days that much of the core teaching of the lessons and skills of *unyago* is done. After the opening *ngoma*, each girl will go to stay in a designated room in her parents’ home where she will sleep and eat her breakfast and dinner. During the day, if there are other *wali* living nearby, the girls gather in *chiputu*, either the designated room in one of the girl’s homes or in a nearby clearing in the bush, to practice their songs and dances. Their teachers are the *wakolomwali*, who come each day to visit and teach them. At lunchtime the mothers rotate the responsibility of bringing lunch to the three girls. At all times the girls wear the same *kanga*, tied either as a *mkokoto* or as a dress with opposite corners crossed and tied behind the neck, and the white cloth across their foreheads. In addition, the girls coat themselves with a paste made of ashes and water and are allowed to bathe only once every seven days. The cloth tied across the forehead and white paste are both measures believed to whiten the skin, one aspect of the physical transformation that takes place during *unyago*.

During these middle days, the families are also subject to specific proscribed actions that are meant to protect the *wali* against witchcraft. First, any mother whose daughter is in *unyago* is not supposed to talk in a voice louder than a whisper, should remain close to home, and should limit her interactions with others in general. In addition, as mentioned in the description of the opening *ngoma*, the parents are supposed
to abstain from sex for at least the first week while their child is in *unyago*, and they are not to have sex outside of their marriage with anyone until *unyago* is over. Because *unyago* is considered a vulnerable time for the young girls, the parents are supposed to be on their best behavior so they do not risk angering anyone who could then employ witchcraft to harm their child in *unyago*.

In this way, three to four weeks pass without significant variation in this routine. In order to capture the essential elements of this extended stage of the *unyago* ritual, in this section I discuss in detail the various types of lessons the *wali* learn during this phase. The term *mizimu* (singular *mzimu*) refers to the traditional songs of *unyago*, some of which are meant to be accompanied by specific dances. The *mizimu* are often composed of short poems or riddles, the meaning of which must be interpreted. In this section, I outline the main categories of *mizimu*, organized by theme, to provide an overview of the central topic addressed in these songs. Before delving into the various themes presented in *unyago*, however, it is important to first understand the structure of these songs.

*Structure of the Mizimu*

Typical *mizimu* are riddles that use metaphorical or symbolic language to teach the listener about the property of the object that is the topic of – and the answer to – the riddle. A typical *mzimu* includes only one line that is chanted repeatedly. To teach and/or perform the *mzimu*, the *mwali* and *wakolomwali* sit on their knees with their toes curled underneath them in a circle facing each other. One girl begins to sing a *mzimu* and clap her hands to the beat, and the other girl or girls are expected to clap along in unison.
A standard *mzimu* has a specific structure and rhythm based on a single line that presents the riddle is repeated in two separate verses. In each verse, the whole line is chanted twice, followed by the final two beats of the line by themselves, and then the whole verse is repeated again. For each verse the girls clap a total of four times during the first two lines and only twice during the second. An example is given in Kimakonde below to bring focus to the structure of the song as opposed to the meaning:

```
Burudani mnyumba akapwaila
Burudani mnyumba akapwaila
Mnyumba akapwaila
Burudani mnyumba akapwaila
Burudani mnyumba akapwaila
Mnyumba akapwaila
```

When the singer has repeated the verse twice she then moves to the chorus that follows any typical *mizimu*. The singer changes the beat, calling out “*mwali mwali*” followed by two quick claps. She does this twice, then repeats the whole line of the song followed by “*maanake ni?!*” which asks “what does it mean?” and two claps. She then repeats “*maanake ni?!*” and two claps again. Then the song is complete and the singer states “*maanake ______*” literally “the meaning is” followed by whatever object the song it describing. Therefore, the entire chorus would go:

```
Mwali mwali (clap clap)
Mwali mwali (clap clap)
Burudani mnyumba akapwaila maanake ni? (clap clap)
Maanake ni? (clap clap)
Maanake ng’uku.
```

This structure is followed, with only slight variation, for most of the *mizimu* taught in *unyago*. In the following discussion, however, *mizimu* will be written in their short form, with only the main phrase of each song listed. However, in performance
these one-line songs should be understood as taking this repetitive structure. In addition, there are also atypical mizimu that are taught in unyago. These mizimu have specific meanings and lesson associated with them, but they do not follow the typical structure described above. Some of these songs are intended to be performed with specific dances or exercises that the wali must also learn. Other songs do not follow the mizimu structure but are performed on the knees clapping hands as the mizimu are. Because these atypical mizimu are taught together with the typical mizimu in unyago, and because they are often referred to as a group as “mizimu” despite their differences, the songs have been aggregated for the purposes of thematic analysis here and will be referred to as a group as mizimu.

**Themes in Mizimu**

The primary themes addressed in mizimu are: 1) knowledge of the environment; 2) sexuality and gender roles; and 3) respect for elders. Of the 88 distinct mizimu documented in participant observation across all field sites, 57.9 percent (n=51) contained references to the natural environment, 46.6 percent (n=41) had references to sexual intercourse, sexual relationships, or sexual aspects of gender roles, and 27.3 percent (n=24) related to respecting one’s elders and/or parents.31

**Themes in Mizimu: Learning About the Environment**

Mizimu which focus on knowledge of the environment draw heavily on metaphor to teach girls both about the environment itself and characteristics of individual behavior and social life that mimic aspects of the environment. Indeed, many of the mizimu which

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31 As will be illustrated below, there is some overlap in these categories, and therefore percentages reported here exceed 100 percent.
relate to the surrounding natural environment are also intended to communicate lessons related to social norms and expectations for human behavior to the wali.

The mizimu often – but not always – contain direct lessons regarding animals, plants or objects commonly found in the surrounding environment of rural Mtwara. These lessons are usually communicated in the form of riddles describing characteristics of a plant, animal or object with the answer being the plant, animal, or object being described. Some of these mizimu are sung from the first-person perspective of the plant or animal itself. For example, the classic and much recited mzimu, “My clothes blow around in the wind,” refers to a banana tree, recalling the way that its leaves flutter in the wind. Another mzimu sung from the first person perspective is, “To my uncle’s house I will never return,” to which the answer to the riddle is “leaves.” Here the song is referring to the impossibility of leaves returning to the tree after they have fallen.

Other mizimu teach about the environment both through song and their related dance. These mizimu, some of which were described in the opening ngoma above, are also taught by the wakolomwali and practiced by the wali in chiputu so that they are ready to be performed in the closing ngoma. These song-and-dance mizimu involve singing about an animal and dancing in a way that is supposed to imitate this animal. In addition to those described in the opening ngoma, another example includes, “Jump jump, the brother of the big black bird is down there.” This mzimu references the ndege ngoma, a large black bird that moves around on the ground by jumping awkwardly on its short legs. For this song, the girls must bend forward at the waist, reach their hands between their legs and lay their forearms on their calves, grabbing the backs of their
ankles with their hands. Then, as they sing, they must jump up and down in this position, an activity that requires significant strength and balance.

Other *mizimu* also rely on personification to draw analogies between humans and objects found in nature. The use of metaphor in these songs requires the *wali* to use specific cognitive skills in order to identify similarities in form or function between various non-human things found in their environment and human beings. For example, the answer to, “There is a girl who has sores/bumps,” is *ming’oko*, an edible root found in the forest that is often harvested during times of famine. This root has small bumps all over its surface, which in this *mizimu* is compared to the types of sores or bumps that are found on the faces of some adolescent girls. In another, “There is a young girl who tests the depth of the ocean,” the “young girl” is a metaphor for the small, crab-like creatures that go down very deep in the ocean to feed, therefore “testing the depth of the ocean.” In another *mizimu*, “You cook the beans, but the beans are never ready to eat,” the girls must consider other objects found in their environment that are similar to beans but are never soft enough to eat. Only by doing this type of abstract thinking can they come up with the answer: pebbles.

In addition to requiring the *wali* to practice specific cognitive skills to understand the *mizimu*, other environmentally-themed *mizimu* teach lessons that are also relevant to human behavior. Some are metaphorical, for example, “He is dirty because he does not bathe,” is again a metaphor for the black *ndege ngoma* bird, which often lives off eating trash or rodents. This *mizimu* is also intended to impress on girls the importance of bathing so that they do not resemble this unpleasant, dirty bird. Another metaphorical *mizimu*, “It is delicious but it has thorns,” refers to the fruit of the pineapple tree because
of its thorny outside and sweet, edible inside. It is also intended to teach girls not to judge someone’s character by their appearance. The *mzimu*, “The leaves are nice but you can’t eat them,” communicates a similar lesson. This *mzimu* refers to the leaves of the groundnut plant, which look edible but are not consumable by humans. Both *mizimu* use examples from nature to impress on the girls to look beyond the physical appearance of people and things when considering whether they are good or bad.

Finally, a longer song that does not follow the typical *mizimu* structure uses an environmental metaphor layered with multiple meanings: “In the ocean there is an animal with sixty legs. If you want to slay him, slay him the poor way, if you slay him the rich way, your hand will just sink.” The immediate meaning of the song – the animal it is referring to – is the octopus. However, the song is also associating the way of the poor with careful action and the way of the rich with careless action. In the song, the rich man cannot manage to spear the octopus, while the poor man’s technique is successful. The song is a riddle, but is also provides advice regarding how to kill an octopus and teaches the more general lesson that actions should not be done carelessly.

Plants, animals and other objects found in the environment are referenced in many of the *mizimu* found in *unyago*. Reference to these things may be used to teach a lesson about the thing itself and may also include a broader lesson about appropriate human behavior. I now turn to those *mizimu* focused on sexuality, some of which also rely on environmental metaphors to teach the *wali* cultural norms, values and expectations of sexuality and gender roles.
Themes in Mizimu: Sexuality

Lessons about sex and sexuality and gender occupy a central place in the mizimu, though the way that the topic is approached varies. In some mizimu, aspects of the sex act itself are explained using environmental metaphors. For example, in the mizimu, “The big tree gives off white fluid,” the metaphor is ejaculation, teaching the young girls that the “big tree,” the penis, releases white fluid during intercourse. Another longer mizimu describes the state of the female genitalia during intercourse using environmental metaphors:

I went to the shorelines
I found a guinea fowl who was crying
I asked him – why are you crying?
He answered – it is full of water!
Big guinea fowl, big guinea fowl!

The expected response to this mizimu given by the girls is, “On one side full, the other side full, in the middle, a clitoris!” In addition, when discussing sex, these mizimu not only include basic information about the sex act itself, but also offer specific advice about it. For example, the answer to, “A large pestle in a small mortar causes a certain type of pain,” is “a large penis.” This mizimu warns the wali that sexual intercourse with a large penis can be painful.

Still other mizimu use the sex act to symbolize more mundane aspects of life. For example, in the mizimu, “In the vagina of an elephant can go two penises,” the response to the mizimu is the large mortar that is used to pound grain, and the reference to “two penises” entering is referring to women’s common practice of working together with two pestles to pound large quantities of grain in one mortar. In this practice, each woman
holds a pestle made from the trunk of a sapling tree, and as one woman raises her pestle, the other woman lets hers fall with a thump on the grain in the mortar, alternating back and forth in rapid successions, and often singing to keep time.

Other *mizimu* which address sexuality are focused on cultural norms around negotiating sexual partnerships. The group of *mizimu* discussed below touch on a number of complex themes regarding broader cultural scripts guiding sexual relationships in rural Mtwara, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven. Many of these *mizimu* reference the expectations of reciprocity that are considered a natural and normal aspect of negotiating sexual relationships among the Makonde of rural Mtwara. For example, in this *mzimu* the girls sing:

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At night, at night
The boys give the girls presents
It is those boys of the night.
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In Kiswahili there is a specific verb, *kuhonga*, which in this context translates as, “to give a girl a present to show appreciation for sex.” Here the song is referencing a normative practice surrounding sexuality in rural Mtwara. Reciprocity is a normal and expected element of all sexual relationships, with men expected to give their sexual partner (girlfriend or wife) presents in the form of money, clothes, or food on a regular basis. Unlike “transaction” which is often associated with prostitution and exploitation of women, this normative, reciprocal exchange of money or goods in sexual relationships is not considered “payment” for sexual access to the woman, but rather as a show of affection and appreciation of her. It also mirrors broader expectations regarding gender roles and household economics which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.
Indeed, many of the *mizimu* reference – and even celebrate – the norms of gift-giving in sexual relationships. For example:

To finish all the eggs!
Who are you having sex with?
You are having sex with Mtavala!
You have a lot of sense to have sex with him!

In this *mizimu*, the singer is praising the wife or girlfriend of Mtavala (a name) for choosing a sexual partner who supports her well with good food (i.e. eggs). In another *mizimu*, the singer also references the role of economic support in sexual relationships, and suggests that if a man does not support his wife, she may be tempted into infidelity. Here the girls sing:

Dread my friend, dread!
Right here I am giving forest rats to your wife!

In this song, the forest rat, (*panyabuku* in Kiswahili) is a small rodent that is regularly captured and eaten in the inland areas of rural Mtwara. The singer is warning his friend that he has been giving his wife forest rat meat as a gift, alluding that he has been offering *vishawishi* or “temptations,” the way in which men encourage women to accept proposals for sexual relationships. These *mizimu* reference the interweaving of sexual and economic roles in rural Mtwara, a central aspect of cultural scripts surrounding sexual roles in rural Mtwara. This topic will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

A final group of *mizimu* specifically addresses sexual taboos or inappropriate sexual acts. For example, “Don’t ask, don’t ask, your father’s bed is squeaking, don’t ask!” refers to the taboo against explicit parent/child discussions about sex. This *mizimu* both informs the *mwali* about the meaning of a “squeaking bed” and teaches her the
culturally appropriate behavior should she hear it. Other mizimu specifically address the incest taboo. For example:

Beautiful tree, beautiful tree  
Tree of my home  
If it is beautiful  
Or if it is ugly  
You should not cut it down!

In this mzimu, the tree refers to the girl’s brother (the “tree of my home”) with whom she should never have sexual intercourse. Another mzimu also uses environmental metaphors to communicate taboos: “In my father’s farm I can never dig.” The response to the riddle is pubic hair, and the mzimu also carries that additional message that sexual relations with one’s father are not appropriate.

Finally, other mizimu address masturbation, which is considered taboo, particularly for girls. In the mzimu, “To dig a hole is to play mdoto (a type of game),” the answer to the riddle is vagina. This mzimu was one of the few that were actually explained to the girls by the walombo in the final ngoma of unyago. The game mdoto, which requires digging a hole and moving pebbles in and out of it, is used a metaphor for masturbation. Furthermore, to masturbate, the walombo said, is tantamount to, “cursing at your mother,” an unacceptable act in any Makonde family. The ritual leader was clear in her emphasis that masturbation is not acceptable and the girls were not to engage in it.

Themes in Mizimu: Respect for Your Elders

The other central topic of the mizimu is the appropriate relationship between a child and her elders. Though not as commonly addressed in mizimu as sexuality, the topic of elder/child relations is actually more central than sexuality to the unyago ritual as
a whole, as it is addressed through other activities in the rituals. In these *mizimu*,
environmental metaphors are again often drawn on to teach lessons regarding appropriate
elder/child relationships. For example, in, “A fat person walks slowly, but chicks they
scratch for themselves,” a person who is fat and cannot walk quickly is criticized when
compared to chicks who, even when they are small, search for food by themselves. The
message of this *mizimu* is that children should not depend too much on their parents, but
help their parents by fending for themselves whenever possible. This is consistent with
the emphasis on reducing dependence on one’s parents discussed in the opening *ngoma*.
Another *mizimu*, which also uses a chicken metaphor, provides a similar message:
“Entertaining but inside he doesn’t clean up.” The answer to this riddle is chicken. In
this *mizimu*, the chicken, who may look like it has a life of all play and no work, is
criticized because it defecates all over the yard and does not clean up after itself. In this
*mizimu*, the chicken is a metaphor for a child who just plays and does not clean up after
him or herself.

Other *mizimu* address the need for children to respect the wishes of parents over
the requests of others, and the importance of protecting the honor of one’s family. For
example, in this extended *mizimu* there are multiple messages:

```
The hyena was sent
The hyena was sent
He was sent by the lion
Go to town and steal a chicken for me
But he didn’t get a chicken
He just got bullets
When he returned he began to cry
Eeh mama, eeh mama
No help for you
```
Singari (name) mama, Singari mama
Singari ya pemba.

In this *mzimu*, the naughty hyena listens to the lion instead of to his mother and gets trouble— he is shot— and his parents can no longer help him. Here the *wali* are warned against stealing and doing other bad things that their parents would disapprove of because if they are in trouble their parents may not be able to help them. In a related *mzimu*:

The calf cut his own skin
And gave the skin to the *ngariba*
The *ngariba* explained to him
If you ruin your family name
It will be baba eeeh, mama eeeh
No help eeeh for you!

In this *mzimu*, which is also learned by the boys in *jando*, the wise *ngariba* (traditional healer who conducts the boys’ circumcision) explains to the young calf that if you do something to bring shame on your family, your family will no longer help you because you have disgraced them.

Finally, other *mizimu* emphasize the need for the child to be consistent in her respect for her parents at all times. For example:

The bow (of a bow and arrow) has reversed itself
The bow has reversed itself
You should not curse your grandfathers by reversing yourself
You should not curse your grandmothers by reversing yourself.

In this *mzimu*, the bow that reverses its curvature is used as a metaphor for a child who betrays his or family by acting against their expectation. The emphasis here is on respecting cultural norms and expectations so as to not bring shame on one’s family.
Kuloweka Mtama

Though learning the *mizimu* and the associated dances that were introduced in the opening *ngoma* are the focus of the middle days of *unyago*, the girls do gather once during this time for a brief ceremony called *kuloweka mtama*, meaning “to soak the sorghum.” During this short ceremony, the *walombo* gather with the *wali* and their close female relatives (usually just mothers and aunts) to initiate the soaking of the sorghum grains that will be used to make *togwa*, a substance used in the final *ngoma*. In this short ceremony, sorghum is poured from a winnowing tray held by all *wali* and their mothers into a large clay pot with water, where it will be left to soak for the final two weeks before the closing *ngoma*. During this time, the sorghum grains will sprout and begin to ferment, and later will be drained, pounded into a paste and made into a thick porridge.

After the ceremonial pouring of the grains, the ritual leaders may give the *wali* a short test to examine the progress of their singing and dancing skills. They may also give additional pointers and “encouragement” (usually whipping them on the back of their legs with a long thin stick) to the girls who are not progressing to the *walombo’s* satisfaction. This “test” consists entirely of songs and dances that are also seen in the opening *ngoma*, the description of *mizimu*, and/or in final *ngoma*, and therefore will not be described in detail here. I now turn to a description of the final days of *unyago* which include the final *ngoma* and preparation for the girls’ reintroduction to the community on the final morning.
Part Three: The Final Days

As mentioned in Section 5.1 above, it is during the final *ngoma* that the *mkomango* and *chivelele* versions of the *unyago* ritual do differ significantly. The *chivelele* ritual will be described first and in greater detail for two reasons. First, it is the most common form of *unyago* found in rural Mtwara, and therefore most relevant to the overall topic of this dissertation. In addition, many of the elements of the *chivelele* ritual are similar to elements found in the *mkomango* ritual. The main difference between the two is the addition of a number of elements in the *mkomango* ritual that are not found in the *chivelele* version. These additional elements will be described in a separate section following the description of the *chivelele*.

Also of note, this final segment of the *unyago* ritual can vary significantly depending on the preferences of the *walombo* who are facilitating the ritual, the financial resources of the *wali*’s families, and the size of the group of *wali*. The excerpt below was chosen because it includes the practices that were observed across all families and villages, and which form the core of the *chivelele* ritual. A discussion of variation in the rituals will follow the description below.

*The Final Days: Thursday*

As Saturday is the traditional day for the “coming out,” the final preparations begin on Thursday. In discussing the final days of *unyago*, I return again to Tatu and her fellow *wali* Asha and Rehema, three excited girls anxiously awaiting their “coming out” of *unyago*. 
The celebration began on Thursday, two days before the girls were to come out of unyago. In the afternoon Tatu’s relatives began arriving, many more than had attended the opening ngoma. Some had come by bus from faraway villages for the celebration. Tatu’s mother was already out back standing with one foot propped against the stone hearth stirring a huge pot of chibuku, the local beer made from fermented sorghum (this was put to soak in the kuloweka mtwama ceremony discussed above). As the women arrived, they each picked up a task, pounding cassava flour, sifting rice, or preparing the fish Tatu’s mother had bought for the occasion as easily as if they were in their own homes. As the women cooked, they also consumed generous quantities of gongo, the distilled local liquor. Through the small holes in the mud wall of her house Tatu could hear them laughing loudly, telling lewd stories, and she peaked through the wall to watch as they spontaneously broke into song and dance.

As the food preparations came to a close, the women quieted for a few minutes while they ate, but as soon as they were full and satisfied, the celebration began in earnest. Tatu’s aunt and cousin each turned over an old bucket, and the women began to pound out a beat, one thumping with her hands and the other rapping with two sticks. The other women began to sing, “The charcoal in the fire is glowing hot!” They were clapping their hands and dancing in a circle around the drummers. They sang song after song, mostly referencing the wali and the events of the upcoming days, such as:

I will make myself beautiful
I will make myself beautiful
I will make myself beautiful through God
I will make myself beautiful in my face,
Komanjingwe,
Where will you make yourself beautiful
Your legs?

(They are referencing preparing their *mwali* to be more beautiful than the others for the coming out ceremony). They also sang other songs to call their neighbors to join the celebration, “Celebrate, celebrate, those from our home!” Their celebrations continued late into the night, their dancing fueled by anticipation and *gongo*. Tatu finally fell asleep sometime in the middle of the night – despite the continued sounds of revelry outside – exhausted from the excitement.

_The Final Days: Friday_

The women woke at dawn on Friday, despite having only slept a few hours the night before, and immediately picked up singing and dancing where they had left off. In addition, a group of “professional” drummers (young men from the village who specialize in learning traditional songs and dances and are often hired for these events) also began circling the village in the early morning, going from house to house to *kupamba moto*, meaning “to stir up the fire/excitement” for the day’s events. The women continued singing and dancing, while a group of them prepared food for the guests, who would only grow in number as the day went on.

Sometime mid-morning Asha and Rehema arrived at Tatu’s house and joined her in her room where they chattered excitedly about what was ahead of them. At noon they were given a big plate of *ugali* and *kisamvu* to eat, and around 2pm the women began to gather in front of the house *kutamba*, meaning to call out the *wali*. They called to them saying, “Today ants, today where we are there are ants!” referencing their upcoming trip into the forest for the *chivelele ngoma*, the cornerstone of the *unyago* ritual.
By 2:30pm they were ready, and Tatu’s mshikamkono came into the room where she had spent most of the last month, covered her with a cloth from head to toe, and carried her out the front door into the crowd of waiting women, who by this time numbered over 50. Asha’s and Rehema’s washikamkono did the same, covering them and carrying them out the door. Then the women set out away from Tatu’s house toward the edge of the forest that began nearby. Though Tatu could partially see through the cloth covering her, she was unfamiliar with the way, and as their journey continued for almost thirty minutes, she soon lost interest in or the ability to determine where they were going.

Her tired aunt let her down to the ground with a thud when they reached their destination. They were standing in a large clearing surrounded by thick brush. Turning around, Tatu saw that the path they had walked was thin and partly overgrown, barely identifiable in the tall grass. Asha and Rehema were put down beside her. Looking around, she realized that all of their female relatives were there, but that not one of their mothers was present.

Tatu turned again and was surprised to see that the two walombo who were there had already removed their clothes, except for their underwear. One of the walombo was lying on the ground on her back, and the other held a sacred gourd in her hand. From the gourd, she was taking small pinches of white powder and tracing a circle on the ground around where the other mlombo’s head lay. When she had completed the circle, the mlombo who was lying down moved into a squatting position over the circle dawn by the white powder and hopped up and down five times. She then lay down again, this time on her stomach, and slowly began to dig a hole in the middle of the circle of white powder.
When the hole was a few inches deep, she called for and was brought a bucket of water. She took a mouthful of water from the bucket, swished it around in her mouth, and spit it in the hole she had made. She repeated this three times, and then the other mlombo did the same.

When both had finished spitting water into the hole, they called for the togwa, the thick porridge that had been made from the sorghum put to soak in water at the kuloweka mtama ceremony two weeks earlier. Both walombo repeated the same swishing and spitting into the hole with the togwa as they had with the water. Then they both stood up and straddled the hole, one behind the other, and called Tatu forward. Tatu’s mshikamkono first removed Tatu’s clothes, and then Tatu went forward wearing only the white cloth tied around her forehead. The walombo instructed Tatu to lie down on her stomach between the walombo’s straddled legs with her face over the hole. Once in position, she was instructed to put her mouth into the mixture of togwa and water that now filled the hole, and blow into it three times. As she did this the walombo sang:

This girl does not understand
This girl does not understand chivelevele
There is no one with a mother in chivelevele.

At the end of the verse, the women responded, “eeeeeee,” at which time Tatu was told to blow with her mouth in the liquid. Then the mlombo sang:

The drum bird always sings in rainy season
The drum bird always sings in rainy season
When it rains.

(The rainy season is the season when the unyago ritual usually takes place.) Again, the women responded, “eeeeeee, chivelevele,” and Tatu blew again into the liquid in the hole.
They repeated the first verse again, and Tatu blew again for the third time. Then the *walombo* suddenly started to hit her violently with sticks that had been handed to them by the surrounding women. Tatu cried out in pain and her *mshikamkono* grabbed her by the feet and yanked her backward and out from between the legs of the *walombo*. The other two *wali*, Asha and Rehema, were then called each in turn to repeat this sequence. When all of the *wali* had completed the exercise, the *wakolomwali*, and then the other women, each completed the same sequence in turn.

Finally the *walombo* called the *mshikamkono* of each *mwali* to complete the sequence, and the activity came to an end. The *walombo* called the *wali* to kneel around the hole, and then they slowly began to cover it over with dirt, working the dirt in from the edges until only an oblong opening remained with the *togwa* mixture showing through (such that the hole resembled the opening to the vagina). The *walombo* then turned to the *wali* and, pointing at the hole, explained that it represented the collective female sexual *mamlaka*,[^32] held in the vagina of each woman, and that this had been passed down to them by the women in their families. Therefore, the *walombo* said, the vagina must be guarded very carefully. If it is given away too easily, she explained a girl risked destroying not only her own sexual *mamlaka*, but the sexual *mamlaka* of women as a whole. Therefore, the *walombo* said, the choice to share one’s vagina must be done carefully, and only with men who would appreciate and provide for them. The girls, who were now shivering in the shade of the forest, nodded their understanding, and the *mlombo* carefully covered the remaining portion of the hole.

[^32]: The term *mamlaka* can be translated as authority, status, possession, or right, and it is used here to refer to the importance and value of the woman’s sexuality and reproductive potential, which is a central aspect of a woman’s authority and status in the community.
Both to warm up the *wali* and to test their skills in song and dance learned in *chiputu*, the *walombo* then ordered the girls each to choose a song or dance to perform. Tatu began, singing and clapping her hands, “Don’t ask, don’t ask, your father’s bed is squeaking, don’t ask.” When she finished the *walombo* asked her, “and what does it mean?” to which she replied, “If you hear the bed in your parents room is making noise don’t ask, just know that your parents are having sex and so you shouldn’t go in.”

Then it was Rehema’s turn. She sang, “Let’s go home, to greet our parents, to greet our parents,” and at the end of each verse, repeated six times, she clasped her hand together in front of her and gave a slight curtsy to the *walombo*. When she finished the *walombo* quizzed her on the song’s meaning, to which she responded, “When you greet your parents you should greet them *shikamoo.*” (*Shikamoo* is the respectful greeting used by younger individuals to greet their elders, usually accompanied by a curtsy. The literal translation is, “I hold your feet.”)

Satisfied, the *walombo* turned to Asha who, unlike her fellow *wali*, did not jump up to begin her performance. After simple encouragement failed to move the girl into action, one of the *walombo* marched over and sharply pulled the girl up from the ground by her elbow. She dragged Asha into the middle of the group, and told her to give them a song, but Asha just stood there and looked at the ground. The *mlombo* became visibly angry at this apparent rebuke to her authority and yelled at Asha, “What, do you have *kiburi*? Don’t you want to please your elders? Don’t you care about the traditions of your people?” (*Kiburi* is a character trait similar to apathy or disinterest. It is used to refer to a person who is not moved by the encouragement of others and shows a lack of caring for their needs or wishes. It is considered a very negative personality trait among the
Makonde). But Asha, either out of *kiburi* or shame or fear, continued to stare at the ground.

The *mlombo* finally lost her patience. She grabbed the stick she had used for the *togwa* ritual and called Asha’s *mshikamkono* to hold her still. She then began to whip Asha, the stick making a sharp “whap” as it landed on her legs, back and arms. Asha began to cry loudly, and the *mlombo* stopped after only a few strikes. She then demanded again, “Give us a song.” Asha, through here tears, did not lift her head from the ground as she softly recited the *mzimu*, “Munjenje couldn’t eat *ugali* because his wife had a stomach.” When she finished the women began to cheer and ululate loudly. Then the *mlombo* asked Asha to explain the meaning of the song. In an even tinier voice, Rehema said, “Even if you are bleeding (on your period) you should still cook so your husband can eat,” and the women erupted into cheers again.

At this, the *walombo* were satisfied, and they instructed the aunts to prepare the girls to dance. The women tied rolled *kanga* around the hips of the otherwise naked girls. Two of the women took up a drumbeat on the bottom of buckets, and the other women began to sing, “Take in my child, to be married eeeh, take care of my child, I am going to be married.” (This song refers to the practice of leaving a small child to live with one’s parents when a woman goes to be married to a new man). They continued with other songs, some poking fun of men, such as, “Kanyembe eeeh, Kanyembe my husband doesn’t work in the farm, his work is to drink beer!” The women clapped and sang as the girls attempted to show off their new dancing skills, rapidly shaking their hips back and forth in the dance *kukata viuno*. 
When the walombo were satisfied, they told the wali to remove the rolled kanga, tie an mkokoto, and sit down in a row on the ground. The mlombo and one of the old grandmothers who was watching went to one side of the circle of women, laid down side by side, and began moving their hips back and forth imitating sexual intercourse. The other mlombo went to one side of the circle, then turned and walked toward the two women. When she neared them, the women lying on the ground suddenly screamed, jumped up and ran into the forest as the women watching burst into raucous laughter. The mlombo walked back to the other side of the circle, and the two women returned and resumed imitating sexual intercourse. The mlombo began to walk toward them again, but this time she called “hodi, hodi,” before she had reached the women. (“Hodi,” is the word used to alert one of your presence or arrival, similar to knocking on the door.) At hearing the hodi, the two women jumped up, straightened their clothes, and said, “Karibu,” welcoming the mlombo to come closer. At this, the women broke out into cheers and ululations.

Then the walombo came to squat in front of the wali and asked them as a group, “What does this mean?” Tatu responded, “When you arrive at a house, you should always say hodi before going inside.” The mlombo nodded. “And why should you say hodi?” she questioned. The girls sat quietly at first, looking embarrassed, then Rehema said quietly, “They might be having sex.” The women again cheered the girls with ululations.

Then the walombo, still squatting in front of the girls, began to tell them a story. “Do you know the history of sex?” she said. Then she began to tell them the story:

A long time ago there was only one girl who had a vagina. She was living with a lion, a crocodile, and a snake. The lion, the crocodile,
and the snake thought that her vagina was a wound and tried to heal her. The lion did the work of cutting firewood to bring to the girl with the wound, the snake picked leaves that could be used as medicine to treat the girl’s wound, and the crocodile carried water to the girl. Then one day when the crocodile, the lion, and the snake were all away, a man came and told the girl to show him her wound. When she showed him, he took his penis and put it inside her vagina, and that was the first sexual intercourse. Then the man explained to the lion, the snake, and the crocodile that the wound of the woman was for sexual intercourse. Upon hearing this, the lion gave a punishment to all humans to eat them whenever he could, the snake also gave a punishment to bite them with poison, and the crocodile decided to punish them by eating them as revenge on the girl who they had taken care of and the man who took her from them.

The wali sat silently listening to the mlombo, their eyes wide with surprise at the story.

When the first mlombo had finished, the second mlombo began her story. “Do you know why there is night and there is day?” she asked the wali. The girls stared at her blankly. She continued:

It is all thanks to the ant. In the year the world was created there was no night and no day. Finally, the animals that were there decided to go to ask God to split the night from the day. In their decision, though, they insulted the ant and went without him. But they didn’t make it and died on the way. Then the ant decided to go on his own. When he arrived he told God his problem and God decided to grant his wish, separating the night from the day. When the ant returned, though, the other animals did not show him any gratitude for what he had done. So to punish everyone, he always goes into their food and their water.

Again, the girls sat carefully listening to the old woman as she told the story with great animation.
When she had finished, the first *mlombo* launched into another story. “Do you know why men have to take care of women?” she asked. The girls again stared at her blankly. She continued:

Long ago, there were men and women, but they were living separately. Men were given tools like hoes, arrows, and spears, so they were able to get food. The women were hungry so they went to the men to ask for food, but the men refused and sent them away. Then the women decided to go to God to ask for food. When the women arrived, they told God their problem and they were given a handful of small insects. God told them to take the insects and sing the song, “Hold them as we told you,” as they brought them home and put them on their crops, and then to protect the plants as they grew. The women did as they were told and got a large harvest, and the women were happy.

At this point, the *mlombo* started to sing, “Hold them as we told you,” and the women joined in for a number of rounds. When they finished, the *mlombo* continued telling the story:

The women were happy with life and grew fat. Then the men were stricken with hunger and went to the women to ask for food. When they arrived, at first the women did not give them food, but later they took pity on them and gave them some of the insects, telling them to sing the song until they reached home and put them on their crops. The men did this and their plants grew well and they harvested a large crop. When the women went to get the insects back, the men refused to return them, but they agreed to repay their debt by taking care of the women forever. And that is why a man has to take care of his wife always, because it is because of us that they have life.

At this, the women began to cheer the *mlombo*, with some throwing her small coins to show their appreciation of her story, and other ululating loudly.
Then the second mlombo stepped to the front again to give a final story. She asked the girls, “Do you know where watermelon comes from?” By now the girls had realized that they were not expected to answer. She continued:

Watermelon comes from the semen of men. Long ago, in ancient times, there was a father who had one son. The years went by, and eventually the boy reached the age to marry. He told his father that he had seen a girl in the next village over and he asked his father for money so he could marry her. His father told him that he would get the money for him. That night, the father snuck in to his son’s room and inserted money into the hole at the end of his penis. In the morning he told the boy to go and marry. After the wedding, the boy did not have food to give to his wife, so he had to go to his father to ask for food. His father told him to go to sleep, and that night he put seeds of the watermelon plant in the boy’s urethra. In the morning he told his son he should go to prepare his farm, and when he was done, he should have sex with his wife there and then take her to her home. The boy did as he was told, and when he was done, it began to rain and the seeds began to grow and flourish. When the watermelons were ripe, the boy fed a slice to his wife. Though she was a beautiful girl, she was a mute, but when she tasted the watermelon she spoke the first words of her life, ‘Isn’t this sweet.’

As the mlombo delivered the conclusion, the women again erupted into cheers and ululations, and then they picked up the drums and began to play. The walombo pulled the wali from their seated position, removed their mkokoto and retied them around the hips. Then they began to jump up and down, switching their legs front and back, while holding one hand between their legs in the front, and the other hand in the back. As they jumped, they sang, “Girls, girls, girls who do not fear the boys eeeh” with the wali imitating their elders in song and action.
When they were tired, the walombo again retied the girls’ mkokoto and squatted in front of them. One mlombo took a short, round branch of a tree and held it between her legs. The other mlombo began to question the girls, ignoring the giggles of the women watching. “When you have sex with a man, what comes out?” she asked. The wali all looked at the ground silently. The mlombo asked again, “What comes out?” When the wali continued to sit silently, she began clapping and singing the mzimu, “The big tree gives off white fluid,” and finished by saying, “The meaning? It is penis.”

Then she turned back to the other mlombo, who was still holding the short branch between her legs. She again asked the girls, “What comes out of the penis?” and after a long silence, Tatu whispered, “White fluid,” prompting an outburst of laughter and cheers from the women. Satisfied, the mlombo continued. “So, when you have sex, you will see the white fluid on the man’s penis. When you see this, you should take a clean cloth and carefully wipe it off from the top to the bottom like this. Do you understand?” As she said this, she imitated the motion using the short tree branch that the other mlombo was holding. The girls nodded, still looking at the ground.

Then one of the walombo took a small jar of oil from the sack they had brought with them. They took a coin out as well and, dipping the coin in the oil, placed a drop on the forehead of each mwali. All of the women gathered around to watch. As they waited for the oil to make its way down the wali’s faces, the walombo explained that if the oil stopped between the eyes, it meant that the wali had not yet “known a man” (had sex), but if it ran down onto her nose, it meant that she had already started having sex, and therefore would be a malaya (prostitute or an otherwise sexually promiscuous woman) throughout her life. The girls, upon hearing this, held very still as not to cause the oil to
slide too far down. The oil slowly slid down each girl’s forehead and settled between her eyes. As it did, the women erupted into cheers of celebration.

The walombo then stood up and called the family members of the wali forward. They asked the family members to repeat the bad behaviors of their wali that the girls’ mothers had stated in the opening ngoma. The family members echoed the mothers’ complaints: laziness, swearing, disrespect, and irresponsibility. Upon hearing this, the walombo called the washikamkono forward and told them each to go prepare a stick to punish the girls for their bad behavior. When the girls heard this, they immediately began to cry and beg forgiveness.

One of the walombo turned to the girls and said, “Have you given up your bad ways?” The girls cried in unison, “Yes, yes, we have changed!” The washikamkono returned, and each one began hitting her mwali on the back of the legs. The mlombo asked the girls again, “Will you stop your bad behaviors?” and the girls cried again, “We will stop! We will stop!” The aunts stopped hitting the girls, who now had tears flowing down their cheeks, and the mlombo began to lead them in a song. She sang “Will you value your parents as people?” and the wali responded enthusiastically, “We will value them!” over and over again.

When the song was over, the aunts threw away their sticks, and only one test remained for the wali. The walombo looked at the wali solemnly. One began to speak, saying, “You now know the secrets of women, and tomorrow you will be set free to start your life again. But when you go, you are never to tell your young sisters the secrets of women, and more importantly, you are never to tell any man. If you do, terrible things
will happen to you.” As she spoke, the other mlombo reached for a clay pot holding medicinal leaves soaked in water. She took a coin and dipped it in the mixture, and then began to touch different parts of the body of each mwali in turn. As she did this, she chanted:

Let the ears of this girl fall off
Let the head split in two
Let the hips be cut apart
   The legs fall off
   And the arms as well.

The girls cried over the mlombo’s chanting, “We will never tell! Let us never tell! We will never tell the secrets!” At the completion of this exercise, the women in the group visibly relaxed, and it was clear that the wali had passed the major tests of unyago successfully.

As the sun was starting to set, the family of each girl gathered in a separate group. The walombo instructed the family of each child to call out its mwali’s name in turn. They then told the wali that if they wanted to take a new name following unyago, they should respond to their family’s call by saying, “That used to be my name, but now I am called _______,” and to state their new name. They did so, with each family calling its mwali’s name in turn, and each girl in turn announcing her name preference before receiving a small gift by her family. Asha changed her name to Mariam, and Tatu changed her name to Adija, but Rehema, the smallest of the wali, stated that she would like to keep her name, and no one protested – it was her choice.

The sun was just sinking below the trees as they finished, and the women picked up their things without ceremony and began the long walk back to the village. The wali
were allowed to walk on their own until they neared the village, at which time their aunts again covered them and carried them on their backs until they reached Tatu’s home.

_The Final Days: Saturday_

When they arrived home, the _wali_ were fed and allowed to go to sleep. For the women, the party was far from over, and they stayed up all night drumming, dancing, drinking and singing until dawn. Around 6am the women woke the exhausted _wali_ to prepare them for their final coming out ceremony. First, the _wali_ were brought into the main room of the house where the women had gathered with the _walombo_. One of the _walombo_ sat with a winnowing tray filled with _togwa_ between her outstretched legs. She called the _wali_ and their _washikamkono_ to sit near her. She then proceeded to feed one of the _mwali_ mouthfuls of _togwa_ from the winnowing tray with a long wooden spoon. The first three mouthfuls the _mwali_ was instructed to spit back into the winnowing tray, and the second three she was instructed to swallow. This series was repeated for all _wali_ and the _washikamkono._

When they were finished, the _walombo_ took one _mwali_ at a time, together with her _mshikamkono_, to the fenced areas used for bathing behind the house. Once inside, both the _mshikamkono_ and the _mwali_ removed all of their clothes, and the _mshikamkono_ held the _mwali_ on her lap as the _walombo_ scrubbed both of them from head to toe with soap and water. (This cleaning is both preparation for the transition out of the liminal middle phase of _unyago_ to the final phase of reintroduction to the community, and also serves to ritually seal the bond between the _mwali_ and her _mshikamkono_. From this point on, the _mshikamkono_ and the _mwali_ will have a special relationship in which the
mshikamkono is both the advisor to the mwali and the punisher of any social transgressions.)

While the wali were being bathed, their female relatives were hard at work cooking food for the guests and the ritual meal of chicken and rice for the wali. The boiled chicken was brought in pieces on a plate together with two separate plates of rice. The walombo carefully divided up the chicken (who was actually a rooster) between the two plates of rice. When all of the wali had been bathed, they were taken inside, rubbed with oil, and wrapped in a clean kanga for the first time in a month. The walombo then called the wali and the washikamkono to sit around one plate of chicken and rice, and gave the other plate to the other women. Before diving in, however, the mlombo first picked up one of the pieces of meat. She asked the wali, “Do you know what this is?” The wali didn’t respond. The mlombo continued, “This is the testicles of the chicken. You should never eat this together with your husband or you will become infertile.” Then she picked up a thigh piece and asked the girls, “Do you know what this is?” This time the girls answered, “Thigh.” Then the mlombo said, “If you husband gives this to you, it means he wants to have sex with you. Do you understand?” The wali all nodded. After this short lesson, they were allowed to eat the chicken.

When they finished, the time had finally come. The crowd, which had been singing and dancing outside all night and through the morning, also had continued to grow in size. As the time neared, the women began to dress the wali in their new clothes. Each girl had a brand new dress, shoes, socks, underwear, plastic necklace and earrings, and a brand new kanga. The girls’ faces were rubbed with oil so they shined.
When they were ready, each mwali was covered with her new kanga and put on the back of her mshikamkono. The front door of the house was opened, and one of the walombo climbed up the doorframe with one foot on either side. (This was made easier as the house is made of sapling trees with crossbeams that can be used to stand on.) One by one the wali exited the house on the backs of their washikamkono, passing through the legs of the mlombo balanced on the doorframe, and were carried to the big tree and set down on a large straw mat that had been laid out for them. The girls sat in a row on the straw mat and the kanga was pulled back to reveal their faces. The girls kept their eyes on the ground a few feet in front of them, and not one cracked a smile.

The ceremony kufupa, to contribute, began. As the drummers played furiously, guests pushed themselves to the front of the crowd one-by-one and, once reaching the space in the middle, danced the rest of the way to where the wali sat with the washikamkono and walombo. As they danced, they waved money in the air, which they eventually deposited in the lap of the wali. The washikamkono took the money off the girls’ laps and held onto it until the end of the party, when it would be given back to the girls themselves to do with as they pleased.

When the string of guests coming to contribute had slowed, it was now time for the family to contribute. The fathers of the wali came up first, depositing money on the girls’ laps. Then the mlombo instructed the wali to stand up, and she placed a dot of oil on each girl’s forehead with a coin. The father of each mwali then touched his forehead to his daughter’s. This was repeated with the mothers, aunts, uncles and grandparents, and finally with the washikamkono.
With this final sign of recognition of the girls’ safe passage through *unyago*, the ceremony officially came to a close, though the party was hardly over. The *wali*’s families had slaughtered a goat the night before, and they served large plates of rice and goat meat to the entire crowd, with ten people at a time digging in with their hands to large platters of rice. The girls were left to run and play as they pleased, and the adults continued with their drunken celebration for the rest of the day and long into the night. For the following two days, the houses of the *wali* would be particularly quiet as their parents slept off the three days of celebration, until next year, when it would surely be time for another relative to go to *unyago*.

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**Variations in Unyago**

There are three issues related to variation in these rituals that are important to address. First, as noted above, there are differences in the *mkomango* ritual in the final *ngoma* stage. Also of note is a small but important difference between the *chivelevele* done by the Tanzanian Makonde and the Mozambican Makonde. Finally, I briefly discuss variation within each type of ritual from family to family.

*Mkomango*

As noted above, the differences between the *chivelevele* and the *mkomango* versions of the *unyago* rituals are most significant in the final *ngoma* from which both types of rituals get their names. While the *mkomango* ritual contains many of the same elements as the chivelevele, a number of important differences do exist.
First, on the Thursday night before mkomango ritual (the second to last full day/night in unyago) the Mozambican Makonde conduct an additional ceremony called ngoma kuchezea mwali. This celebration involves repeatedly and extensively testing the wali on the singing and dancing skills learned during their time in chiputu. This ngoma lasts all night and into the morning, at which time the women disperse to sleep for a few hours before returning to go to the forest for mkomango.

Second, when going to the forest, the wali must first ruka moto, or jump the fire. A small fire is made from brush and put on the path that leads to the ritual site in the forest. The wali, each holding the hand of his or her mshikamkono, must run and jump across the fire three different times as women stand on either side of the path swat at their legs with sticks.

Third, when they arrive at the ritual site, punishing the girls for their bad behavior is the first thing done, and it is done to a much more extreme degree than seen in the chivelelele ritual, described above. The girls are continuously beaten for at least 15 minutes and made to beg their elders for forgiveness and promise to leave behind their bad deeds. In fact, there is a specific song that is sung on the way to mkomango referencing the severe punishment dealt there:

If I go to mkomango my stomach hurts
Look today look!
If I go to mkomango my head will hurt
If go to mkomango my stomach will hurt
And I will return limping.
Look today look!
As they punish the girls, they also tell the wali that their fathers have been killed, and that when they go home they will be orphans. This is intended as to cause the wali emotional pain and enhance the punishment for the bad deeds.

Fourth, in mkomango the women do not drink togwa as was done in chivelele, nor do they spend extended time telling stories about their ancestors (this is done more extensively in the first ngoma). However, they do make the wali perform songs and dance.

Finally, perhaps the most striking addition to the mkomango that is not seen in chivelele is a specific type of repetitive ceremony conducted during the final ngoma in the forest. The women remove all of their clothes and begin to dance around in a circle to the beat of a drum. The wali and the wakolomwali make a circle on the inside of the women’s circle. The girls kneel down facing the women’s circle and are supposed to move around in a circle by jumping on their knees and slapping the ground to the beat of the music. They sing a number of songs, and after each verse an adult woman tackles each of the wali, pushing her down on the ground on her back and imitating having sexual intercourse with her. While doing this over and over, they sing the following songs, which are all sexual in nature:

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Nandinde is having sex with girls
Nandinde is having sex with girls.
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The sea cucumber came himself
He came himself into the vagina
He came himself into the anus.
------
The penis of Namung’ambe has remained shaking around
The penis is tasty
Tonight it is pestering me
Go with me to go find penis.
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Indeed, the topic of sex is very present in both the *mkomango* and the *chivelele* rituals, but in different ways. The *chivelele* involves lecturing to the girls about protecting their sexual *mamlaka*, singing and telling stories about the relationship between men and women, the role of sex in the history of the people, and practical advice regarding how to conduct sexual relations with a man. In *mkomango*, on the other hand, sex is celebrated much less formally, as a fun and pleasurable activity.

**Chivelele of the Muslim Mozambican Makonde**

The *chivelele* of the Mozambican Makonde who are Muslim is very similar to that of the Tanzanian Makonde with one important exception. Specifically, the Mozambican Makonde also require the wali to jump over fire on their way to the forest, a practice seen in the *mkomango* ritual of the Christian Mozambican Makonde (mentioned above), but not in the *chivelele* of the Tanzanian Makonde. These similarities points to the shared cultural roots of the Muslim and Christian Mozambican Makonde.

**Variation in Unyago Rituals**

As discussed in Section 5.2 above, all *unyago* rituals follow a uniform set of stages, including an opening *ngoma*, a middle period for teaching and learning, a closing
ngoma in the form of mkomango or chivelele, and a coming out ceremony of the final morning. In the course of this research, we were fortunate to be able to observe these rituals on five occasions in four different field sites, and in all cases the basic structure was the same. This was also the structure described by female interview participants who had gone through unyago (n=24). While these multiple sources of data highlighted the continuity in the structure of these rituals, they also illustrated individual differences in these practices.

Though all of the rituals basically mirrored the ritual process described above, there are some small differences. Most of these differences are in timing, as opposed to content. For example, the mothers may shave the wali’s hair on the second night of unyago instead of the first. In some places certain lessons are taught in the opening ngoma that elsewhere are taught in the closing ngoma. Some walombo will test the girls more extensively or punish them more or less severely. Indeed, it is clear that the walombo have a great deal of control over the specific details of the rituals as they are the primary decision-makers and experts in ritual knowledge.

Another factor that can impact the details of unyago is the socioeconomic status of the mwali’s family. The families must pay the walombo for all of their services, provide food, beer and the necessary supplies for the activities in rituals, and, of course, buy new clothes for the mwali’s coming out. If the family is short on funds, some parts of the ritual may be cut out essentially for financial reasons. For example, the final meal of chicken, while important, was not practiced in one of the five rituals observed. Though the family discussed the need to do this part of the ritual, as they did not own chickens and could not afford to buy one, this portion simply could not be done. That
said, families make a concerted effort to save money and raise funds (for example, through selling beer, as Tatu’s mother did) to make sure that their child’s unyago can be completed successfully.

5.4 Sexuality in Unyago

To close this chapter, I summarize the two key ways in which unyago relates to adolescent sexual activity in rural Mtwara. First, unyago marks a developmental transition from childhood to ukubwa, a life stage similar to adolescence, during which a girl becomes eligible for marriage and sexual activity typically begins (discussed further in Chapter Seven). Unyago therefore includes a range of activities and lessons to prepare each girl for various aspects of the ukubwa life stage, including sexual relationships. The ritual of unyago itself is conducted prior to the development of any outward signs of puberty in order to prepare girls for the transition to sexual and reproductive maturity. The lessons and skill taught in unyago provide girls with the knowledge and skills they will need to negotiate their new life stage, including the initiation of sexual relationships. The preparation for sexual activity is therefore embedded in a complete developmental transition, after which a girl is considered ready to engage in sexual relationships.

A second and related issue is the specific messages contained within the lessons and activities of unyago. Indeed, the knowledge and skills taught in unyago not only serve as preparation for the transition to sexual maturity, but for the transition to sexual maturity specifically as a woman. Girls not only learn the details of the physical act of sex (e.g. “The big tree gives off white fluid”), but also lessons and skills that are specific to the woman’s sexual role in a relationship. These include concrete skills, such as how
to move one’s body effectively in sexual intercourse and how to clean oneself and one’s partner following a sexual encounter.

These lessons also reflect values and expectations specific to the woman’s role in sexual relationships, including the expectation that girls will be economically supported by their sexual partners. This message is interwoven in various discussions of sexuality in unyago. It is discussed in the mizimu, which regularly reference this aspect of women’s sexual roles (e.g. “At night, at night, the boys give the girls presents, it is those boys of the night.”). It is also explicitly spelled out during the final ngoma by the walombo’s creation stories (e.g. “And that is why a man has to take care of his wife always, because it is because of us that they have life”).

Finally, in the final ngoma, girls are instructed to be careful in their sexual relationships in order to guard the source of their sexual mamlaka. As mentioned above, the term mamlaka here refers to the importance and value of the woman’s sexuality, which the walombo identify as a central aspect of a woman’s authority and status in the community. The walombo encourage the wali to recognize the high value of their sexuality and only share it with men who will value and care for them. The walombo explicitly link women’s sexuality to their gender and economic roles in the context of rural Mtwara.

In Chapter Seven, I examine unyago, as both a developmental transition and a context in which girls are taught specific aspects of women’s sexual roles, as it relates to various characteristics of the cultural environment in rural Mtwara.
5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the variability, structure and content of the ritual of *unyago* as practiced by the Makonde of rural Mtwar. The ritual of *unyago* marks the developmental transition from childhood to the adolescent life stage of *ukubwa*, and includes specific lessons intended to prepare girls for this transition, including lessons related to sexuality. These lessons not only teach the girls the details of sexual activity, but also communicate specific norms, values and expectations related to women’s sexual roles. However, understanding the role of *unyago* in shaping adolescent sexuality requires examining the broader cultural environment in which this ritual is practiced. I take up this question in Chapter Seven, following the examination of the male *jango* ritual in Chapter Six.
Chapter Six

Boys’ Initiation Rituals – Jando

6.0 Overview

In this chapter, I discuss the male initiation ritual of *jando* as it is conducted among the Makonde of rural Mtwara. The central event of *jando* is the circumcision of the male initiates, which occurs on the first full day of the ritual. Following the quick operation, the boys remain in seclusion for a period of up to one month while they wait for their wounds to heal. During this time they are also given a variety of lessons regarding expectations of adult life. These lessons are communicated in a variety of ways though, as a whole, the teaching component of *jando* is not as heavily emphasized as it is in the female ritual of *unyago*.

This chapter is divided into multiple sections. In Section 6.1, I discuss the variability and prevalence of *jando* in rural Mtwara and across other regions of Tanzania. In Section 6.2, I discuss the timing of *jando* and age of initiation (as was done in the previous chapter on *unyago*) and then outline the stages of *jando*. In Section 6.3, I describe the content and context of each stage of *jando*. A number of activities that are addressed in these sections have parallels in the *unyago* ritual, and therefore the previous chapter will serve as a point of reference for various aspects of *jando* as well. Finally, I conclude this chapter by summarizing the messages related to sexuality discussed in the *jando* ritual.
6.1 Jando and Male Circumcision Practices in Tanzania

Unlike unyago, for which there exist multiple subtypes, jando does not vary significantly across the subgroups of the Makonde tribe. This is due in large part to the content of the jando ritual itself. While the unyago ritual is composed of many complex ceremonies and involves intensive teaching of the wali in multiple different stages, jando as it is practiced today is defined by and centered on one main ceremony – the circumcision. Jando does include some of the teaching of cultural norms and expectations of adult life seen in unyago, as well as punishment of the initiates for past deeds with the goal of transforming them into more responsible and obedient individuals. However, these aspects are treated as secondary to the physical transformation of circumcision. Indeed, the primary way in which the jando ceremonies observed did differ was in the extent to which other elements of the ritual were included at all, with the extreme end of this represented by families who chose to circumcise their children in the hospital, entirely foregoing the time spent in the forest in traditional jando.33 The lack of emphasis on the formal teaching aspects observed in jando (illustrated in Section 6.3 below), taken together with the fact that a hospital circumcision is considered a sufficient substitute for the jando ritual, suggests that circumcision is the defining component of the jando ritual.

Unlike unyago, for which reliable statistics are unavailable, the Tanzanian government includes male circumcision in the HIV/AIDS Indicator Survey conducted every 4 to 5 years. From these data, the Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics (TNBS)

33 The term “traditional jando” will be used in this chapter to distinguish from circumcision conducted in a hospital.
estimates that approximately 70 percent of Tanzanian men are circumcised either through traditional *jando* or in a hospital context (National Bureau of Statistics, 2008). This varies significantly by region, however, due to the diversity in the tribal makeup of the different regions and the cultural beliefs around circumcision among these different tribal groups. While in the coastal regions of Tanzania (including rural Mtwara) an estimated 99 percent of men are circumcised, in the central and western regions of the country prevalence rarely reaches 20 percent (Medlink, 2011; National Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

Among male interview participants (n=36), 100 percent reported going through *jando*, with 86.1 percent (n=31) reporting having gone through the traditional *jando* and 13.9 percent (n=5) having been circumcised in the hospital. In the Barabara Survey as well, 100 percent of households (n=239) reported circumcising their sons, with 96.2 percent (n=230) relying on the traditional *jando* and 3.8 percent (n=9) circumcising in a hospital setting. It should be noted that all types are referred to as *jando* in rural Mtwara, even if the boys do not receive any of the teaching associated with traditional *jando*. The detailed description below will be based on the most common form of *jando* practiced in rural Mtwara, traditional *jando*, involving circumcision in the forest by a local healer.

### 6.2 Structure of *Jando*

In this section, I discuss the timing of *jando* and typical age of initiation, as well as the basic stages that make up the ritual.
Timing of Jando and Age of Initiation

The timing of jando does not differ significantly from that of the unyago ritual, which was described in detail in Chapter Five. Like the unyago ritual, jando is primarily conducted during the December/January period, and occasionally in June/July. In the course of participant observation, I regularly encountered families who were coordinating the unyago and jando ceremonies of their male and female children, planning the opening ceremonies and the final coming out ceremonies for boys in jando and girls in unyago to occur on the same days. This allows families to both reduce the cost of having to feed the many guests that come for these events and also eases the burden of travel on family members who come from great distances, often on foot, to attend. Therefore, the multiple days of celebrating that are described at the end of the previous chapter on unyago, and also at the end of this chapter on jando, may occur concurrently for children in the same family and in some cases (e.g. the Mlimani field site where the entire village coordinated their ceremonies) for the entire village.

Age of initiation does differ somewhat between boys and girls. Among male interview participants (n=36), the average age of initiation reported was 8.9 (SD=2.9), and among all male initiates (also called wali, like the girls in unyago) who were observed as part of the participant observation in the jando rituals (n=57), the mean age of initiation was lower at 7.4 (SD=1.4). This is younger than the average of age initiation for girls of age ten, as discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, the age of initiation in jando varied more widely than girls in unyago. While all female participants in both
the adolescent interviews (n=24)\textsuperscript{34} and observed in the rituals (n=34), were initiated between the ages of six and 12, for all boys in both the interviews (n=36) and participant observation (n=57) samples, the ages ranged from four to 15.

These differences are related to a number of factors, including differences in the goals of \textit{unyago} versus \textit{jando}, family structure and socioeconomic status. The goals of \textit{unyago} and \textit{jando} differ both in their focus and in the effort required by the child in order to ensure that the goals of \textit{unyago} or \textit{jando} are met. As noted above, \textit{unyago} is not focused around one central event, such as a circumcision, but around a series of events that, as a whole, are intended to both mark and encourage a physical, psychological/behavioral and social transformation of the young girls from children to adolescents. Furthermore, this transformation is dependent in large part on a girl’s ability to learn the various skills taught in \textit{unyago} through intensive practice. For boys, on the other hand, the physical transformation through circumcision is the focus of the ritual, and this transformation is not dependent on the individual boy’s effort – it is done to him by force. While boys are encouraged in \textit{jando} to learn the cultural expectations of adulthood, as will be illustrated in Section 6.3 below, these teachings are much less intensive.

Because boys are not expected to learn a series of complex lessons in \textit{jando}, the age at which it is deemed appropriate for them to go to \textit{jando} is much younger because they are not required to “have sense,” before going to \textit{jando}, as is required of the girls. In fact, in discussions with families during participant observation, the reasons given for sending their child to \textit{jando} were rarely related to the child himself. Instead, families

\textsuperscript{34} Includes only those who went through \textit{unyago}. 
focused on family structure, and specifically the relative age of other male children who might participate in jando at the same time. Sending the boys to the forest for jando is an even more expensive undertaking for families than sending girls to unyago. In addition to paying the ngariba (the traditional healer trained to conduct circumcisions) for the procedure itself, they also must buy food to send to the child in jando and pay for a caretaker to cook for and protect the boys while they are in remote site where the boys live during the ritual.

To avoid funding a separate ceremony for each male child, brothers and cousins who were close in age are sent to jando together. In participant observation of jando, pairs of siblings and/or cousins were present together in all three field sites, and in one site there were three male siblings (one five years old, one eight, and one eleven) who were all sent to jando together. This practice allows families to minimize the overall cost for the family to conduct this expensive ceremony, and also contributes to the wide range of ages at which boys are initiated.

Though there is greater flexibility in the age at which a boy can be sent to jando (as opposed to a girl in unyago), it is not considered appropriate for a boy who has already entered puberty to go to jando. Establishing age of puberty in boys is difficult given the nature of puberty in males, with no physiological complement to menarche, and therefore no one event that marks puberty. To collect data on age of puberty in interviews, boys were first asked at what age they reached puberty. They were then asked how they knew they were going through puberty and were asked to describe the specific physical signs they recognized as indicating puberty. Using the Tanner staging method, which assigns certain physical characteristics to specific stages of puberty, the
Tanner stage being described by each boy was estimated based on the physical signs he identified with his age of puberty (W. Marshall & Tanner, 1970).

Not surprisingly, all boys described signs related to Tanner Stage Three, the stage during which the most drastic constellation of physical changes of puberty typically occur, including voice change, growth of significant body hair, and the beginning of nocturnal emissions (W. Marshall & Tanner, 1986). The average age of puberty as defined by Tanner Stage Three changes reported by male interview participants was 15.6 (SD=1.4), with the youngest reporting going through puberty at age 13 and the oldest at age 18. The number of participants included in this calculation, however, is only 28 of the 36 total boys in the sample. This is due in part to two participants who could not remember their age of puberty (both were age 24, the oldest included in the adolescent interviews) and also an additional 6 participants who had not yet gone through puberty. Of these six, two were age 14, one age 15, and two age 16. These ages are consistent with an average age of puberty of 15.6 reported by the other boys.

As with girls, these data suggest that boys in rural Mtwara appear to go through puberty at a later age than boys in Europe and North America, where Tanner Stage Three puberty in males occurs on average between ages 11 and 13 (L. Coleman & Coleman, 2002). This is significantly younger than the average age of 15.6 reported by boys from rural Mtwara. These findings are not surprising, as researchers have repeatedly recognized variability in pubertal timing across cultures (Eveleth & Tanner, 1990; W. Marshall & Tanner, 1970). Furthermore, adolescents in developing countries generally go through puberty at a later age than adolescents in developed countries, though the reasons for this trend are still under examination (L. Coleman & Coleman, 2002; Eveleth,
1986; Eveleth & Tanner, 1990). With regard to jando, this older age of puberty allows for a wider window of time during which a child may be circumcised. Unlike girls, who exhibit visible physical signs of puberty (specifically breast development) early in the pubertal transition, visible physical signs do not appear for boys until as many as five years later (W. Marshall & Tanner, 1970).

There is also a lower “floor,” before which a boy should not be sent to jando. However, this condition is even more flexible and less specific than for girls. In discussions with parents, the most common prerequisite for jando was a child’s apparent ability to tolerate living in the woods away from his mother for an entire month. Though five years of age may seem quite young by Western standards to send a young boy into the woods, this is consistent with both the model of jando and the model of childcare in this region in general. A boy who is sent to jando at a particularly young age is likely doing so in order to accompany his older brothers in the ritual, and therefore will not be entirely without family. As sibling caretaking is a common practice in Tanzania, as in other African countries, even very young boys may be able to tolerate the harsh environment of jando because they are taken care of by their older brothers, as they would be at home (Weisner & Gallimore, 1977). This was confirmed in interviews with male walombo (n=7) who report that it was not uncommon for boys as young as four or five to go to jando, though they felt that this would not happen unless the young boy was accompanied by older siblings. As one mlombo explained, “Boys can come even when they are very small, but if they don’t have a sibling it would be very difficult. Who would take care of him?”
An additional concern regarding a child’s readiness for jando is related to the child’s level of “having sense,” though, unlike the girls in unyago, this is not a concern with regard to the child’s ability to learn lessons. Instead, the primary concern is whether a child is old enough to understand the importance of protecting the confidentiality requirements of jando. Young boys are supposed to go to jando without previous knowledge of what will be done to them there, and significant emphasis is put on keeping the “secrets of jando” during the ritual itself. This was also a secondary justification given by families for sending groups of siblings together to jando in cohorts – if an older sibling is sent to jando without his younger brother who is close in age, it is likely that the older might either accidentally or intentionally tell the secrets of jando to his younger sibling. If all male siblings who are close in age are sent together, there is no opportunity to share secrets.

However, in interviews with male adolescent participants (n=36), 38.9 percent (n=14) mentioned that this requirement for secrecy, and the lessons associated with jando in general, were losing importance. For example, as Athmani (age 22) states,

> When I was young, it was the rule that those who had not gone to jando could not bathe with those who had already been to jando. We did not know why, that was just the way things were. But these days, things are so different. Even little boys have already been circumcised, because their parents take them to the hospital when they were just small children. Jando when I went through it…that was ten years ago now. It was not just about the circumcision. Jando was our traditional school where you learn how to live with people. Now people just don’t care as much. They go, they get circumcised, they wait to heal…for many that is it. Some don’t get any lessons at all.
These participants suggested that the importance of secrecy and the teaching aspects of jando were decreasing in emphasis even when children were taken to the forest for traditional jando. Participants pointed to this decline in emphasis on jando as a “traditional school,” as the reason boys were sent to jando at such young ages. The suggested trend toward a lower age of initiation would explain the higher average age at initiation reported by male interview participants (average age=8.9) who went through jando almost 10 years earlier compared to the initiates directly observed currently undergoing the rituals, who averaged 7.4 years of age. Though the design of this research does not allow these specific changes to be independently documented, this shift in the practice of jando was a regular theme in adolescent interview participants’ discussions, suggesting that some changes may be underway.

The Stages of Jando

I now turn to an outline of the main stages that make up the jando ritual. The data presented below are drawn from person-centered interviews with 31 male adolescents who went through traditional jando (as opposed to the five who participated in “modern” jando as conducted in the hospital and involving only male circumcision and no teaching in the forest), as well as participant observation in three different field sites: Mlimani, Mtoni, and Barabara. The number of wali observed in each field site is listed in Table 15 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Site</th>
<th>Mlimani</th>
<th>Mtoni</th>
<th>Barabara</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Wali</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As noted in Chapter Five, in the Mlimani field site the village leaders assisted in organizing these rituals and therefore large numbers of *wali* were initiated together and were observed in large groups. In addition, in Mtoni the two families with whom we were involved in participant observation were collaborating in planning their initiation ceremony, resulting in two groups of *wali* in two separate *jando* sites, both of which we were able to access and observe. The *wali* observed in Mtoni therefore were observed as two separate groups of seven and eight *wali* each. In total, four different groups of *wali* were examined in three different field sites. In all field sites the basic structure and content were very similar, regardless of the size of the group, and therefore the observation data presented below are relevant to all field sites.

In general, boys are initiated in larger groups than girls, and the size of the group is also more widely variable. Among all male interview participants (*n*=35\(^{35}\)), the average reported size of their initiation group was 6.4 (SD=6.2), and ranged in size from only one up to a group of 31. This is larger than the average size of the initiation group reported by female participants of 3.9 (SD=4.8) girls. The tendency toward larger groups for the boys’ rituals reflects both the high cost of the *jando* ritual, which is reduced when families collaborate to share costs, and the complexity of the rituals themselves. While each girl who goes through *unyago* is subject to many complex ceremonies and lessons, in *jando* the circumcision is the primary ceremony performed, after which the boys receive little individual attention (see Section 6.3 below). I now turn to an examination of the stages of the *jando* ritual.

\(^{35}\) Data was missing for one participant who could not remember the size of his initiation group.
Stages of Jando

The stages of jando do not differ significantly from those of unyago, in that they follow a processual three-stage model of initiation including an initial separation from society, a transitional, “liminal” stage in the middle days, and a final ritual of reintegration into society (Turner, 1967, 1969; van Gennep, 1909). Though the structure is similar, the content of these stages does differ from unyago in many ways.

The initial stage of jando is focused on the circumcision itself. The boys are sequestered in a designated room overnight and then taken to the ritual hut, called likumbi, which has been built in the forest for this purpose. It is just outside this hut that the actual circumcision itself is performed by one or multiple mangariba,\(^{36}\) depending on the number of wali in the group. The procedure is done quickly, and once it appears that it has been successfully completed, the initial stage of the ritual is essentially complete. The middle days that follow the circumcision are less structured for the boys in jando than for the girls in unyago. Though they do involve some teaching and punishment for past misdeeds, these elements of the middle stage do not begin until the boys’ circumcision wounds have begun to heal, usually a week to ten days into the ritual. During this time the boys remain in the likumbi, tending to their wounds, talking and playing together as they feel ready.

The mlombo in jando takes on a slightly different role than in unyago. The female walombo in unyago are elderly women with special knowledge of the rituals who leads all components of the rituals, including those having a spiritual component.

\(^{36}\) Ngariba is the singular form of this noun, mangariba is the plural. A ngariba is a traditional healer who also conducts the circumcision.
Though these *walombo* do conduct some teaching of the female *wali*, most of this is done during the middle days of *unyago* by slightly older peers who have previously undergone the ritual. In *jando*, on the other hand, the primary role of the *mlombo* is not as the spiritual leader of the rituals, but as the caretaker of the young initiates. The *mlombo* watches over the boys, prepares their food, and sleeps in the hut with the boys for protection while they remain in *jando*. He is also responsible for a majority of the teaching of cultural lessons that are conducted during the middle days of *jando*. However, the rituals in *jando* that include a spiritual component are conducted by the *ngariba* who is only present for a short time during the circumcision and again in the final days of the ritual.

The final days of *jando*, which serve to reintroduce the boys to the community, begin on the evening of the second-to-last night. As with *unyago*, the coming out ceremony is always performed on a Saturday because it is considered an auspicious day on which the spirits are particularly generous. On Thursday evening, the boys are brought from the *likumbi* back to a designated house in the village, ideally one that is uninhabited. Thursday evening involves the ceremony during which the *wali* may change their names, followed by an all-night celebration for the boys’ relatives involving singing, dancing and drinking. The *wali* sleep in the village for the night, and just before dawn the following morning they go back to the *likumbi* with their relatives (both male and female) to conduct the ceremony of drinking *togwa*. The families’ celebrations continues through Friday night until Saturday morning, when the boys are bathed and given a final blessing before being dressed in their new clothes and conducting the coming out ceremony of *kufupa* (to contribute money) from their neighbors and friends.
6.3 Detailed Description of *Jando*

As in the previous chapter, the detailed description of the ritual itself is presented in a case study format as seen from the young *mwali*’s point of view. Participant observation in the male rituals was conducted by two male research assistants. However, in the Barabara field site, I was able to directly observe the coming out ceremony of one of the groups because the children were closely related to the group of girls that I was observing in *unyago*, and the families coordinated the rituals such that the boys and girls came out together on the same day. The description below is based on the detailed field notes taken by male research assistants throughout the ritual process, including their notes on the boys’ perceptions of the rituals based on conversations with the boys throughout the course of the ritual.

Stage One: The Circumcision

The first stage of the *jando* ritual is focused on the circumcision. The extended excerpts from field notes describing the opening ceremony are drawn from one set of observations conducted with a group of participants in Mtoni field site. This case was chosen because it includes all of the core components of this stage of the *jando* ritual. The description of the middle days, on the other hand, is drawn from notes taken in all field sites.

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It was just after breakfast on Friday when Haji’s father called him and his younger brother Ally to come inside the house. Haji and Ally went running toward the sound of their father’s voice. When they passed from the sunlight into the dim front room of their
home, their father was standing there with their mother. Their father told them gravely
that they were not to leave the house again, but to wait for other boys who they would
send to keep them company. Then their parents left without another word. Haji didn’t
know why he had to stay inside, but he didn’t want to disobey his father, and so he did as
he was told. Soon other fathers started to arrive with their sons in tow – first Haji’s
cousins Hamisi and Rajabu were brought by their uncle, and their other uncle soon
followed with their cousins Shaibu, Athmani and Yusuph.

The seven boys were left alone inside the house for most of the day. They played
games and told stories and wondered aloud to each other what was going to happen to
them. They could hear the voices of women growing in volume behind the house as they
grew in number. As their numbers grew, the boys could hear the distinctive ‘thump’ of
the large pestles as they ground cassava into flour.

Around 5pm, Haji heard the voices of a large group of men approaching the
house. He could see that the men were carrying machetes used for cutting down trees in
the forest. The men, who included the older brothers, male cousins, uncles, fathers, and
grandfathers of the six boys, settled on the front porch and waited for the women to bring
them food from around the back where they were cooking. Soon the women brought
them large plates of ugali and kisamvu, and brought a plate inside for Haji and the other
boys to share.

When everyone was full, the boys were called out on the front stoop of the house.
They were told to sit down in a line, one next to the other. Each father took a razorblade
from his pocket and shaved his sons’ heads, collecting hair as they went. Then it was the
mothers’ turn to be shaved, and the grandmothers were put in charge of cutting their hair.
Haji was surprised to see that his mother wore a single black *kaniki* as clothing, a
garment which she would continue to wear through the night and into the next morning.
(As in *unyago*, the hair is disposed of in a secret place as to avoid discovery by witches or
evil spirits who might use it to harm the boys. In addition, the black *kaniki*, the garment
traditionally worn at funerals, is worn by the women to acknowledge the potential for the
death of their sons in *jando*.)

When everyone’s head was shaved, the boys were put back inside for the night.
They couldn’t sleep, though, kept up by the sound of drumming, dancing, and singing,
and Haji could smell the distinct alcoholic perfume of *gongo* through the porous mud
walls of the house. The songs they sang ranged in meaning from ridiculous to
metaphorical. In one of the funnier songs, for example, the men called after their
beautiful former schoolmate Zuwena, suggesting that she had caused them pain by
refusing their sexual advances in their school years:

    Zuwena mama ayaaa!
    Zuwena mama ayaaa!
    We have studied in the same school called Sokineee,
    Zuwena mama ayaaa!

In a more serious one, each man takes a turn trying to grab a hot coal from the fire they
are dancing around and juggle it between his hands without burning himself while
everyone sings:

    You shouldn’t play with fire!
    You shouldn’t play with fire!
    You are scary/brave!
Around 2:30am the boys were startled out of half-sleep by an explosion of shouts and ululations from the crowd outside. Haji leapt up to peer out the window and caught a glimpse of an old man who was well known as a traditional healer in the village just before he was enveloped by the crowd. The crowd began to dance around the man in a circle, singing:

Mama how many days will you watch over me!
Now I am mixed up in singenge!

Haji knew this ngoma, called singenge. He had heard this song at other celebrations and knew it was used to stir up the crowd and keep them excited and dancing through the last hours of the night before dawn.

At 5am the wali were awoken again by their male relatives streaming into the room from outside. The boys’ clothes were removed and they were each wrapped in a kanga with two corners crossed and tied around the neck. The boys’ close male relatives and the old ngariba settled on the floor of the small room, and the women brought in mnalwa, large plates of rice and greens for everyone to eat to give them strength after the long night of dancing.

When they were full, the boys’ mothers came back with a large mortar and pestle that held a small amount of sorghum. They were still wearing their black kaniki, and they also had strings tied around their wrists, ankles and necks. (These strings, referred to as kuinamila in Kimakonde, are similar to those worn by the mothers of girls in unyago to signify their current social status as the mother of an initiate, and to indicate that they should not talk loudly or have sexual intercourse outside her marriage.) One of the mothers grabbed the large pestle and the other women lined up behind her. As she began
to pound the grains into flour, each woman grabbed the hips of the woman in front of her and all began to *kukata viuno* as two of the boys’ relatives beat out a rhythm on overturned plastic buckets. When the sorghum was finely ground, the *mangariba* scooped out the fine powder in handfuls and began to rub it onto the faces, chests, arms and legs of the boys until their skin took on a bright white glow. (The ground sorghum, called *ng’opedi* when prepared in this way, is applied to the boys’ skin because it is believed to scare off evil spirits and protect them from witchcraft during their circumcision)

By the time they were finished, dawn was approaching, and there as a large crowd of guests outside the house. They were chanting the names of different forest animals, “Come rabbit, come bird, come mouse…” (The boys are called out of the house using the names of forest animals because they will be living in the forest during their initiation time.) Each boy was covered with a *kanga* from head to toe, and then lifted into the air on the shoulders of an older brother or father and carried out and away from the house.

Haji still had no idea what was happening to him, but he could tell from under the thin cloth that they were moving away from the village and into the forest. After about 20 minutes of walking, Haji’s brother put him down on the ground and removed the cloth covering his head. Haji could see that they were standing on a narrow path though thick forest brush, but Haji had no idea which path they were on. His brother held him firmly by the shoulders, and after a minute, Haji heard the men ahead start to make loud noises, shouting, singing, and chanting. He tried to move toward what sounded like a celebration, but his brother held him firmly in place.
The shouting continued for a couple of minutes, and then Haji’s brother covered his head again, lifted him and carried him down the path for just a few more meters. When he put him down this time, though, he did not uncover his face. Instead, he told him in a stern voice to kneel down. Haji did so obediently, but he had already noticed the sound of a boy crying, not quite masked by the cheering men around him. He felt his brother kneel behind him and grab his elbows, forcing Haji to lean slightly backward into him. Then Haji felt another man kneel down, putting his knees on top of Haji’s.

In a flash, the man in front of Haji had moved aside the kanga that was covering his body and taken his penis in his hand. Before Haji had time to try to wriggle away from the man’s touch, he felt a searing pain and a scream rose out of him. Then they uncovered his head, and the men around him cheered even louder than Haji could cry. Haji continued to cry with pain for a few minutes, looking at the bleeding ring around his penis where another layer of skin used to be.

Crying and looking at his wound, he barely noticed as the other boys were led down the path he had come from into the clearing. One by one, the unsuspecting boys were held tightly as the ngariba did his work with the rapid precision of an expert as each boy’s father handed the ngariba a new sharp razor for his son’s circumcision. When each boy was finished, he was moved aside to sit near Haji and nurse his wound. It only took a few minutes for all six boys to be circumcised, and when the ngariba was finished his hands were covered in blood. The boys sat together, tears still running down their cheeks. Their fathers, uncles, and brothers gave them candy and coins to try to cheer them up, and laughed about how their little brothers were now, “clean for the girls,” and that, as circumcised boys, “now you will know the sweetness of sex.”
While some of the men were trying to cheer up the boys, the ngariba was still busy. He dug a hole in the middle of the square tree and mud structure that had been built the day before in preparation for the boys’ arrival. This structure, referred to as likumbi, would be the boys’ home for the next month as they waited for their wounds to heal. When the ngariba had finished digging the hole, he took a short, thick tree branch and stuck it down into the hole so it stood upright inside the hole. Then he took an old plastic water bottle that had been filled with coconut milk from his bag and poured some of the thick white liquid into the hole. He then called the male relatives forward one by one. He instructed each man to enter through the front door of the hut, remove his pants and rub a small amount of coconut milk from the bottle onto his penis, letting the excess drip from his penis into the hole. Then each man was to exit through the back door. When all had completed this task, the ngariba covered the hole with dirt, careful to leave the branch standing upright. (This ritual, which is meant to imitate ejaculation and symbolize the fertility of the boys’ male relatives, is believed to protect the boys’ fertility as they heal from their circumcision).

When the ngariba was finished, he disappeared into the thick surrounding brush and returned with a handful of leaves called mtope. The ngariba removed his pants and, holding the wide, flat leaves on his genitals, began to scoot on his backside in a circle around the hut. (This ritual, like the previous one described, are both called kuliganga in Kimakonde. They are done to protect the boys in jando. This ritual specifically is intended to prevent bad animals, people, or spirits from entering the jando hut.)

Finally, the boys’ fathers cut a roll of bandage into six pieces and carefully wrapped a loose bandage around each boy’s penis. When they were finished, the crowd
of male relatives began to shout and cheer as they ran back toward the village to tell the women the good news of the successful circumcision, leaving the boys to nurse their wounds. As they ran toward the village, they tore branches from the bushes along the trail, waived them overhead and chanted:

If you see branches have been erected
You should know that God has brought happiness!

When they reached the house where they had spent the night, they found all of the women sitting in silence, legs outstretched, holding a small handful of flour in their cupped hands in their laps. The men continued their chanting, and began to hit the branches on the roof of the house. The women finally broke their silence, leapt up and tossed the flour in the air, celebrating the safe passage of the boys through circumcision. (If a child dies in jando, the men take a clay pot and break it on the porch of the family’s house). After a few minutes of celebrating, the ngariba arrived and gathered the men and women around and told them solemnly that they should not forget that though their boys had survived circumcision, the parents still needed to be careful during the whole time while the children were in jando, and not have sex with anyone outside their marriage. Furthermore, he said that the men should abstain from sex with their wives for at least the first seven days to be sure that the boys begin to heal well. The parents nodded their agreement, and then the men headed back to the likumbi, and the women also headed into the forest to cut grass for the roof of the likumbi.

Back in the jando site, Haji was relieved when the men returned, now hoping that they had not been left alone for good in the forest. A few minutes later, Haji heard the voices of the women approaching, and he glimpsed bundles of grass on their heads before
being ushered inside the hut, out of sight. Peering through a space in the hastily-constructed mud walls of the hut, Haji saw the men stop the approaching women at the edge of the clearing, holding branches and threatening to hit them if they came any closer.

The women tossed their thick bundles of dried grass at the men’s feet. Haji saw his grandmother step forward holding a smaller bundle of grass wrapped in a black *kaniki*. (This bundle, prepared by a female *mlombo*, is made to resemble a corpse. It is meant to stay in *jando* and curse any evil person to death who might come to *jando* and try to hurt the boys.) Haji’s male relatives lunged at his grandmother, grabbing the bundle out of her hands and swatting at her with branches. At this, the women all turned on their heels and ran away laughing and shouting, “Prepare the penises well for vaginas like ours!”

Haji and his fellow *wali* spent the rest of the day sitting around, watching as the men attached the bundles of dry grass to the top of the mud and stick hut to form a roof. It was the warm season, so Haji did not mind not wearing any clothes. The *mlombo* cooked a large plate of *ugali* and *kisamvu* for lunch, and the boys ate until they were full. In the afternoon the *mlombo* dug a deep hole a few meters away from the hut for the boys to use as a bathroom.

In the evening, Haji’s father came to check on the boys. He sat them down and spoke solemnly. “For the next month,” he said, “you must stay in this hut and not leave at any time. The *mlombo* will be taking care of you instead of your mothers, and you should all respect him like a parent. If you do not respect him, your life in *jando* may be
very hard, but if you respect him, you will learn many things.” With this short speech, he rose and left the boys with the mlombo.

As the sun began to set, the mlombo made six crosses out of sticks and twine. He tied the crosses between the boys legs, with the top points of the” X” tied to their upper thighs and the bottom points tied one to each ankle. The mlombo explained to Haji that this awkward contraption would prevent him from accidentally closing his legs on his penis while sleeping. Though still in quite a bit of pain, Haji soon fell into an exhausted sleep, huddled near the other naked boys for warmth on the straw mat they had laid out on the floor of the small hut.

As illustrated above, boys are told very little about jando before their own circumcision. Their faces are covered until the procedure is complete, and following the ceremonies to protect the boys and the likumbi, their wounds are dressed and they are left with the mlombo in the forest. Though in one of the observation sites the likumbi was located closer to the village (about ten minutes walking distance), in the other three the site was located at least thirty minutes walking distance from the edge of the village. As the boys do not wear clothes for the first week to two weeks following their circumcision, it is important that they are located well away from the eyes of others.

The focus of this first stage of jando is the physical transformation of the circumcision. Though the boys’ relatives may tease the boys about becoming “sweet” for the girls, there is generally little discussion regarding the social transition to ukubwa during this stage, or of the psychological/behavioral changes in tabia that are another
goal of *unyago*. This is markedly different from the opening ceremony of *unyago*, where the *walombo* typically addresses all aspects of this transition in the opening *ngoma*. These aspects of the *jando* transition are primary addressed during the middle days of *jando*, to which I now turn.

**Stage Two: The Middle Days**

The middle days of *jando*, like those of *unyago*, take on a basic routine as the month passes. Their days involve caring for their wounds, occasionally being taught lessons or *mizimu* by the *mlombo* or other visitors, and listening to the *mlombo* and the visitors tell stories. In this section, I describe the typical activities that characterize the middle days of *jando*.

The only significant variation in the otherwise routine middle days comes in the changing need to care for the circumcision wound, which slowly heals during this stage. Because the fathers are responsible for the wound care, their presence in *jando* also changes through the course of the rituals as the boys’ wounds heal. Though in Haji’s case the fathers of the *wali* did not sleep in *jando* with the boys on the first night, it is not uncommon for them to do so. The fathers may stay with the boys for the first couple of nights, at most through the first changing of the bandage on the circumcision wound, an event that takes place on the third day after circumcision. This event can be quite painful for the boys because the removal of the bandage often results in a reopening of the circumcision wound. The fathers come to the *likumbi* for the event to encourage the boys to be brave and also often to bring iodine to cleanse the wounds. Though the fathers may sleep in the *likumbi* for the first few nights, as soon as the wounds begin to show some
progress of healing they will return to sleep at home, only visiting the boys during the day.

To change the dressing, the bandage is first soaked in water to soften it and then slowly peeled away to reveal the open wound. The wound is rinsed in iodine and covered with a fresh bandage. The bandage is changed at least two more times at three-day intervals. During this time, the boys are still in significant pain from the wound, though they are encouraged not to cry or complain. When the wound has been healing for a period of one week to ten days, the bandage is removed and the wound left uncovered. The wounds will continue to heal for an additional period of one week to ten days, with the total healing period ranging in time from two to three weeks from the time of circumcision.

During this entire healing period, the boys wear no clothing and sleep with the X-shaped contraption tied between their legs to hold them apart. The *mlombo* also teaches them to make a *mweja*, a stick tied with a small cloth used to swat flies from the circumcision wound, and to urinate in a push-up position, instead of standing up, to ease the pain. The boys only bathe once per week (on the same day when the bandage is changed) because water must be carried by hand from the boys’ homes to the *jando* location. In one of the field sites for this study, however, the *likumbi* was located in close proximity to the Ruvuma River, and the boys did bathe more regularly. Indeed, for villages located along the river, the *likumbi* are often constructed as close to the river as possible, for reasons discussed below.
As in *unyago*, the sexual activity of adults is seen as potentially dangerous to the young *wali*. The parents with a child in *jando* or *unyago* are explicitly instructed not to have sex outside of marriage at all, and to abstain from sex with each other for at least the beginning days of the rituals. In addition, because the boys in *jando* also receive many visitors, a clay pot filled with a mix of medicinal leaves and water is put on the path to *jando*, and any man who visits *jando* who has had sexual activity with anyone other than his wife must first bathe his penis in this mixture before approaching the *jando* site. If he fails to do this, it is believed that the boys’ circumcision wounds will not heal well. While in both cases adults’ sexual activities are seen as potentially threatening, additional steps are taken to protect boys in *jando*.

In *jando*, the *mlombo* controls all aspects of the day-to-day life of the boys, including cooking for them, teaching them the majority of the lessons that are part of *jando*, and doling out punishments for boys who do not learn quickly enough. The *mlombo* is not a family member, but a villager selected by the family and paid for his services. However, these individuals are not randomly selected, but are part of a group of individuals who regularly conduct this service each year and are well-versed in the expectations of everyday life in *jando*. They are often young, unmarried men who use the *mlombo* role as a form of employment.

In addition to caring for the boys’ daily needs, the *mlombo* is also responsible for protecting the boys during their time in *jando*, a task that is not to be underestimated. The *likumbi* is often located deep in the forest, far from the village and in an environment shared by many wild animals. During the period of our participant observation fieldwork in Mlimani, our most remote field site, two villagers were eaten alive by lions while
returning home from their fields in the evening. In the villages located along the Ruvuma River bordering Mozambique, the likumbi are often located in the floodplain, allowing easier access to water for cooking and cleaning, as well as access to fish for eating. However, the December/January period during which jando is most commonly conducted runs concurrent with the beginning of the rainy season in the highlands, located upriver from rural Mtwara. During this time, low-lying areas around the river can become suddenly flooded by rains washing down from the highland, and villagers report that boys have been swept away by flash floods in past years. It is the mlombo’s responsibility to keep a watchful eye over the boys and protect them from harm.

Despite the dangers, locations deep in the woods or on the banks of the river continue to be intentionally chosen for jando for specific reasons. When the walombo (n=7) were questioned in interviews as to the reason for continuing to expose the young wali to the risks associated with living deep in the forest or close to the river, they responded with both practical and symbolic reasons. In the case of jando sites located on the river, the walombo emphasized that the benefits of being close to the river (easy access to water and fish) outweighed the risks. For the forest jando sites as well, they responded that sending the boys far away was necessary, despite the risks from wildlife, to prevent younger boys and women from accidentally entering the area and seeing the young initiates. Furthermore, the walombo also pointed out that these dangers were not unique to jando, but a natural part of everyday life in rural Mtwara. While lions and flashfloods were startling concerns for us as fieldworkers and outsiders, to the residents of rural Mtwara, they were perceived as relatively normal aspects of their daily lives. Finally, both walombo and parents spoke of the choice of a remote jando site as a
reflection of the, “value of the traditional way of jando,” that is intended to test the boys’ courage. They emphasized that jando must involve risk, as it is meant to be a difficult and somewhat dangerous test that the boys must pass in order for jando to have meaning. Indeed, while “success” in unyago is focused on learning the lessons taught there, in jando, “success” is defined primarily by physical survival of both the circumcision and of the physical environment.

Each day in jando starts the same way, with the nauli-uli. At dawn the mlombo wakes the sleeping boys, unties their legs and makes them line up outside the hut. The boys are instructed to bend over and place their hands on the ground in front of them, with their hips as their highest point and their legs spread. They are then instructed to chant over and over, “Nauli-uli, nauli-uli, nauli-uli!” in loud voices. This continues for up to an hour, until the boys are shaking with exhaustion. According to the walombo, the sharp exhalation required to chant nauli-uli is believed to open up the groin area and, in combination with the bent-over position of the boys’ bodies, to “air out.” the circumcision wound, resulting in faster healing.

Following the nauli-uli, the mlombo coordinates the boys’ chores, which include sweeping the area inside and around the hut, washing the dishes from the night before and, if necessary, collecting firewood for cooking. Beyond these basic tasks, the boys have few responsibilities, and it is not expected that they conduct any significant physical labor. Like the girls in unyago, the boys are expected to gain weight while in jando so they will appear healthier during their coming-out ceremony. Also as in unyago, the boys coat their skin with a paste of ash and water, which is believed to lighten their skin. The
long hours spent sitting in jando, together with three large meals of ugali each day, are generally successful in causing the intended physical transformation.

Boys also are taught lessons about adult life in jando, in both structured ways, involving explicit lectures and songs, and unstructured ways through casual conversation fostered in the all-male environment of jando. The mlombo has the primary responsibility for teaching the boys, though the boys may receive any number of male visitors who also teach them. The direct lectures the boys receive are most often focused on expectations of obedience to and respect for parents and other elders, including how to greet them and receive them in their home. Boys are taught to greet their elders using shikamoo, the most respectful greeting and, when an elder arrives to visit, to go out to meet him and take his bags in to the house.

Once the boys have been instructed in these expectations, if they receive a visitor and do not perform as instructed, they will be punished by the mlombo. Common punishments include forcing the boys to kneel for extended periods of time, whipping them on the backs of their legs with thin sticks, and kufinya vidole, a punishment which involves putting sticks between the boys’ fingers and then squeezing the tips of the fingers together, bending them over the sticks and stressing the joints. The punishment lasts until the boys have begged forgiveness and promised to correct their behavior. These practices are similar to those seen in unyago, where girls are beaten or threatened with physical pain (e.g. having their clitoris cut off) to emphasize their need to change their tabia in order to make the transition to ukubwa. However, unlike in unyago, where these teachings take place in the middle of the night and in the context of an ngoma, the boys teachings are less structured and are not conducted within a specific ceremony.
The boys also learn some – though not all – of the same mizimu as the girls do in unyago. Indeed, while 88 distinct mizimu were documented during observation of the unyago rituals, only 34 were documented in jando. The primary themes of the mizimu taught in jando fall into four general categories: respect for elders, lessons about the environment, and sexuality, as well as the importance of not revealing the secrets of jando to women or younger boys. The mizimu about respecting elders and the environment described in the previous chapter do not differ significantly from those taught in jando, with these mizimu heard in both unyago and jando. Indeed, of the 34 mizimu documented in jando, 18 (52.9%) were also seen in unyago. However the mizimu regarding sexuality and, of course, those regarding the secrets of jando, are different from those taught in unyago.

_Mizimu_ related to sexuality in jando, not surprisingly, focus on knowledge about sex that is relevant to boys. The boys learn about the female body, for example, in the song:

**Chitoko, chitoko**
It has pierced the small child
She has been hurt in the vagina.

In this song, the word _chitoko_ refers to a type of bird that lives in the forest. In teaching the boys this song, the mlombo explains that the vagina was made when the _chitoko_ stepped on a small infant child and caused an opening that became the vagina.

Still other songs address the sexual act more explicitly. In the following _mzimu_ the boys are taught how to gauge their partner’s sexual satisfaction:
If you have sex with her  
And she is going back and forth  
It means she thinks it is sweet!

In another mzimu, the boys kneel on the ground and thrust their hips back and forth singing:

To thrust, to thrust!  
To have sex!  
Mbara-mbara-mbara!

In this song, “Mbara-mbara-mbara,” does not translate as actual words, but is a way of cheering the boys to thrust harder. This is similar to the liyanga conducted in the girls’ ritual, where the girls lay next to each other and are taught to thrust their hips back and forth. Still other songs teach about the dynamics of sexual relationships, for example, “While you work, while you are working, your neighbor may be stealing your wife, eeeh eeeh!”

These sexuality-related mizimu, as well as the details of the circumcision itself, all fall into the category of the “secrets of jando.” As in unyago, the details of the rituals themselves are not to be discussed outside of the ritual context. In addition, the boys also learn mizimu that explicitly address the importance of keeping secrets. For example, in the song, “Chitupi tupi, animal of the forest,” chitupi tupi refers to a type of bird commonly known as a forest pigeon. In jando, however, the term chitupi tupi is used to reference the way in which the bird appears to thrust its hips whenever it lands on a branch. Indeed, the word chitupi tupi itself is a slang word for the back and forth motion of the hips in sexual intercourse. When teaching the boys this song, the mlombo emphasizes that the forest pigeon cannot be called chitupi tupi outside of jando, and the
song as a whole acts as a reminder that the things they talk about inside *jando* should not be revealed to outsiders (i.e. women and younger boys).

Though the boys do learn these different *mizimu* and other lessons similar to those taught in *unyago*, the structured teaching associated with *unyago* is not heavily emphasized in *jando*. While the girls practice their dances and *mizimu* almost every day, the boys spend long, idle hours in *jando* during the afternoon. During these long hours, the boys often sit and listen to the *mlombo* and other visiting men *kupiga stori*, literally meaning “to hit the stories.” Talking and telling stories is a favorite pastime in rural Mtwara, and being able to tell a good story is a highly valued social skill. Although the young male *wali* do receive some structured teaching in *jando*, it is much more common for them to learn the details of adult life while sitting and listening to these unstructured stories.

This is one component in which *unyago* and *jando* differ significantly in their content. While the young female *wali* spend most of their time in *unyago* in the company of girls just one or two years older than themselves, learning the different *mizimu* and dances, the young male *wali* spend most of their time in *jando* in the company of older males. These men are usually either the friends of the *mlombo*, who is himself usually an adolescent or unmarried young adult male, or the boys’ older male relatives. In their long hours together in the afternoon, the young boys sit and listen to these young men tell stories, a large percentage which revolve around the topic of sex. As one of the male research assistants who conducted the observations in *jando* described it, “In *jando*, sex talk rules.” Though the young men would rarely talk so openly about their sexual exploits at home, in *jando*, taboos around discussing the details of one’s sexual
encounters are temporarily lifted, and the young wali listen to these stories with rapt attention.

It is in these informal conversations that sex and sexuality are most commonly discussed in jando. Sex is joked about in stories and in everyday speech. For example, in one field site, the observer noted that as the boys bend over for the nauli-uli exercise in the morning, the mlombo would say to them, “Bend over boys, your mothers are waiting for you the same way at home.” The mlombo is not referring to the boys’ actual mothers, but is suggesting that women in general will be available for the boys to have sex with when then come home from jando.

Sex is referenced often and casually in a range of contexts. For example, when a mlombo was changing a boy’s dressing, and he cried out in pain, the mlombo said, “You wimp! You don’t have a girlfriend because you have pimples on your face!” In this environment, the boys not only learn a great deal about the details of sexual relationships of older boys, but they also become accustomed to using sexual language and discussing otherwise taboo topics. The boys, who remain entirely unclothed for up to three weeks while in jando, regularly joke and laugh about which boy has a larger penis. While the girls are taught explicit cultural norms, values and expectations of sexuality in unyago, the boys are exposed to a wide range of ideas regarding sexuality in mostly unstructured ways.

Among all male interview participants who went through traditional jando (n=31) 91.3 percent (n=28) also reported listening to these types of informal discussions of sexual activity, and 83.9 percent (n=26) identified jando as playing an important role in
peaking their interest about sex. Furthermore, among the 28 male interview participants who reported listening to such discussions in jando, 60.7 percent (n=17) stated that during the course of jando they were explicitly told that they were now ready to enjoy sexual activity because they had been circumcised and were now in ukubwa. Selemani (age 19) captures this idea particularly well. He says:

When I went to jando, the way it is, you sit with your brother and your other relatives and their friends, and the way they talk amongst themselves, all they talk about is sex. And they tell you, you are a man, so once you get home, now you should pursue women, you should have a girl, as many times as you can. And once you go back to the village, of course you start to do that, to pursue girls, because you know they told you to!

Mohamedi (age 24) also explicitly links the circumcision to the transition to ukubwa and the expectation that sexual activity will be a part of that stage. He says:

You can be taken to jando, and on the first day, you go to be circumcised, and your father is there, your brother is there, and you feel VERY fierce pain, and you want to know why you are being tortured this way. And then your father comes, and he takes off his pants and says, “You see me? You will heal to look the same way, and then once you have healed and you return home, people will contribute money to you for your coming out, and you will go wander the streets to look for a girl, and you will find it very sweet.” That is one of the key lessons of jando. On the day of coming out, you have already got your money, and you head to the street to look for a girl – and they will be looking for you because they know you got contributions for your coming out. And you wear your new clothes, your new hat, and girls will follow you around. And the act that you have been told about by your father, you will do it the way it was explained to you. Even if you are very small, you will still know about sex. In jando you get ready for sexual things.
In both participant observation and in male interview participants’ descriptions of *jando*, the act of circumcision was regularly referred to as “cleansing” the boys so that they will be able to experience the “sweetness” of sex. For example, as Ally (age 14) states, “In *jando* you are prepared so that you are clean, and once you have come out of *jando*, you feel fresh and you can pursue any girl to have sex.” Mbaraka (age 16) also recalls, “*Jando* contributes to sexual activity because in *jando* your brothers, fathers, uncles all come to tell you how they live, and they explain to you how soon you will start to feel desire, how a person who has been circumcised is able to feel the sweetness of sex. So they tell you and you start to want to try it yourself.” Though sex is a topic in both *jando* and *unyago*, the messages are different, and are communicated in different ways. These differences will be examined in Section 6.4 below.

When the boys’ wounds have healed sufficiently such that they are comfortable wearing pants, the parents begin to prepare for the boys to *kuaruka*, that is, to go through the coming out ceremony that signifies the end of *jando*. As in the *unyago* ritual, the parents begin these preparations with the ceremony *kuloweka mtama*. This ceremony is similar to the version performed for *unyago*, except it is led by the male *ngariba* in the home, not in the *likumbi*, and therefore only the parents, and not the boys, participate. The parents notify the *mlombo* living with the boys in the *likumbi* when this ceremony occurs, and for each remaining day in *jando* the *mlombo* instructs the boys to shout the word *kuloveka* (*kuloweka* in Kiswahili) in loud voices in the early morning. In the quiet of the early morning, the boys’ voices often reach all the way to the village and are intended to notify the villagers that they will soon be returning from *jando*. As in *unyago*, the soaked sorghum prepared in the *kuloweka mtama* ritual will be used to make *togwa*
and local beer for the final coming out ceremony. The details of the final days of *jando* will be described in the following section.

**Stage Three: The Final Days**

To examine this final stage of the *jando* ritual, I return again to the account of Haji and his fellow *wali*, who was followed through the opening *ngoma*. As with *unyago*, the final days of *jando* begin on a Thursday, the second-to-last day before the end of the ritual.

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**The Final Days: Thursday**

Haji was excited – he knew the end was near. Last week the *mlombo* had allowed him to wear pants for the first time in almost three weeks, and the other boys were allowed to wear pants the day after that, which meant that they had finally healed enough to go home. Also for the past few days, the *mlombo* had made them yell *kuloveka* at the top of their lungs over and over at sunrise, just as the village was waking up. Haji was sure his mother could hear his voice and knew he was coming home soon. All of the boys were feeling strong from eating a lot of *ugali*, and they could all urinate while standing up like normal without pain. Haji was excited to return to his more comfortable bed in his parents’ home, and he couldn’t wait to see his mother.

That afternoon a large group of men arrived at the *likumbi*. With little ceremony, they covered the boys with *kangas*, lifted them onto their shoulders, and carried them back to the village. When they uncovered Haji’s face, he could see that they were inside one of the empty houses not far from his parent’s home. In the gathering darkness, the
boys giggled with excitement and talked about what they would choose for their new names – every boy wanted to change his so everyone knew that he had gone through jando.

A few hours later, Haji’s father and brothers returned, together with the other boys’ relatives, and they led the boys through the dark village to the open field by the school. As they walked, they sang:

While playing on the swing
   You won’t see the cars
   Or other things from the outside
   But you will see your mothers next year!

(This song was referring to their time spent in jando, where they didn’t see anyone from the outside, including their mothers, and announcing that the end of jando was near.)

When they arrived at the big field, they heard a large crowd of women gathered at the other end. As they walked toward them, the women started to cheer. But before they reached them, the mlombo ordered them to stop. He then instructed the mothers of the boys to call their sons by name, and told the boys that they should first introduce themselves by their new name before going to greet their families. He also reminded the boys to, “Remember the courtesy you learned in jando, and greet your elders appropriately.”

When the mlombo had finished giving his instructions, the chikula, the name-changing ceremony, began. Haji’s mother stepped forward first. She called “Haji come here! Haji come here!” in a loud voice. Haji resisted the urge to run to her like a small child, and instead remembered the mlombo’s instructions and spoke, “I who was Haji, I am now Mohammed,” then he greeted her using the respectful greeting, “Shikamoo
mama.” She replied with the standard response, “Marahaba,” and then said, “Come Mohammed, and take your gift.” Haji walked through the darkness toward his mother’s voice. He recognized her yellow kanga among the crowd of women. She handed him a parcel of two fresh chapatti wrapped in greasy newspaper, and then he returned to join the other boys.

This process was repeated for the six boys, each announcing his new name, greeting his mother with a respectful, “Shikamoo,” and then going to receive his present. When each mother had called her son’s name, the grandmothers and aunts were given the chance to call the boys, using the same dialogue, and give them the small presents of food or candy they had brought for them. When everyone had taken a turn, the mlombo collected the boys’ presents in a bucket and walked them back to the empty house. (The place where the boys stay during the final days of jando is called mnandile or tanita in Kimakonde, and acts as a type of holding place for the boys as they prepare for the final coming out.)

Back at the house, the boys were allowed to eat their treats and were also brought a large plate of ugali and kisamvu. They ate until they were stuffed, and then sat up late into the night listening to their friends and family celebrating. They heard them sing funny and surprising songs, such as:

The mwali’s mother
She has a sweet place
Eeh, she has a sweet place!

A large group of villagers was circling around the village following behind the drumming troupe that had been hired from the neighboring village. The drummers had been paid by
the wali’s families to stay up two nights in a row, keeping the party going and ensuring that all of their guests enjoyed the party.

Final Days: Friday

When Haji and the other boys were awoken before dawn the following morning, they found that the celebration outside had lost little of its fervor over the course of the night. Before the boys were fully awake, they were covered with cloth and lifted again onto the shoulders of their fathers and older brothers. Haji started to become nervous when he realized that they were headed back in the direction of the likumbi. He thought they had left there for good, and he was worried that they might do something painful to him again when they got there.

When they arrived at the jando site, the boys were put down on the side of the clearing and uncovered. Haji and his fellow wali watched as the ngariba they recognized from the day of the circumcision started digging a hole in the ground. As he dug, other men went into the surrounding forest and Haji could hear them cutting branches from trees with machetes. When the men returned, they carried three long thin, branches. They worked together to braid the branches into one long piece, and then they bent the branches and dug the ends into the dirt on either side of the ngariba’s hole, forming an arch over the hole.

The ngariba, who had finished digging, placed a clay pot into the hole and filled the pot with togwa. He then stood with the boys’ grandfathers in a line, legs spread, with the hole and arch directly in front of them. The grandfathers all held branches, and the ngariba held a spear. The ngariba called Haji forward. Haji was terrified of what they
might do to him, and he hesitated. Before the first cries of protest had crossed his lips, however, his father was on him, pushing him forward toward the waiting men and yelling, “Haven’t you learned anything in jando! Now is the time to leave behind this childish behavior. All of your ancestors have done this, and you must too.”

Haji threw himself on the ground and wriggled forward on his belly until his face was over the sunken pot of togwa. The ngariba instructed Haji to take three mouthfuls and spit each one into the woven tray to his side, then to take three additional mouthfuls and swallow each. Haji eyed the grey, gelatinous mixture warily, but he was afraid of what might happen if he refused, so he took the mixture into his mouth and quickly spat it into the tray. As he did, the men began to cheer loudly, and his grandfathers began to whip him on his legs with sticks as the ngariba jabbed him in the backside with the spear just hard enough to be startlingly painful. Haji did not hesitate again, but quickly completed the spitting and swallowing of the togwa and scurried out from under his elders’ legs.

This series was repeated for each of the reluctant wali in turn, and then each of the older men took their turn, though they were not slapped and jabbed as the young wali were. As the last of the wali’s relatives finished, Haji heard the sound of women approaching. He was surprised to see his aunts and grandmothers come through the brush into the clearing. The women appeared to understand their role, as one after another quickly lay on her stomach over the pot of togwa, spitting and then swallowing three mouthfuls each. When Haji’s aunt went to drink togwa, however, the old men standing over her started slapping at her with sticks as they had the young boys. The ngariba started yelling, “You whore, you sleep with your neighbor’s husband when you
have your own! Respect your man! Respect your man!” Haji’s aunt completed the round of drinking *togwa* and scurried back to the group of women, all of them laughing, including Haji’s aunt.

The women all took their turns, though only a few received the treatment that Haji’s aunt did. When each had taken her turn, the *ngariba* said to the group, “In your celebrations tonight, do not have sex with anyone, even your own spouse, until the children have come out tomorrow. If you do not follow these instructions, you can give us all spiritual trouble, ok?” The group laughed and nodded their acceptance of these terms. Haji noticed then that all of the women were wearing their oldest clothes and had left their hair askew. (When asked why the women had worn such old clothing, the *mlombo* replied that they were trying to prevent their husbands from trying to have sex with them and breaking the *ngariba’s* rule.)

With this, the ceremony was finished and the women returned to the village. The men dug up the clay pot full of *togwa* and took down the arch, and then they lit the *jando* hut on fire and instructed the boys to walk away with their fathers and not look back. They marched away from the burning structure, but instead of going back to the village, they turned and headed down the hill toward the low-lying pond that the villagers often used as a source of bathwater during the dry season. There the fathers stripped the boys naked, removed their own clothes as well, and all stepped into the edges of the pond and began to bathe. The *ngariba* scrubbed each of the boys down thoroughly with soap and water. When he was satisfied, he took a small bottle of oil from his pouch around his waist and rubbed the oil on the head of the penis of each of the *wali*. 
As they finished, the sun was just starting to peak over the trees. The boys were dressed, covered in cloth and carried back to the empty house where they had spent the night before. As they marched back to the village, the men sang loudly:

What we do at dawn, eeeh,
Means tomorrow the boys will come out!

Haji could hear his neighbors yelling and the sounds of drums, and could smell gongo in the air as they made their way through the village.

Back at the empty house, the boys were left alone by the men, and Haji’s older brother and cousin came to teach them likulutu, the song and dance routine they would be expected to perform the following morning during their coming out ceremony. The routine was not too difficult, involving stepping forward and back in unison. The boys were soon having fun practicing and singing the song:

Look at us everyone, look at us everyone!
We are coming! We are coming!
Father, mother, celebrate!
Don’t feel lonely for us!
Today we are coming back home!

The boys relaxed in the house through the afternoon, practicing their routine for the following day and greeting visitors who came to see them with the respectful shikamoo. Outside Haji could hear the celebration continuing, the drummers still circling the village with a crowd of dancers following them, singing and laughing and shouting. The boys were brought a large plate of ugali for lunch and another for dinner.

Just after the sun had set, Haji’s older cousins came rushing into the room, breathless and laughing. They told Haji and the other boys between their giggles that their other cousin Asha had been spotted having sex with a boy between two houses near
the corner of the village. She had been so intoxicated on gongo that she either did not realize or did not care that she and her partner were visible to those passing by. Haji’s cousins were quite intoxicated themselves, and their pants were soaking wet from dancing in the puddles of dirty water that had been left on the road from the last rainstorm. The party continued through the night, and Haji did not sleep both because of the noise and his excitement for the coming out ceremony the following day.

Final Days: Saturday

The next morning the boys’ male relatives all crowded into the small house to prepare them for their reintroduction to the community. They first bathed each boy and applied oil to his penis. Then the boys were dressed in new underwear, socks, pants, shirts, shoes, and hats. Two of Haji’s cousins also had new suit jackets to wear, and Haji couldn’t help but feel a bit jealous. By 10am everyone was ready to go. The mlombo led the boys, singing and dancing the likulutu they had learned the following day, out of the house and into the front yard. They sang the song over and over again as the crowd cheered.

The mlombo brought the performance to a close and instructed the boys to line up in front of the house. With the crowd watching the ngariba dipped a coin in cooking oil and dabbed a drop on the forehead of each boy. As the oil dripped down the boys’ foreheads, the ngariba explained that this test, called kumwinamila, would tell if the parents of the boys had broken the ngariba’s rules and had sexual intercourse with someone outside of their marriage while the boys were in jando. If the oil stopped between the child’s eyes, he explains, it meant his parents acted appropriately, but if it
ran down the bridge of his nose, it meant that one or both of his parents had engaged in sexual intercourse with either each other or someone else.

The crowd watched the oil drip down the boys’ faces. For all of the boys except Haji’s cousin Hamisi, the oil stopped between their eyes. As the oil on Hamisi’s face ran down between his eyes and continued onto his nose, the crowd broke out into hysterical laughter, grabbed branches from the nearby trees, and began swatting at Hamisi’s parents’ legs and backsides. Hamisi’s mother and father both screeched and ran away from the crowd. They soon returned laughing, and no one said another word to them about their apparent misdeeds.

With this, it was time for *kufupa*, to contribute money, to the boys. The now-exhausted troupe of drummers was there, and they started up with a fervor that did not show their sleep deprivation. The boys sat in handmade wooden chairs in a row, each with a bucket in front of them. They held a solemn expression throughout as the guests, one by one, danced their way to the front of the crowd to deposit coins into their buckets. When the flow of contributions had slowed, Haji’s parents took him and his brother Ally by the hand and led them back to their house with their buckets. At home, the boys again sat on chairs and watched their relatives and neighbors drop coins into their buckets. Finally, their parents told them that it was time to eat. They brought out huge platters of rice and goat meat, and the guests ate hungrily after their long night of drinking and dancing. Haji was delighted to eat rice and meat after a month of only ugali for every meal.
When they were full some guests slowly began to prepare for their trip back home, while other slept on mats in the shade near the house. Haji went with his brother to visit neighbors, both to show off their new skill at politely greeting them and in hopes of soliciting more contributions. Haji’s mother had counted his contributions, which added up to almost 5000 shillings (approximately $3). Haji suspected that his mother might have taken some of the money to buy things at home, but he didn’t mind. Five thousand shillings was more money than he had ever had in his whole life.

As Haji walked around the village with his brother, he saw a group of girls, two of whom were also wearing new clothes and had come out of unyago on the same morning. When the girls saw him, they ran over and surrounded the boys. They asked how much money they had gotten, but Haji refused to say. The girls asked for money to buy candy and Haji gave them 200 shillings to split amongst themselves. The girls ran away giggling toward the store, and Haji headed home and slept hard and happy for the rest of the day.

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The final ceremony of jando is much shorter and less involved than that of unyago. Though the boys also drink togwa, as the girls do, the boys are not tested on skills or mizimu they may have learned in unyago nor are they told creation stories or given explicit instruction regarding their sexuality. While the girls final ngoma lasts many hours, the boys is quickly over, and they return home to prepare for their coming out. This is just one of the many ways in which the jando is less complex than the unyago ritual.
6.4 Sexuality in Jando

To close this chapter, I will briefly summarize the key ways in which jando acts as an underlying influence on adolescent sexual activity in rural Mtwara. First, like unyago, jando is intended to mark a developmental transition from childhood to ukubwa. As such, the ritual itself involves preparation for various aspects of this new life stage, including the transition to sexual maturity and beginning of sexual activity. The circumcision itself is regularly referred throughout the jando rituals as preparation for sexual debut. In addition, like girls in unyago, boys also learn the details of sexual activity, though primarily through informal conversations, as opposed to structured teaching, as in unyago.

As described above, the boys’ lessons in jando are less structured. Though they do learn some mizimu about sexual relationships, these are not the primary source of messages related to sexuality in jando. On the contrary, messages related to sexuality in jando are primary communicated in informal conversations during the long days spent in the likumbi while the boys are waiting to heal. These informal conversations not only contain information about sexual relationships in general, but also specifically about the norms, values and expectations surrounding men’s sexual roles. In the stories of the older boys and men, the young initiates hear about the various strategies used in pursuing girls and are explicitly told that once they have completed jando, they are free to pursue girls.

In jando and unyago, both boys and girls are exposed to messages that are intended to prepare them for engaging in sexual relationships in ukubwa, though these messages are quite different. Boys and girls are taught specific, gendered expectations
surrounding the sexual roles of men and women. However, fully understanding these messages and their relationship to adolescent sexual activity requires examining these messages in the context of broader cultural scripts guiding gender and sexual roles in rural Mtwara. In the following chapter, I examine these cultural scripts, and the various aspects of the cultural environment which influence adolescent sexual relationships.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the structure and content of the jando ritual as practiced by the Makonde of rural Mtwara. The focus of this ritual is the circumcision, which occurs on the first day of the ritual. Following the operation, the boys remain in the woods as they wait for their wounds to heal. During this time, they do learn a variety of lessons that are intended to prepare them for their transition to ukubwa. However, unlike in unyago, in jando many of these lessons, and particularly those related to sexuality, are communicated through informal conversation with older male visitors. Though they are informal, they do include specific messages regarding male sexual roles. In the following chapter, I examine the relationship between the rituals of jando and unyago and adolescent sexuality within the broader cultural environment of rural Mtwara.
7.0 Overview

In the preceding two chapters, I provided a detailed description of the structure and content of the initiation rituals of *unyago* and *jando*. As van Gennep (1909), and many others who have followed him in the study of “rites of passage” have noted, the cultural and developmental significance of these practices is defined by the surrounding cultural environment, and understanding them requires an examination of the context in which they are practiced (e.g. Ahmadu, 2000; Beidelman, 1997; Boddy, 1989; Herdt, 1981; Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000). Furthermore, the rituals of *unyago* and *jando* are only one influence on adolescent sexuality in the region, and understanding adolescent sexuality in this context requires a broader examination of other potential influences. In this chapter, I discuss key characteristics of the population and cultural environment of rural Mtwara to illustrate the context within which these rituals are practiced and to identify additional underlying influences on adolescent sexuality. In the following chapter, Chapter Eight, I examine how the recent changes in the region – and particularly the introduction of formal education – are reshaping the cultural environment described below and, by extension, adolescent sexuality.

In this chapter, I use LeVine’s (1996) cultural mediation framework (as described in Chapter Two) to explore the biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors that influence adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara and to examine the role of the initiation rituals in relation to these other factors. These include characteristics of the
cultural environment that influence two core components of adolescent sexuality: 1) the normative developmental pathways for boys and girls, shaping the meaning of “adolescence” and, subsequently, “adolescent” sexuality in rural Mtwara; and 2) normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ roles in negotiating sexual relationships. Though I organize this discussion according to biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors relevant to the question of adolescent sexuality, as these categories are interrelated there will be some overlap in content.

In Section 7.1 of this chapter, I discuss the relationship between the social transition of unyago and jando, the biopsychological transition of puberty and the age of sexual debut in rural Mtwara. As will be illustrated below, although boys and girls are prepared for sexual activity in unyago and jando – before they have reached puberty – the majority do not actually begin to engage in sexual activity until at or soon after puberty. This suggests that the biopsychological changes of puberty play a mediating role in the relationship between the rituals of unyago and jando and sexual debut. This is also consistent with the timing and purpose of unyago and jando as discussed in the previous two chapters. These data together suggest that sexual debut around the age of puberty is part of normative developmental expectations in rural Mtwara.

In Section 7.2, I examine the relationship among aspects of the physical, economic and social environment as they related to norms and expectations of adolescent sexuality. First, I examine the subsistence practices and general economic status of the population of rural Mtwara, which were identified by adolescent participants as primary factors shaping sexual relationships. However, the impact of poverty on sexual relationships is mediated by gender. In this section, I examine how economic roles are
divided by gender in rural Mtwar, and the way in which this gendered division of
economic roles shapes boys’ and girls’ access to resources.

In Sections 7.3 and 7.4, I specifically examine how these underlying
biopsychological and environment/economic factors relate to cultural factors, or “scripts”
defining central tendencies in adolescent sexual relationships in rural Mtwar.
Specifically, I examine two distinct cultural scripts shaping adolescent sexuality in rural
Mtwar. In Section 7.3, I examine the scripts defining normative developmental
pathways for boys and girls, including the meaning of “adolescence” and, subsequently,
“adolescent” sexuality in rural Mtwar. Then, in Section 7.4, I closely examine
normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ roles in negotiating sexual
relationships.

As will be illustrated in Section 7.3, the normative developmental pathways are
distinct for boys and girls in rural Mtwar. In this context, sexual relationships in
adolescence for girls are inherently limited by the normative developmental pathway for
girls. I discuss these patterns in relation to other characteristics of the cultural
environment, including gender and economic roles, as well as to the rituals of jando and
unyago. I return to this issue again in Chapter Eight, where I examine how the
introduction of secondary education is leading to a later age of marriage among some
girls and challenging existing values and expectations surrounding adolescent sexuality,
particularly for girls.

Finally, in Section 7.4, I specifically examine the normative cultural scripts
guiding adolescents’ negotiations of their sexual relationships. As will be illustrated
below, adolescents’ negotiations of their sexual relationships reflect the biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors discussed in the previous sections. These scripts also echo many of the specific messages surrounding boys’ and girls’ distinct sexual roles communicated in *unyago* and *jando*. This reflects the shared roots of these rituals and these cultural scripts within the surrounding cultural environment of rural Mtwara.

7.1 Biopsychological Factors

As discussed in Chapter Two, biopsychological factors underlying human behavior refer to universal characteristics of the human species. In this case, these factors include those universal aspects of human biological and psychological development that underlie human sexual capacity. LeVine (1996) refers to these factors as the “organic hardware,” because they represent species-wide constraints on behavior that are changeable only over evolutionary time. However, as was discussed in Chapter Two, the actual impact of these universal biopsychological factors on adolescent sexuality is mitigated by both environmental/economic and cultural factors (discussed in Sections 7.2 and 7.3 below). In this section, I focus on the biopsychological influences on adolescent sexuality, with a particular focus on the developmental changes associated with puberty. I first briefly discuss the basic characteristics of the pubertal transition and the variation in the timing of puberty worldwide. I then examine the relationship between puberty and sexual debut in rural Mtwara and its implications for the role of initiation in adolescent sexual behavior.
Puberty and Variation in Pubertal Timing Worldwide

Puberty marks the physical transition of individuals from children to adults. The pace of growth and change associated with puberty are second only to those seen in infancy in regard to their impact on the body (Garn, 1952). During puberty individuals undergo a rapid growth spurt and achieve full reproductive capacity. Puberty also plays a key role in sexual differentiation; before puberty, the only major physical difference between males and females is in the gonads, but the development of secondary sex characteristics during puberty results in visible sexual differentiation between males and females. The pubertal transition takes place over many years and at varying paces for males and females, and the various stages of puberty are associated with specific biopsychological changes.

The physiological changes of puberty begin earlier in girls by an average of approximately six months. However, the visible changes such as weight gain and breast development occur one to two years earlier in girls than in boys, making girls appear physically mature at a much younger age. Unlike boys, in girls the development of secondary sex characteristics precedes fertility, causing girls to resemble adult women well before they have actually attained their full reproductive capacity (Lancaster, 1986). Menarche occurs relatively late in the course of pubertal development, approximately two years after the first signs of breast growth (Hammar, 2004). The first ovulatory cycle typically does not occur until many months after menarche, and full fertility (i.e. ovulation occurring every month) may not be reached for months or even years later (Eveleth, 1986; Montagu, 1959). Research across diverse cultural contexts suggests that 50 percent of girl’s menstrual cycles remain anovulatory up to three years following
menarche (Konner & Shostak, 1986; Lancaster, 1986; Vihko & Apter, 1980; J. Whiting et al., 1986). Given these differences in pubertal development, boys are fully fertile much earlier than girls, though they appear to reach puberty much later.

Though the sequences of the stages of puberty are consistent across human population, the timing of puberty is widely variable. Worldwide, the age of pubertal onset ranges from eight to 14 in females and from nine to 15 in males (Eveleth & Tanner, 1990; J. Whiting et al., 1986). This variation in gonadarche also affects variation in age of menarche – while girls in Hong Kong or the United States reach menarche around 12.5 years of age, girls in Rwanda have an average age of menarche of 17.0 (Eveleth, 1986). Though much remains to be understood regarding the factors influencing age of pubertal onset, a number of factors, including genetic, environmental, behavioral and psychosocial influences appear to play a role (Eveleth, 1986; P. Gluckman & Hanson, 2006). One reason for these differences cross-culturally is the secular trend toward an earlier age of puberty – particularly for girls though potentially for boys as well – in North America and Western Europe. This trend is generally associated with changes in diet and lifestyle linked with industrialization in these parts of the world, though the exact mechanism remains unclear (L. Coleman & Coleman, 2002; Ellison, 1990).

Similar to adolescents in many rural communities across sub-Saharan Africa, boys and girls in rural Mtwara experience puberty at an age significantly later than that experienced by adolescents in Europe and North America (Parent et al., 2003). In rural Mtwara, the average age of puberty for boys as reported by male interview participants is 15.7 years (SD = 1.4), with the youngest participant reporting age 13 and the oldest age
The mean age of menarche for all female adolescent interview participants was 14.6 (SD=1.1), with the youngest participant reaching menarche at age 12 and the oldest at age 16. Though these data are based on individual recall, and therefore are subject to error, this estimate is consistent with recent data collected on rural populations in northern Tanzania (Hou, Huo, & Olopade, 2011; Rebacz, 2009). These estimates are higher than the age of puberty seen in both males and females in Europe and North America, where boys usually reach Tanner Stage Three puberty between the ages of 11 and 13, and girls reach menarche at an average age of 12.5 years (L. Coleman & Coleman, 2002; Eveleth, 1986; W. Marshall & Tanner, 1970). These data suggest that both boys and girls in rural Mtwara reach puberty at a later age than adolescents in the United States.

Puberty and Sexual Debut

Another biopsychological factor specifically related to pubertal development is the increase in feelings of sexual desire or attraction associated with adolescents’ emerging reproductive capacity. The cross-cultural record suggests that sexual activity begins around puberty in all cultural contexts except those where it is actively suppressed through explicit social measures (Broude, 1975; Broude & Greene, 1976; Ford & Beach, 1951; Konner & Shostak, 1986; D. Marshall & Suggs, 1971). This near-universal pattern of initiating sexual activity around the age of puberty suggests a role for psychobiology – essentially, the transition to reproductive maturity together with an increase in feelings of sexual desire lead to sexual activity among adolescents in the absence of restrictive cultural attitudes or social pressure against such behaviors.

As defined by Tanner Stage Three changes, see Chapter Six for details.
There is significant cross-cultural evidence to suggest that the first feelings of sexual desire associated with puberty actually begin during adrenarche (Herdt & McClintock, 2000). Adrenarche, often called “adrenal puberty,” refers to the earliest stage of puberty during which the production of androgen hormones from the adrenal glands increases, sparking the cascade of other hormonal changes that drive later pubertal development in both boys and girls. Though difficult to measure, the onset of adrenarche generally takes place in late childhood around the age of ten (Tanner, 1984). In their recent article aptly titled, “The Magical Age of 10,” Herdt and McClintock (2000) note that across diverse cultural contexts, young adolescents most commonly report their first feelings of sexual attraction as occurring around age ten. As Herdt and McClintock suggest:

Something prior to puberty is transforming the child’s body and psyche in the direction of sexual arousal. What might the precursor of this development be? Adrenarche is the best candidate for conceptualizing the development of attraction. (2000, p. 592)

Though the exact mechanism is unclear, it appears that the hormone changes associated with adrenarche also marks the first psychological changes associated with puberty, the beginning of feelings of sexual attraction.

In interviews, adolescents acknowledged the role of sexual desire or attraction in motivating sexual activity at the time of puberty. Among all adolescent interview participants (n=69), 43.5 percent (n=30) identified sexual desire as important in influencing age of sexual debut. However, of these 30 participants, 63.3 percent (n=19) were referring specifically to boys, while only 20 percent (n=6) were referring to girls, and the remaining 16.7 (n=5) percent were unspecific as to gender. For example, as Saidi
(age 19) explains, “For me, once I had reached puberty, the feelings of desire had already begun a lot, pushing me to have sex. For boys, once we reach puberty, it is really difficult to prevent yourself.” Doris (age 16), on the other hand, explains for girls, “[For] some girls, when they reach puberty, there are certain feelings of desire, desire to be with a man. And, of course, once you know a man, once he has seen a girl, of course he will start to try to proposition her.” Though more participants discussed sexual desire as an influence on boys, this does not suggest that girls necessarily experience less sexual desire than boys during puberty. As will be discussed in Section 7.3, participants more commonly identified economic factors as equally or more important than sexual desire in shaping girls’ sexual relationships.

In interviews with adolescents, puberty was identified as the primary marker for the beginning of adolescent sexual activity. The connection between pubertal changes and sexual debut was made most directly by participants when they were asked to state the normative age of sexual debut for boys and girls in their community. Among all adolescent participants (n=69), 62.3 percent (n=43) of participants did not state an age, but instead volunteered that it was pubertal development, not age, that was related to sexual debut. For example, as Hasani (age 15) responded, “The question of sex is just about reaching puberty. Once you are there, you start. That’s it.” Hamisi (age 20) expressly links variation in age of sexual debut for girls to variation in age of puberty, saying, “In short, girls begin to have sex once they have gone through puberty. After age 14, 15, or 16. They vary between those three ages because they go through puberty at different ages. But once she has begun to grow breasts, she begins to have sex.”
Participants’ reports of their own age of sexual debut were consistent with their perceptions regarding the normative age of sexual debut in their community. As mentioned above, for all female interview participants (n=33) the mean age of menarche was 14.6 (SD=1.2), and ranged from 12 to 16. Among girls who reported sexual activity (n=22), the mean age of sexual debut was 15.6 (SD=1.7). For boys, the average age of puberty was 15.7 (SD 1.4), and among boys who reported sexual activity (n=20), the average age of sexual debut was 16.4 (SD=2.3). The majority of participants reported an age of sexual debut at or near their age of puberty. Among all adolescent participants who reported engaging in sexual activity (n=42), 69.1 percent (n=29) reported an age of sexual debut within two years of puberty. Table 16 below illustrates the difference between age of puberty and age of sexual debut among sexually active male and female participants.

Table 16: Difference between Age of Puberty and Age of Sexual Debut

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<th>Number of Years Between Puberty and Sexual Debut</th>
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<th>Girls (n=22)</th>
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<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>6 (27.3%)</td>
<td>11 (26.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38 A negative number represents an age of sexual debut before puberty.
Among the 27 participants who reported no past or present sexual activity, 40.7 percent (n=11) also reported that they also had not yet reached puberty. Furthermore, among those who had reached puberty but reported no sexual activity (n=16), 62.5 percent (n=10) were within two years of puberty.

In general, these data suggest that puberty is the normative point at which boys and girls in rural Mtwara begin to engage in sexual activity. This is consistent with the timing of unyago and jando which, as discussed in the previous two chapters, are intentionally conducted before the first physical signs of puberty in order to prepare young people for their upcoming transition to sexual maturity and the beginning of sexual activity. The pattern suggested by these data is one in which boys and girls in rural Mtwara receive the knowledge and preparation deemed necessary for engaging in sexual relationships in jando and unyago, and then begin to engage in sexual relationships upon reaching puberty. These data also suggest that the biopsychological changes of puberty act as a mediating influence on age of sexual debut. Though youth are prepared for sexual activity in jando and unyago, it is the biopsychological changes of puberty that are more closely linked to the onset of sexual activity. In the following sections, I will examine a number of environmental/economic and cultural factors in relation to this pattern in the age of puberty and sexual debut.

### 7.2 Environmental/Economic Factors

LeVine’s “environmental/economic” factors include a range of population-level characteristics of the physical, economic and social environment. According to LeVine, variation across environments presents different populations with different sets of
parameters for behavior. In this section, I explore specific aspects of the physical, economic and social environment of rural Mtwara that act as underlying influences on adolescent sexual activity. Specifically, I focus on the subsistence practices and general economic status of the population of rural Mtwara, and the social organization of economic roles by gender. These aspects of the environment of rural Mtwara serve as underlying – but not determining – influences on adolescent sexual relationships.

**Subsistence and Economic Status**

As was noted in Chapter Three, agriculture is the dominant mode of subsistence for the population of rural Mtwara, with 92 percent of women and 77 percent of men reporting that it is their primary source of subsistence (National Bureau of Statistics, 2004). Among all adolescent participants with at least one living parent (n=67), 88.5 percent (n=59) reported that one or both of their parents were farmers. Of these participants, the most common crops grown included millet (54.2%, n=32), corn (44.1%, n=26), cassava (32.2%, n=19) and rice (30.5%, n=18). In addition, a number of participants reported that their families also grew cash crops, including cashew (16.9%, n=10), beans (11.9%, n=7), coconut (8.5%, n=5), and pineapple (6.8%, n=4), or kept small animals, including chickens (16.9%, n=10) and goats (10.2%, n=6). Ethnographic observations also revealed that families in rural Mtwara cultivate small amounts of a variety of other crops, including cucumber, tomato, onion, pumpkin, papaya, lime and various green leafy vegetables, and also forage for a variety of wild fruits (e.g. mango,

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39 Though this aspect of the “social environment” is clearly also shaped by cultural norms related to gender, because participants so often tied this issue to the limited economic opportunities and high rate of poverty in Mtwara in general, it has been included here. This is not intended to suggest, however that these gendered economic roles are inevitable or unchangeable.

40 As some participants reported more than one crop, percents exceed 100 percent.
cashew fruit, guava, and pear) and a wild root called ming’oko. In addition, among adolescent participants whose fathers were still alive (n=54), 20.4 percent (n=11) reported that their father supplemented the family food supply and income by pursuing a variety of marine life, including shellfish, octopus, squid, eel, and fish.

In addition to farming, fishing and foraging, many households also supplement their income through entrepreneurial small business. Among all adolescents with at least one living parent (n=67), 50.7 percent (n=34) reported that one or both of their parents were involved in some type of small business. The most common types of small business ventures included selling agricultural products grown at home (47.1%, n=16), selling, trading or transporting marine products such as fish or squid (32.4%, n=11), or trading other types of goods (20.6%, n=7) such as foodstuffs, charcoal, kitchenware, or clothing. However, the majority of business ventures (97%, n=32) reported by participants were small scale, with individuals buying and selling limited amounts of goods in local markets or from their home. Only two participants reported that their parents (in both cases, their fathers) were involved in large scale business, one who had a trading business to bring goods from Mozambique, and the other who bought and sold sea cucumber to a Japanese company in nearby Mtwarra town.

In total, subsistence practices in rural Mtwarra consist of a highly diversified set of agricultural activities supplemented by foraging activities and small business. Reliance on a range of subsistence practices is necessary in the harsh physical environment of rural Mtwarra for a number of reasons. First, the unpredictability of the climate of rural Mtwarra, where drought not uncommonly ruins crops, makes sole reliance on agriculture risky (UNICEF, 2008). Second, the local climate, which includes a cycle of only one
rainy season followed by a long dry season, allows for only a single growing season per year for the large staple crops such as corn, rice, and millet (FEWS Net Tanzania, 2007). Through diversification of crops and supplementation with foraging and fishing, Mtwara residents increase their access to food throughout the year. Third, there is a shortage of arable land for agriculture in rural Mtwara. The population density of rural Mtwara is relatively high at 52 people per square kilometer, and large tracts of land are covered by sandy soil or thick forest that is difficult to clear and rapidly re-grows, making agriculture essentially impossible (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002). It is not uncommon for villagers, particularly those living in larger villages, to walk for up to three hours one-way to reach their fields because no land is available closer to their homes. Finally, agriculture in rural Mtwara is practiced almost entirely without the assistance of modern technology. In the course of my fieldwork, I never encountered a single farmer who had access to a tractor or any other modern farm equipment. This meant that every inch of the dry, sandy fields had to be tilled using a simple hand hoe, and during dry spells women carried water on their heads, one bucket at a time, to water their fields. The intensive labor required for agriculture further limits the area that one household can cultivate.

Though the many agricultural, foraging and small business activities practiced in rural Mtwara do allow its residents to survive, they rarely allows them to thrive, and the general economic status of the community can only be described as poor. Among adolescent interview participants (n=69), only 30.4 percent (n=21) reported that they ate at least three meals per day in their household, much lower than the national average for rural areas of 49 percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). An additional 58.0
percent (n=40) reported eating only two meals per day, and 11.6 percent (n=8) reported eating only one meal per day. Although the diversity of subsistence practices may increase access to food resources, the physical environment of rural Mtwara makes food security unpredictable for a large percentage of the population. During fieldwork in 2009, rural Mtwara was one of the few regions of the country that was provided food aid by the Tanzanian government due to shortages resulting from the previous year’s drought.

Given the cross-sectional design of this research, it is difficult to know if and how individuals’ and families’ economic status have changed as a result of the recent economic investment in the region spurred by the arrival of oil and natural gas industries. However, data on per capita incomes in the region suggest that incomes remain among the lowest in Tanzania and still appear to be increasing at a rate less than the national average. Table 17 below shows the per capita income in rural Mtwara compared to the national average.

**Table 17: Per Capita Income 2000-2009, Mtwara Region and National Average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mtwara Region</td>
<td>267,207</td>
<td>295,181</td>
<td>330,991</td>
<td>293,889</td>
<td>299,785</td>
<td>310,679</td>
<td>334,603</td>
<td>369,004</td>
<td>433,138</td>
<td>465,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>238,987</td>
<td>258,130</td>
<td>290,012</td>
<td>329,212</td>
<td>367,828</td>
<td>403,283</td>
<td>433,783</td>
<td>495,932</td>
<td>568,082</td>
<td>627,046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income is reported in Tanzanian Shillings (TZS). $1 is equal to approximately 1,400 TZS.
As discussed in Chapter Three and suggested by the trends in per capita income provided above, the arrival of the oil and gas industry in Mtwara in 2003, and the subsequent economic boom in the town of Mtwara, do not appear to have had a significant impact on the standard of living in rural areas. Though the new electrical plant in Mtwara has been producing electricity for the city since 2005, no infrastructure has been built to bring this resource to the surrounding villages.\textsuperscript{42} In addition, though the road from Dar es Salaam is nearing completion, roads within the region remain undeveloped (Small Industries Development Organization, 2007). In interviews with community leaders (n=34), 70.4 percent (n=24) reported that, though the arrival of the gas company did provide many jobs as the time, they were primarily labor-based jobs which ended with the completion of the gas line from the villages to town. Among all adolescent interview participants, only one reported that her father currently worked for the gas company. Though ethnographic observations in the town of Mtwara from 2008 through 2010 identified many indicators of economic growth (see Chapter Three), the surrounding areas of rural Mtwara do not appear to be experiencing the same benefits.

In general, access to cash resources in Mtwara remains difficult, despite the economic growth occurring in Mtwara town. Economic opportunities in rural Mtwara are still severely limited, and households scrape together a living through agriculture, small business and hard physical labor. Though the gas company has been active in Mtwara since 2003, the large majority (88.5 percent) of adolescent participants reported that their parents still rely primarily on agriculture for survival. While families can survive through a diverse set of subsistence practices, they often struggle to purchase the

\textsuperscript{42} As of January 2011.
few goods that they cannot grow or gather themselves, such as kerosene for lighting and clothing, and for many, access to food is a constant concern.

The issue of poverty and basic material needs permeates every aspect of life in rural Mtwara, including sexual relationships. However, as has been documented in many cultural contexts, the impact of the high rate of poverty on sexual relationships varies by gender (R. G. Parker, Barbosa, & Aggleton, 2000). I now turn to an examination of the way in which economic roles in rural Mtwara are shaped by gender, and I then examine the role of these factors as underlying influences on adolescent sexual relationships in rural Mtwara.

**Gender and Economic Roles**

The division of labor in rural Mtwara households is strictly along gender lines. Within the household, women and girls (and very young boys) focus their subsistence activities on agricultural and foraging activities, as well as on daily household subsistence activities related to processing and preparing food. Among all adolescent interview participants whose mothers were still alive (n=63), 82.5 percent (n=52) reported that their mother’s primary occupation was farming. In addition, 48.7 percent (n=3343) also referred to “being married” as their mother’s “occupation,” reflecting the gendered expectation that women should be financially supported by their husband (discussed further below).

Some adult women do produce goods for sale outside the home, though these activities are generally limited to the sale of small doughnuts and other snacks, woven

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43 Some participants referred to their mothers first as “being married,” but on follow up questioning stated that their mothers were also farmers, and therefore the percentages exceed 100 percent.
mats, rope, and cooking pots that they make and sell from home. Among all adolescent interview participants whose mothers were still alive (n=63), only 9.6 percent (n=6) reported that their mother was involved in an income-generating activity other than farming. In the course of conducting ethnographic fieldwork in this community, observations did suggest that a greater percentage of women are involved in occasional income generating activities, as evidenced by the regular visits by female neighbours coming to sell extra shellfish or fruit they had collected, leafy greens, cucumbers, or tomatoes from their gardens, eggs from their chickens, or woven winnowing trays they made in their homes. However, none of these items sell for more than a few hundred shillings (about 50 cents) and thus likely were not reported as income-generating activities because they do not provide a significant source of income.

In rural Mtwara, it is the male head of the household who is primarily responsible for conducting work outside the home and providing for the basic needs of those living in the home. Among all adolescent participants whose fathers were still alive (n=54), only 22.2 percent (n=12) identified farming as their father’s only employment. On the other hand, 63 percent (n=34) stated that their father was involved in some sort of small business (as described above), and an additional 13.7 percent (n=7) of participants reported that their father had regular employment, either as a teacher (7.4%, n=4) or in the private sector (5.6%, n=3). As the primary economic provider, it is the man’s responsibility for ensuring the household’s economic stability and providing for his wife and children. Among all adolescent interview participants who were still in school
(n=41\textsuperscript{44}), the father was most commonly identified as the primary source of financial support, with 53.7 percent (n=22) identifying their father and only 9.8 percent (n=4) identifying their mother.\textsuperscript{45} In Tanzania, the father’s role as economic provider is so important that a child who has lost his or her father is considered an orphan (\textit{mtoto yatima}) and is eligible for government assistance for education even if the child’s mother is still living.

This general pattern of gendered economic roles in which men are the primary economic providers has been extensively theorized by anthropologists (e.g. M. Z. Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974) and regularly documented in rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. J. C. Caldwell & Caldwell, 1987; S. LeVine & LeVine, 1979; Oyèwùmí, 1997). In rural Mtwara, this pattern is a central characteristic of the social environment that shapes many aspects of social life and interaction, including sexual relationships. The gendered expectations that women will depend on men, and that men provide economically for women and children, are reflected in the local idiom \textit{watu wa kupewa}. This figure of speech, meaning, “those who are given to,” is used to refer to women and reflects the cultural expectation that women will be supported by men. Men, on the other hand, are referred to as \textit{tegemezi}, meaning, “those who are depended on.”

In this way, the relationship between men and women is framed by economic and sexual/reproductive reciprocity, in which men provide economically for women, and women bear children for men and manage the household. This concept of reciprocity

\textsuperscript{44} As will be discussed below, after completing education, female children soon marry and male children are expected to be able to depend on themselves. Therefore, only those students who are studying are considered here.

\textsuperscript{45} The remaining students reported that they were relying on other relatives for support, a practice that is associated with the extended family system in rural Mtwara.
was also central in participants’ discussions normative developmental pathways to adulthood for boys and girls, as well as normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ roles in sexual relationships. In the following sections, I examine these cultural factors shaping adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara.

### 7.3 Cultural Scripts – Developmental Pathways

LeVine’s cultural factors include population-specific cultural norms, beliefs and values surrounding gender, sexuality and reproduction. These cultural factors, which LeVine also refers to as “scripts,” are in part shaped by the underlying biopsychological and environmental/economic factors discussed above, but are not determined by them. Furthermore, these cultural scripts are not determinative in their influence on adolescent sexual behavior, but represent “common sense,” or what is considered natural and normal patterns of behavior in the context of rural Mtwara (R. LeVine et al., 1996). In this and the following section, I examine the relationship between gender and economic roles, as discussed above, and the two distinct cultural scripts shaping adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara, specifically: 1) the scripts defining normative developmental pathways for boys and girls, including the meaning of “adolescence” and, subsequently, “adolescent” sexuality in rural Mtwara; and 2) normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ roles in negotiating sexual relationships.

**“Adolescence” and Normative Developmental Pathways in Rural Mtwara**

As discussed in Chapter Five, *unyago* and *jando* mark the transition into adolescence, and marriage is considered the primary marker for entrance to adulthood in rural Mtwara. However, the timing of marriage for boys and girls is predicated on
different factors. While girls marry soon after puberty, marriage for boys is predicated on economic independence, resulting in a later age of marriage for boys and girls. As a consequence, girls experience a much shorter adolescent life stage than boys, and this pattern has implications for expectations of adolescent sexual relationships for boys and girls. In this section, I examine these normative developmental pathways as they relate to the practice of *unyago* and *jando* and cultural attitudes toward adolescent sexual relationships in rural Mtwara.

As discussed in Chapter Five, marriage was identified by both male and female interview participants as a key marker of the transition from *ukubwa*, the life stage following initiation, to adulthood. Specifically, among all male participants (n=36), 86.1 percent (n=31) identified marriage as a marker of adulthood for boys, and among female participants (n=33), 90.9 percent (n=30) identified marriage as the marker of adulthood for girls. However, 75 percent (n=27) of males also identified economic independence as an important marker of adulthood, while no female participants mentioned this as a marker for girls, suggesting the underlying role of the economic considerations discussed above in shaping cultural norms.

The influence of the division of economic roles by gender is clearly reflected in the expectations surrounding adolescents’ transition to economic independence. This is particularly evident in male adolescents’ involvement in income-generating activities. Among all male interview participants who were no longer in school (n=14), 85.7 percent (n=12) were involved in an income generating activity. These activities varied widely, but most commonly involved small scale trading of goods (64.2%, n=9), including fish, fruit, vegetables, sugar, oil and charcoal. Other jobs included herding goats, driving a
boat, and fixing small electronics. In addition, among all male adolescent interview participants who were no longer in school (n=14), 71.4 percent (n=10) identified their primary source of financial support as “myself.”

In discussing boys’ transition to economic independence, the normative age for achieving independence suggested by male participants (n=36) was 18.9 years, though their estimates varied widely (SD=3.4). This wide variation was in part related to the issue of schooling. Among all male participants (n=36), 27.8 percent (n=10) stated that boys were expected to become economically independent once they finished school. For example, as Athmani (age 18) states, “For those who are studying, it is later. Once a boy leaves school, his parents will expect him to start to make some of his own money so eventually he can depend on himself.” Once adolescent boys finish school, they are expected to begin to engage in income-generating activities and transition to economic independence.

Contrary to boys’ responses, when female participants (n=33) were asked at what age they were expected to depend on themselves economically, instead of giving an age, 57.6 percent (n=19) replied that this did not happen, but that they would continue to depend on their fathers until they were married, and then depend on their husbands. For example, as Sihami (age 15) reports, “Girls are not really expected to depend on themselves, they just stay at home with their fathers until they are married, and then they depend on their husbands.” In addition, 12.1 percent (n=4) of female participants first
answered the question only as it pertained to boys, not girls, also implying that it is boys who are expected to depend on themselves.46

As suggested by the girls’ responses, female adolescents generally do not engage in income-generating activities outside the home, even if they are not in school, and they are not expected to attain economic independence. Among female interview participants who were no longer in school (n=14), only 35.7 percent (n=5) reported that they were involved in an income-generating activity other than farming. These activities included selling food such as fruit or small doughnuts (n=4) and working as hired labor during the harvest season (n=1). In addition, of these 14 girls who were no longer in school, 57.1 percent (n=8) were either currently or had previously been married. Among those five who were currently married, each reported that her husband was her primary source of financial support. Among the three women who had been married but were currently divorced, one said she was depending on her father, one was depending on her brother, and one said she was depending on herself, working in a small restaurant. Finally, among the girls who had never been married (n=6), three still were depending on their father, one was depending on her brother, and two were depending primarily on their boyfriend for support.

These differing expectations for economic independence for boys and girls act as an underlying influence boys’ and girls’ normative developmental pathways, and particularly the age of marriage. National statistics suggest that boys marry an average of three years later than girls in rural Mtwara (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Only 46 The remaining 18.2 percent (n=8) responded by simply giving an age or an age range, averaging 18.8 (SD=2.8), and 6.1 percent (n=2) said that it depended on when they finished school.
two individuals among all male adolescent interview participants (n=36) were married, and both were married over the age of 20. Among all boys who were not married, the mean age was 19.6 (SD=3.4), with the youngest 14 and the oldest 24. When all male participants (n=36) were asked to estimate the average age of marriage for boys, their estimates averaged 22.1 (SD=3.1), and they also estimated that the youngest age a boy might marry is 18.5 years of age (SD=1.4).

In contrast, female participants marry at much younger ages, usually at or within a few years of puberty. Among all female participants (n=33), eight had already been married, and the average age of first marriage was 16.4 years (SD=1.1), with the youngest married at 15 and the oldest at 18. Though data from this small subsample cannot be assumed to be representative of all adolescents in rural Mtwara, adolescent participants’ discussions regarding normative marriage practices for girls were consistent with the experiences of the subsample of girls who have already been married. Female participants estimated that the average age of marriage for girls in rural Mtwara is 16.9 years (SD=1.3). Participants’ estimates for the youngest age at which girls began to marry in their community was 13.6 years (SD=1.8), with estimates ranging from ages 10 to 16. These data suggest that girls in rural Mtwara who do not continue with their education often marry at or soon after reaching puberty.47

Adolescent participants also explicitly linked the difference in age of marriage for boys and girls to the gendered expectations of economic roles and the high rate of poverty. When female adolescent interview participants (n=33) were asked why girls

47 The age of marriage for girls who do continue with their education will be discussed below.
were married younger than boys, the most common response, provided by 51.1 percent (n=17) of participants, was economic dependence. As Hamida (age 18) described:

In truth, even if you are 12, if a person already sees that they have reached puberty, they can be married. For girls, the difficult environment\textsuperscript{48} brings girls to be married early, because of a difficult life. You stay at home, and there are five people there and no food, every day your father is working hard to look for food, so if someone comes and says that they want to marry you, you might agree because you think your husband might be able to help you more, so you are running away from poverty.

An additional 30.3 percent (n=10) of female participants expressly linked girls’ earlier age of marriage to gendered economic roles specifically in the context of poverty. For example, Asha (age 16) suggests that some parents might even encourage or try to force a girl to marry so that someone else will take responsibility for supporting her. She says:

Girls marry early because, isn’t it your parents’ right? You are staying with your parents, you aren’t studying, and you are a girl. For your parents, they can say to you, ‘If you don’t want to be married, we will be unable to feed you, you will have to get married.’ Some just force you because of poverty.

In discussing girls’ marriage patterns, adolescent participants linked girls’ younger age of marriage to girls’ economic dependence on men. Once a girl has reached puberty, she is not expected to seek out a job, but instead it is assumed that she will be married, transferring the economic responsibility for supporting her from her father to her husband.

\textsuperscript{48} In Mtwara, the phrases, “difficult environment,” and, “difficult life,” are commonly used as euphemism for poverty.
Male adolescent participants, on the other hand, linked their later age of marriage to the need to develop economic independence before looking to marry and father children whom they would be expected to support. When male adolescent participants (n=36) were asked how they would determine when they were ready marry, \(^{49}\) 86.1 percent (n=31) indicated that they would marry once they had the *uwezo*, meaning the financial ability to care for a wife and children.\(^{50}\) For example, as Ahmadi (age 17) reported, “I can’t marry until I have *uwezo*, until I can make a life for myself.”\(^{51}\) Athmani (age 18) implies that it is the female’s expectations, more than a sense of personal responsibility, which drives this. He says, “I will marry once I have the *uwezo* to make a life. How will I marry without *uwezo*? Who would agree if I don’t have a way to get food?” Finally, Mudi (age 24), one of the two participants who had already married, provides a slightly different perspective, saying, “I married because, well, I had a child with my girlfriend, and I saw that I had the *uwezo* to make a life for us, so I married her.”

These differing expectations of gender, economic roles, and marriage together result in a shorter adolescent life stage for girls than for boys in rural Mtwara. The normative developmental pathway from childhood to adulthood for girls is shorter than boys and is closely linked to puberty, beginning with initiation in *unyago* shortly before puberty and then sexual debut and marriage both following at or shortly after puberty (though not necessarily at the same time). In this context, sexual relationships for girls during the adolescent life stage are inherently limited by their normative developmental trajectory. As discussed in Chapter Five and Six, both boys and girls are taught about sex

\(^{49}\) For participants who were already married, the question was adapted to, “Why did you decide to marry when you did?”

\(^{50}\) The remaining five participants reported either “I don’t know,” or “I can’t know.”

\(^{51}\) The phrase, “to make a life,” is a commonly used idiom for economic self-sufficiency.
and sexuality in the context of the initiation rituals, and it is culturally acceptable for both to begin to engage in sexual activities following initiation. Furthermore, as discussed above, both boys and girls generally begin to engage in sexual activity at or near the age of puberty. However, the length “adolescence,” that is, the period of time when girls may engage in sexual activities prior to marriage, is relatively short.

For boys, on the other hand, initiation in jando occurs before puberty, followed by sexual debut at or soon after puberty, but marriage is more closely linked to establishing economic independence, which usually occurs some time in their early 20s. This may represent one possible explanation for the less-intensive teaching of structured lessons on adult life in jando, as the transition to adulthood is still many years away. Indeed, though boys do learn about sexual relationships in this context, this is primarily through informal discussions of older boys’ pursuits and negotiations of sexual relationships. However, as described in Chapter Six, these lessons do include discussion of boys’ sexual roles in relationships and – together with the circumcision itself – do prepare the boys for engaging in sexual relationships during adolescence, a life stage which is more extended for boys than for girls.

As will be discussed further in Chapter Eight, these normative developmental pathways for boys and girls are being differentially impacted by the changes underway in rural Mtwara. While boys, who marry in their early 20s, already experience a substantive adolescent phase, for girls this period is significantly shorter. However, the introduction of secondary education in recent years is resulting in an increased age of marriage and an extension of the adolescent life stage for the subset of girls who continue with their education.
In this final section, I specifically examine the cultural scripts guiding the negotiation of adolescent sexual relationships. To examine these scripts, I trace the processes of negotiating a sexual relationship and outline the cultural norms and expectations for boys and girls in these processes. As will be illustrated below, adolescents’ negotiations of their sexual relationships reflect the biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors discussed in the previous sections. These scripts also echo many of the specific messages surrounding boys’ and girls’ distinct sexual roles communicated in unyago and jando. This reflects the shared roots of these rituals and adolescent sexual relationships within the surrounding cultural environment of rural Mtwara.

Establishing Sexual Partnerships: Boy Pursues Girl

In rural Mtwara, it is the expectation that the boy will initiate the relationship through pursuing a girl whom he finds sexually attractive. When all participants (n=69) were asked to describe how sexual relationships between adolescents usually began, 92.8 percent (n=64), described a boy initiating the process of kutongoza, to sexually pursue or proposition a girl. The term kutongoza itself has a distinctly gendered meaning in Kiswahili, and even in cases where a girl might express interest toward a boy (discussed below), this term is not used. Musa (age 23) provides a typical description of the act of kutongoza:

Once you spot a girl who pleases you, maybe you watch her for a few days, or ask your friends if they know her. You try to get some information about her. And then once you know her routine,
you approach her when she is on the way to the well, or to the market. You stop her and explain to her that you love\(^52\) her, or maybe you tell your friend to go ask her, or you can even write her a letter. Either way, you just tell her that you love her and then you wait for her response.

In participants’ descriptions, *kutongoza* involved a boy directly telling a girl that he was in love with her and wanted her to be his girlfriend. Though some participants (24.6%, \(n=17\)) felt that boys preferred to use indirect communication – either a letter or a friend – to deliver their proposal to a girl, the majority (69.6%, \(n=48\)) felt that *kutongoza* usually involved direct communication. For example, as Doris (age 16) describes, “If a boy likes you it is obvious. First, maybe he will try to be close to you all the time, if you need something he will do everything he can to help you, anything. But then after a while, he will always come out and just tell you he loves you.”

On the other hand, it is not considered appropriate for a girl to directly pursue a boy for the purposes of establishing a sexual relationship. Among all adolescent participants (\(n=69\)), 71.0 percent (\(n=49\)) felt that girls, “never” or “rarely” pursued a boy, while only 29.0 percent (\(n=20\)) felt that this did occur “sometimes” or “often.” When asked how they would view a girl if she did pursue a boy, among all participants (\(n=69\)), 76.8 percent (\(n=53\)) indicated that they would view such an act as not appropriate. For example, as Mwarabu (age 19) states:

> It would be really surprising if a girl did that, because for our community, it is very rare for a girl to tell a boy directly that she loves him. It is the man’s role to tell a girl he loves her. Because [they are] girls, they usually have *aibu* (i.e. shame, shyness), so usually it is hard for her to tell a man she loves him.

\(^{52}\) See Appendix E: Notes on Translation, #3.
For participants such as Mwarabu, for a girl to initiate a sexual relationship is inappropriate simply because it violates cultural norms surrounding gender roles. Among all participants who thought that it was inappropriate for a girl to directly proposition a man (n=53), 54.7 percent (n=29) stated that it would violate not only gender roles, as suggested by Mwarabu above, but also sexual roles. These participants used words such as *malaya* and *kicheche*, both terms meaning a sexually promiscuous person or a prostitute, to describe a girl who openly pursues a boy. For example, as Hamza (age 16) explains:

> If a girl does that directly, you first think *malaya*. In our community, a girl who pursues a boy would be seen as a *malaya*, because here it really doesn’t happen, for a girl to go straight to a boy and tell him directly that she loves him. We say ‘in all years the man begins.’ That is just how it is here.

Finally, among all adolescent participants (n=69), 23.2 percent (n=16) felt that it was not necessarily inappropriate for a girl to pursue a boy. Instead, they felt that this was simply, “normal,” or suggested, as Asha (age 15) did, that, “It is their choice.” Among these participants, a small number (n=5) explicitly identified this behavior as one that had appeared only recently. For examples, as Musa (age 23) explains, “Usually if a girl likes you, she won’t come out and tell you, but some girls, because these days the world is changing, she could even call you and tell you directly, ‘I love you, I want to be your girlfriend.’” Though Musa identifies this behavior as unusual, he does not criticize it, but instead perceives it as an indicator of changes underway in society. This issue will be examined more closely in Chapter Nine.
Though it is generally viewed negatively for a girl to directly approach a boy, this does not extend to other ways of expressing affection. Of all adolescent participants, 53.6 percent (n=37) described various ways in which girls can and do show their attraction to boys in socially acceptable ways. These ways involve indirect communication or *ishara*, meaning “signs.” Among participants who felt girls could express their affection (n=37), the *ishara* most commonly included the following: acting friendly, including visiting, greeting, or looking at the boy often (n=20), teasing or laughing often (n=10), and giving gifts or doing favors for you (n=7). For example, as Hamisi (age 14) described:

I can tell if a girl likes me because of her *ishara*. (Interviewer: What kind of *ishara*?) Well, you know, she is always trying to put herself so she is close to you. Maybe she is seen around your house often, or she greets you often, and you can just know, ‘aha, this one is interested in me.’

Managing boys’ proposals for sexual relationships is a daily task for adolescent girls in rural Mtwara. Among all female adolescent participants (n=33), 93.9 percent reported that they were regularly propositioned by boys, including three of the five girls who had not yet reached puberty and all five of the girls who were currently married. For example, as Ashura (age 20) exclaimed, “On the way home from this interview, I can be sure that at least five boys will try to stop me to tell me that they love me!” This was the sentiment of the girls regardless of their size, shape, skin color, dress, or religion. Indeed, in rural Mtwara, all girls are considered attractive and are pursued by men simply by nature of being women. This was confirmed by male participants. When asked what type of girls were most often pursued by boys, among all male participants (n=36), the
most common initial response, given by 75.0 percent (n=27) was, “All of them!” The response of Juma (age 18) was representative of this perspective: “How it is, in short, is all shapes are liked, because they are all girls and all of them are kupendeza, it doesn’t matter shape, color or height, anything.”

Though all girls are pursued by boys, some girls are considered particularly attractive sexual partners. Among male participants (n=36), 38.9 percent (n=14) expressed a preference for girls with a lighter skin tone. In addition, 36.1 percent (n=13) expressed a preference for a specific body shape, one which was “a little bit fat,” or had “shape,” and four of these participants also mentioned the attractiveness of wide hips and/or a large backside. For example, as Mwarabu (age 16) described, “I prefer a girl with a nice shape to her body, just a little bit fat, a large enough backside, thick legs and small breasts, that is my opinion, and I think a lot of people, if you have a girl like that will be asking you, ‘Hey who is your girlfriend?’ and you will feel good knowing that your girl is kupendeza.” Finally, among male participants (n=36), without exception, all indicated that they would only engage in a sexual relationship with a girl who was younger than them in age. Though they generally indicated that a difference of only a year or two was necessary, they were adamant that the girl should not be older.

Establishing Sexual Relationships: Girls Accepts (or Rejects) Boy

The second stage in the establishment of sexual relationship is the girl’s response to the boy’s proposal. It is the expectation that regardless of the girls’ intention to ultimately accept or not, she will initially refuse the proposal. Among all female

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53 The Kiswahili verb “kupendeza” is used here because it does not translate well into English. Though literally translating as “to cause to like,” a girl who has kupendeza, is beautiful and/or pleasing to look at and/or be with.
participants (n=33), 81.8 percent (n=27) stated that a girl’s first response to a boy is always, “I don’t want you!” regardless of her feelings toward the boy. In addition, a small percentage of female participants (18.2%, n=6) also volunteered that immediate acceptance of a proposal could lead to a girl being labeled *malaya*. Just as directly approaching a boy to communicate one’s affection is considered inappropriate, immediate acceptance of a proposal may be considered too direct of an expression of a girl’s intentions. As Jerani (age 19) suggests, “You have to refuse at first. If you agree right away they might see you as *malaya* and decide that they don’t want you, so even if you love them you have to refuse the first time, but then you can agree later after they have tried harder to tempt you.”

As a girl usually will refuse a boy’s first proposal regardless of her intention to accept, if a boy is serious about establishing a relationship, he will continue to pursue her to determine whether she might ultimately accept his proposal. This stage of courtship is also important for distinguishing boys who are seriously interested in a sexual relationship from the many casual proposals girls receive daily from any number of men who pass them on the street.

At this stage, the boy’s pursuit involves offering *vishawishi*, temptations of gifts and money, as well as promises of love and support. These basic elements of the process of *vishawishi* were described by 31 of 33 female participants (93.9%). As Sihami (age 15) describes, “If a boy is really interested, he just doesn’t quit. You tell him, ‘I don’t want you,’ but he will come again to tempt you, to promise you gifts, money, clothes, if he has money he might even say he will give you a phone.” The most common *vishawishi* offered to female participants were money (mentioned by 30 of 33
participants) and clothing (28 of 33 participants), though phones were also frequently mentioned (16 of 33 participants).

Boys are well aware of the expectations of vishawishi. Among all male participants (n=36), 91.7 percent (n=33) described the same basic elements of vishawishi. Mudi (age 23) describes this process from a boy’s perspective:

When she refuses the first time, you should bring her gifts and money, and maybe she returns them or maybe she just takes them, but if you really want her you have to continue to pursue her, sometimes boys do this for years, they just continue to give gifts and hope that she will accept him, but that is only if he really loves her.

When participants were asked whether a girl can continue to refuse such persistence, the overwhelming response was “yes.” Adolescents’ responses suggested that in most cases, the girls were the ones in charge of determining whether a relationship would go forward, and they were free to refuse if they wished. Among all adolescent participants (n=69), 27.5 percent (n=19) simply said that yes, a girl could refuse, and an additional 31.9 percent (n=22) of participants added, “If she doesn’t love him.” For example, as Ally (age 19) says, “Some girls, even if you love her, it may be that she does not love you and if she does not love you that is it, even if you go to tell her two thousand times, even if you give her 20,000 shillings, she can just refuse you.”

Despite the importance placed on money and gifts in the process of pursuing girls, only 5.8 percent (n=4) of participants indicated that money alone was a reason to accept or refuse a boy. For example, as Hawa (age 16) describes:

If he really pursues you, if you don’t love him in your heart, you can refuse, but if he pursues you and you love him, there will come
a day that you will agree. Or if he really gives you a lot of presents. Some girls love boys just because of what? Because he has a lot of money! She can just say, ‘this one, I don’t love him in my heart but I love him for his money.’

While Hawa suggests that money can occasionally be the only reason a girl accepts a boy’s proposal, Balozi (age 23) suggests that it can also occasionally be the primary reason for refusing. He says, “A girl can refuse you even if you try to pursue her, if she sees that you are tired and you do not have money, because there are some girls who see money as the most important thing in the world.”

Finally, 24.2 percent (n=17) of participants offered further explanation. They described the small gifts and money presented by the boy in the process of pursuing a girl as a way of showing his affection, and repeatedly offering these things to a potential sexual partner is viewed as an attempt to convince her that his pursuit is genuine. For example, as Hamza (age 19) described,

If you pursue her, if she is satisfied with everything it is good, but if she is not, then she will refuse. But sometimes if you continue to follow her, she will see what you are doing and think, ‘why is he doing this?’ and she will look at you and realize that you truly love her and at the end of the day she will be satisfied, she will agree.

If a girl does accept a boy’s proposal, it is expected that he will follow through on his promises of material support, and he may become an important source of economic support for the girl. As discussed in Section 7.2 above, adolescent boys are often involved in small business ventures that provide them with access to cash resources, while adolescent girls are rarely involved in such activities and therefore have little ability to access cash through other means. Among all participants (n=69), 91.3 percent
(n=63) reported that boyfriends and girlfriends regularly gave each other presents. Of these participants (n=63), 77.8 percent (n=49) said that it was most often the boy who gave the girl presents, though the remaining 14 participants said that girls would also give presents when they were in an established relationship. Furthermore, among female adolescent participants who reported either past or present sexual relationships (n=22), 95.5 percent (n=21) reported that their boyfriend regularly gave them gifts or money. For example, as Asha (age 15) said:

Yes, he helps me with my problems. If I don’t have tomatoes one day, or I need soap, he helps get rid of my problem. And sometimes he will just give me money, 500 shillings or 1000, to use as I please, or on a holiday maybe even new clothes. (Interviewer: Do you give him presents?) I would if I had a way to get money, and sometimes, for example, at harvest season, I will save some rice for him. Or if I go to pick fruit I put some aside for him. But I don’t have the ability to buy him anything really.

When male participants who had a past or present girlfriend (n=20) were asked why they gave their girlfriends gifts, the primary response, given by 85 percent (n=17) of participants was, essentially, “to show love.” For example, as Iddi (age 18) states, “The main reason for me to give her gifts is because I love her.” Rashidi (age 15) also points out the high value of money in the context of extreme poverty, suggesting that the act of giving it to another person shows caring. He says, “I give it because I care about her, because money, in our environment, it is a really big things, that is, without money, nothing goes well, so you have to help each other and care for each other.” Still others recognized gift-giving as important in maintaining their partnership. For example, as
Azizi (age 16) says, “You have to give gifts so she knows you love her, and so she loves you more and doesn’t go to someone else to get what? To get gifts.”

Adolescents’ discussions above suggest that money, sex and “love” all play a central role in cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ negotiations of their sexual relationships. The expectation that men will provide economic support for their sexual partners, even outside of the context of marriage, has been documented in diverse communities across sub-Saharan Africa, including in other areas in Tanzania (Haram, 2003; Helle-Valle, 1999; Hunter, 2010; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Moore, Biddlecom, & Zulu, 2007; B. Nyanzi, Nyanzi, Wolff, & Whitworth, 2005; Poulin, 2007; Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001). These accounts challenge Western conceptions of “prostitution” and “transactional sex.” As Helle-Valle (2003) notes, “Perhaps the most significant difference in the Western strictness about sex and motivations is that romantic love and/or personal pleasure (physical and psychological) are the only ‘proper’ motives for engaging in sex, while strategic, materially oriented uses of sexuality are strictly tabooed—being forcefully embodied in our image of ‘the prostitute’,” (p. 205-6).

While Helle-Valle is encouraging scholars to think beyond the Western notion of “love” as the only appropriate motivations for sexual relationships, other scholars have suggested that the interweaving of economic concerns in sexual relationships does not preclude the possibility of “love,” but requires rethinking this concept as it relates to sex and money. For example, as Hunter (2010) suggests:

In the setting of great poverty, love can rarely be severed from a world of dependencies; when money and sex are closely connected, love is often more embedded in relationships, not less…It is tempting to see highly material relationships as loveless;
I did at first. But we must take seriously the way people often understand their lives as simultaneously material and emotional despite, or perhaps precisely because of, the existence of profound inequalities. (p. 199)

Hunter suggests that poverty, and the associated interweaving of economic concerns in sexual relationships often seen in contexts of poverty, does not exclude the possibility of love, but instead requires a rethinking of the meaning of this concept as it relates to the local cultural and economic environment. Hunter, whose work focuses on love in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, uses the idea of “care” to move away from a purely emotional conception of love to one of love-in-action, as manifest in actions which protect the well-being of one’s partner.

Hunter’s concept of care, as an alternative to “love” in the Western sense of the term, is consistent with the cultural scripts guiding adolescent sexual relationships described above. The expectation that a boy will pursue a girl through promises of gifts and money and help her with her material needs once they have established a relationship is not perceived as “transactional,” (in the sense that he is paying her for sex) but instead as a sign of his commitment to their relationship. Furthermore, it is intended that this material support be perceived by the girl as a sign of caring, and in turn cause her to care for the boy and remain committed to her sexual relationship with him.

These scripts guiding adolescents’ negotiations of their sexual relationships reflect the biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. Specifically, the gendered division of economic roles in clearly reflected in boys’ and girls’ sexual roles. In this way, these scripts also echo many of the specific messages surrounding boys’ and girls’ distinct sexual roles
communicated in *unyago* and *jando*. This reflects the shared roots of these rituals and adolescent sexual relationships within the surrounding cultural environment of rural Mtwara.

### 7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined a range of biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural characteristics of the context of rural Mtwara that act as underlying influences on adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara and mediate the role of *unyago* and *jando*. These factors, including the biopsychological changes of puberty, the economic status of the community, the gendered division of labor and the age of marriage in rural Mtwara –together with the rituals of *unyago* and *jando* –shape the cultural scripts defining normative developmental pathways for boys and girls, including the meaning of “adolescence” and, subsequently, “adolescent” sexuality in rural Mtwara. In addition, the influence of these factors, including the rituals, is reflected in the normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ roles in negotiating sexual relationships. The similarities between sexual roles as presented in these rituals and in these cultural scripts reflect their shared roots in the cultural environment of rural Mtwara. Therefore, the rituals of *unyago* and *jando* must be understood as influencing adolescent sexuality inasmuch as they are a teaching tool for communicating norms, values and expectations of the adolescent life stage, and of boys and girls roles in sexual relationships during this life stage, from one generation to the next.
8.0 Overview

In the previous chapter, I examined biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural characteristics of the context of rural Mtwara which act as underlying influences on adolescent sexuality. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, this context is currently undergoing a period of rapid change following the discovery of oil and natural gas in the region, as well as the rapid expansion of the secondary education system. The introduction of secondary education, in particular, appears to be producing “friction” in the domain of adolescent sexuality, as evidenced by the high rate at which adolescent girls are dropping out (or being expelled) from secondary school due to pregnancy (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010a; Tsing, 2005). Though the positive effects of schooling on girls’ health and well-being has been repeatedly documented across diverse cultural contexts (R. LeVine et al., 2001), in rural Mtwara, schooling appears to put girls at increased risk for pregnancy during adolescence. This is not to suggest, of course, that education is itself the problem, but to recognize the need for a close examination of the interaction between the secondary school system in rural Mtwara and the surrounding cultural environment in which it has been introduced.

Drawing on Tsing’s (2005) concept of “friction,” in this chapter I examine the underlying factors contributing to these high rates of pregnancy among female students in rural Mtwara. As discussed in Chapter Two, Tsing proposes friction as a metaphorical
symbol of, “the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection,”
produced through the movement of global “universals,” (p. 4). These “universals”
include phenomena that were produced within a specific cultural and environmental
context but which, in the era of globalization, have become abstracted from their origins
and “flow” into diverse cultural environments. As these universals move, however, they
produce friction as they encounter diverse cultural contexts. Tsing contends that an
examination of friction can help to illuminate, “where the rubber meets the road,” that is,
where the movement of global universals across diverse cultural environments create new
points of conflict or creativity and, ultimately, new cultural forms.

Drawing on these theoretical tools, in this chapter, I explore the points at which
friction is emerging in this encounter between a quintessential global universal, the
Western education system, and the cultural environment of rural Mtwara. I examine how
this friction is increasing both girls’ vulnerability to and the consequences of pregnancy
in rural Mtwara, and its subsequent impact on cultural norms and expectations
surrounding adolescent sexual relationships.

In Section 8.1 of this chapter, I first provide background information on the
structure and key characteristics of the formal education system in rural Mtwara. Then,
in Section 8.2, I discuss how the friction created by the interaction of various aspects of
the school system with the existing cultural environment contributes to girls’ increased
vulnerability to pregnancy, as well as to increased consequences for girls and their
families should a pregnancy occur. Though education itself is not “causing” these
pregnancies, within the context of rural Mtwara, certain characteristics of the school
environment do contribute to the high rate of drop out due to pregnancy, suggesting the
need for changes in the structure of the system itself to order to successfully education students in this cultural environment.

Finally in Section 8.3, I will examine how the friction produced through the introduction of formal education in rural Mtwara is contributing to the emergence of a set of values and expectations surrounding students’ sexual relationships that is distinct from the cultural scripts described in Chapter Seven. Although premarital pregnancy among villagers⁵⁴ is not considered inherently problematic, pregnancy among female students is considered highly problematic. Therefore, sexual relationships are considered inappropriate for students, but normal for villagers. These data suggest that the friction created through the introduction of formal education is fuelling the emergence of a distinct set of cultural norms and expectations surrounding adolescent sexual relationships among female students.

8.1 Secondary Education in Rural Mtwara

As discussed in Chapter Three, the number of public secondary schools in rural Mtwara has risen from one to 22 since 2003 (Mtwara Regional Administrative Officer, 2007). These new secondary schools have been built in a cluster arrangement, with one secondary school built per ward, each responsible for serving students from all of the public primary schools in that ward, which may number as many as seven. This

⁵⁴ In this chapter, “villagers” will be used to refer to those male and female adolescent participants who are no longer pursuing their education, regardless of the reason. As will be discussed below, the majority of adolescents in rural Mtwara do not continue past primary school for a variety of reasons. Here they are referred to as “villagers” both because this reflects the Kiswahili term used to indicate someone who is no longer studying, and to distinguish between those individuals for whom pregnancy – or impregnating a girl - does not pose a risk to their educational progress, as they have already left school.
arrangement is feasible, at least for the time being, because the majority of students who enter primary school in rural Mtwara never become eligible for secondary school.

One of the primary ways that students become “ineligible” for secondary school is by dropping out of school prior to completion of the seventh (and final) grade level of primary school. Unfortunately, data on primary school dropout rates in Tanzania are inconsistent, but as recently as 2005, estimates ranged between 30 and 55 percent (The World Bank, 2005). Data that are available also suggest that primary school enrollment rates have been increasing and dropout rates decreasing over the last decade (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010a; National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Indeed, in 2010, an estimated 82 percent of the school-age population in the Mtwara Region was enrolled in primary school, while only 25.4 percent of females and 27.5 percent of males in the adult population had completed primary school (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Even if a student completes primary school, he or she must also pass the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) in order to be eligible for secondary school. In 2010, only 37.2 percent of grade seven students in Mtwara Region passed the PSLE, one of the lowest pass rates in the nation (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010a). The national exam itself continues to act as a barrier for many students who would otherwise wish to continue their education. Among all adolescent interview participants who were no longer studying (n=28), 32.1 percent (n=9) dropped out before completing all years of primary school, while 67.8 percent (n=19) completed grade seven. Among those who completed grade seven (n=19), 57.9 percent (n=11) reported that they failed the PSLE, 26.3 percent (n=5) stated that they did not continue for
financial reasons, and 10.5 percent (n=2) participants reported that the primary reasons they did not continue was either marriage or pregnancy.\textsuperscript{55}

Though many students do fail the PSLE, it is not the test itself (which requires only basic abilities at reading, writing and mathematics to pass) that is the actual barrier, but the poor state of primary education in the region, which does not provide the students with even the most basic level of education. The investment in secondary school infrastructure since 2003 has not come with a parallel investment in primary school infrastructure or resources. In Rural Mtwara District in 2007, there were an estimated 45,567 enrolled students attending 106 primary schools staffed by just 839 teachers (Mtwara Regional Administrative Officer, 2007). In these overcrowded and under-resourced schools, this low pass rate is hardly surprising. In rural Mtwara, completing primary school, passing the PSLE, and continuing to secondary school is a significant challenge.

Students who do manage to complete primary school and pass the PSLE are assigned to a secondary school in their home ward or, if there are more eligible students than spaces, to another ward school in the area. Due to the expansion in secondary schools, the high drop-out rate, and low pass rate on the PSLE, a student who does succeed in completing primary school and passing the PSLE is essentially assured a space in a secondary school (District Education Officer, 2008). However, many students who do make it to this point still do not continue to secondary school. Available statistics suggest that approximately 25 percent of students never report at their assigned secondary school each year (Mtwara Regional Administrative Officer, 2007). As noted

\textsuperscript{55} Data was missing for one participant.
above, a number of participants who completed secondary school and passed the PSLE cited economic constraints as a reason for not continuing to secondary school. Though Tanzanian law requires parents to educate their children through secondary school if they pass the PSLE, the associated cost makes abiding by this law difficult for many families (Children’s Dignity Forum, 2009).

Unlike primary school, which has been free in Tanzania since 2000, secondary school education is a significant economic investment for most families (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010b). Though secondary school fees are officially listed at between 20,000 and 30,000 Tanzanian shillings per year (less than $20), students are also expected to pay a range of fees, called *michango*, which are determined by the school and include everything from paper, desks and chairs to intangibles such as “academics.” Furthermore, the fees for the required national qualifying exams taken in form two and form four56 exceed the cost of tuition for a year of school at approximately 40,000 Tanzanian shillings. Though estimates are difficult to verify, interviews with the headmasters of three secondary schools suggest that the total fees for one year of secondary school can easily reach 100,000 TSH ($75), an amount well beyond the ability of many families in an area where the average per capita income is only 465,236 TSH per year (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010a).

The cluster design of the secondary school system in rural Mtwara adds to the economic difficulties families face in educating their children. In this cluster arrangement, each ward secondary school serves the surrounding villages that make up

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56 The Tanzanian school system refers to the four years of ordinary level secondary schools as “form” one through four.
that ward. However, the school may be located up to 20 kilometers from peripheral villages of the ward. Due to the limited availability of public transportation in rural Mtwara, most secondary school students do not live at home while they are studying, but instead share a rented room with one or more of their fellow students in the village that serves as the ward headquarters where they are attending school. Among all participants in the school-based sample (n=24), 58.3 percent were paying to rent accommodations, 29.2 percent (n=7) were living with extended family, and 12.5 percent (n=3) were living with one or both parents. These arrangements further increase the financial burden of secondary education because, in addition to paying school fees, most families will also have to send their child to school with enough food for the semester, as well as cash to pay for unexpected expenses and rent.

Though, as discussed above, some villagers who did not continue to secondary school did suggest that money was a barrier, comparison of household wealth\(^57\) of those who did and did not continue to secondary school only varied for girls, but not for boys. In Table 18 below, differences in the mean household wealth scores between secondary school students (n=33) and villagers (n=28) were statistically examined by gender.

**Table 18: Continuing Education by Household Wealth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Villagers (n=28)</th>
<th>Students (n=33)</th>
<th>Statistical Significance(^58)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>(\mu=6.1) (SD=1.5)</td>
<td>(\mu=6.8) (SD=1.3)</td>
<td>(t=-1.5, p=0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>(\mu=6.6) (SD=1.3)</td>
<td>(\mu=9.5) (SD=2.1)</td>
<td>(t=-4.6, p&lt;0.001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{57}\) See Chapter Four for calculation of household wealth score.

\(^{58}\) An independent samples t-test, conducted using SPSS 17.0 for PC, was used in both cases to evaluate statistical significance.
Though these data suggest that girls from wealthier households are more likely to attend secondary school, they also illustrate that it is not only the children of wealthy families who are accessing this level of education. While female students’ household wealth scores were generally above the average for all participants of 7.2 (SD=1.9), their scores ranged from 6 to 12, suggesting that some female students do come from households of average wealth. Furthermore, household wealth scores for male students ranged from five to 10, indicating that even boys from very poor families also attend secondary school.

As suggested by these data, the household economic status of the student population in the secondary schools in rural Mtwara is highly variable. As a result, many students arrive at school without a sufficient supply of food or money. If a student runs out of food or other supplies in the middle of a term, he or she must contact home and request supplies and/or request permission to go home to retrieve them. Among all participants in the school-based sample living away from home (n=21), 80.9 percent (n=17) reported that they made at least one trip home during each term to request more food or money. The economic stress of living away from one’s family is one of the many factors that can have significant implications for girls’ sexual relationships, discussed below.

Despite the expansion of secondary school infrastructure in recent years, the vast majority of girls and boys fail the national qualifying exam at the end of the form four, and only a select few manage the mark of C that is required to go on to higher levels of
education. For example, among the 439 female form four students who took the national exam in Rural Mtwara District in 2010, only eight percent (n=33) passed, and not a single girl received a mark higher than a D. At Mnazi Secondary School, one of the first new secondary schools to open in Mtwara in 2004, not a single girl had received a C in any year since the school’s opening. Though boys’ scores are not high, they are relatively better than girls. In 2010, of 725 male form four students who took the exam, 33 percent (n=238) received a grade of D, and three percent (n=20) received grades high enough to go on to upper-level secondary school (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010a). At this point in time, then, girls who go to secondary school in rural Mtwara can be relatively certain that they will not continue on to higher levels of education, and most will likely fail. Student who fail the final form four exam are not given a diploma, rendering their secondary education, in many ways, obsolete.

The secondary school student population in rural Mtwara is composed of more boys than girls, primarily because girls drop out of school at higher rates. Indeed, equal numbers of boys and girls are assigned a space in rural Mtwara secondary schools each year, and though boys do report to school at slightly higher rates – for example, in 2007, 78.5 percent of boys who were eligible for secondary school actually attended compared to 77.1 percent of girls – the higher dropout rate for girls results in a gender imbalance in the student population as a whole (District Education Officer, 2008). For example, in 2010, girls made up only 34.7 percent of graduating form four students in rural Mtwara. Though pregnancy among school girls does occur across Tanzania, Mtwara has one of

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59 The exam is rated on an A through F scale, with letters D through A representing a passing grade, and F indicating failure.
the highest rates of all regions in Tanzania (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010a).

Pregnancy is one of the primary reasons that girls drop out of school at a higher rate than boys, with between five and ten percent of all secondary school girls affected (Regional Committee on School Pregnancy, 2007). These vulnerabilities, I argue, are a symptom of the friction created by inconsistencies between certain aspects of the structure of the school system and the realities of the cultural environment of rural Mtwara. In the following section, I will examine this specific sources of this friction that increase girls’ vulnerability to pregnancy, as well as the consequences associated with pregnancy should it occur.

8.2 Friction with the System – Adolescent Pregnancy

In the previous section, I outlined the structure and key characteristics of the formal education system in rural Mtwara. In this section, I will examine how friction created in the interaction between certain aspects of the school system and specific characteristics of the cultural environment of rural Mtwara serves to increase both female students’ vulnerability to pregnancy the consequences of pregnancy for female students and their families.

The first and perhaps most obvious way in which secondary school increases a girl’s vulnerability to pregnancy is by extending the period during which she is an adolescent. As described in diverse communities around the world, the expansion of education opportunities often results in delay in the age of marriage for girls and, in some cases, for boys as well (Mortimer & Larson, 2002b). This is also the case in rural
Mtwar. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the normative developmental trajectory for a girl involves marriage at or around the time of puberty. The Tanzania school system, which involves seven years of primary school from ages six to 13, is designed such that girls are entering secondary school at age 14 of 15. Furthermore, many students enroll two or more years late in primary, such that an estimated 67 percent of grade seven students in rural Mtwar are older than age 13 (Regional Committee on School Pregnancy, 2007). In this school system, them, girls are entering secondary school at approximately the same time as they typically marry.

In discussing the average age of marriage, adolescent interview participants regularly referenced the fact that a girl’s age of marriage depended on whether or not she continued to secondary education. Among all female participants (n=33), 60.6 percent (n=20) noted that girls marry later if they attend secondary school, and participants estimated the average age of marriage for girls who finish secondary school to be 21.1 years (SD=1.4). For example, as Salima (age 16) notes:

It depends on the person themselves, what they have preventing them from getting married. Like many of the girls, they don’t study, so once they have reached puberty, maybe 16 years or so, they are married. If they finish primary school, they wait to know that they have failed, and then they get married straight away.

This later age of marriage for secondary school girls therefore increases their vulnerability to adolescent pregnancy by increasing their adolescence. This increased vulnerability is therefore the result of friction between the structure of the school system and the normative developmental pathway for girls in rural Mtwar. The delay in
marriage by this subset of adolescent girls is a central influence in emerging concern over adolescent sexual activity in rural Mtwara, discussed in Section 8.3 below.

The second way in which the current structure of the secondary school system increases girls’ vulnerability to pregnancy is by requiring that they live away from their home and, by extension, their source of economic and social support. Among all participants in the school-based sample\textsuperscript{60} (n=24), 83.3 percent (n=20) mentioned that if a girl is away from home and she runs out of food, she will be more likely to get involved in sexual relationships. For example, as Arafa (age 15) explains:

Take me for example. I am at school, and my father is in another village. Now, if I need something, I have to write a letter because I don’t have a phone and he doesn’t have a phone. I send the letter with a student going to town, but it is possible that it never even gets there! It can be a very difficult period, you have run out of food and there at school you don’t have any family. And even if you can manage to call on the phone, your father still needs to find money and that takes time, so by the time it comes, you will already have had to stay hungry for a while, and if you are hungry most of us girls, we just have to accept men’s vishawishi (offers of gifts/money).

As suggested by Arafa, this vulnerability is produced by friction between the demands of the secondary school system, which requires girls to lives away from their source of economic support, and cultural scripts, discussed in the previous chapter, in which girls’ economic dependence on their boyfriends is a normative practice.

This is not the case for boys, of course, as it is the cultural expectation that the boys will support the girls in sexual relationships, and therefore boys cannot turn to

\textsuperscript{60} These questions were only included in interviews with those secondary school students who were part of the school-based sample because these questions arose near the end of the fieldwork period, and these students were the last to be interviewed.
sexual relationships as a potential source of economic support. For this reason, 54.2 percent (n=13) of participants in the school-based sample (n=24) actually felt that boys in rural Mtwara study under more difficult economic conditions than girls, while only 25 percent (n=6) felt that it was more difficult for girls, and 20.8 percent (n=5) felt that there was no difference. These data are illustrated below in Table 19 below, divided by gender of the student respondent:

Table 19: Who Studies Under More Difficult Conditions, Boys or Girls? (n=24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Respondents (n=12)</th>
<th>Female Respondents (n=12)</th>
<th>Both (n=24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys Study Under More Difficult Conditions</td>
<td>8 (66.7%)</td>
<td>5 (41.7%)</td>
<td>3 (52.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Study Under More Difficult Conditions</td>
<td>3 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (25.0%)</td>
<td>6 (25.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Difference</td>
<td>1 (8.3%)</td>
<td>4 (33.3%)</td>
<td>5 (20.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is illustrated above, both boys and girls most often felt that boys study under more difficult economic conditions. Among these participants (n=13), two reasons were given, both related to girls’ sexual relationships, including: 1) Girls are helped by their boyfriends, and therefore have greater access to economic resources (n=9); and 2) Parents are more responsive to girls’ economic needs because they fear pregnancy (n=10), with both reasons given by six participants.

In this discussion, participants indicated that parents are well aware of the possibility that a school girl who has run out of food or other basic needs would have difficulty refusing the vishawishi, or offers of gifts and money, from boys who
attempting to engage them in sexual relationships. For example, as Ashura (age 16) suggests:

Boys study under more difficult conditions. For example, if my younger brother and I are both at school, and our father stays far away….if he takes 15,000 shillings to give to us for going to school, he will no doubt split it up by giving me 15,000 and my brother 5,000 because he is afraid if I run out of money I will go to a boy.

Similarly, as Salumu (age 24) suggests, “Boys study under more difficult conditions, our needs are not always met. It is not that much different from girls, but if we run out of food we can’t go to men for help. And sometimes girls are just better taken care of so they don’t get pregnant.” However, among participants who felt that girls studied under more difficult conditions (n=6), all pointed to the difficulty in refusing vishawishi should one run out of food. For example, as Salama (age 15) says, “Girls have a harder time, and they are not patient, so if their parents are late sending them food they often go to dirty places with boys because they are hungry.”

Finally, the responses of those who felt that there was no difference between boys and girls (n=5), highlight the potential influence of a student’s household wealth on their sexual relationships. These students emphasized that gender was not necessarily the deciding factor, but the economic status of the student’s household. For example, as Athmani (age 20) explains:

It depends on the person’s economic environment. If there is money at home, a student will be fine, if a boy or a girl. And if there isn’t money, then they can’t send you anything even if they want to. For example, there was one student, Azizi, his parents really took good care of him, they always brought him money all the time, but then there was a girl, her father didn't have any work, she only got ugali and sardines, so it depends on the situation
itself. Maybe then for girls it is harder because she will be tempted by *vishawishi* and go to a man, but for the boy it will be equally hard because he will not be able to go anywhere and he will hurt with hunger.

These participants suggest that the extent to which a girl’s student status actually create vulnerability – or the likelihood that a girl would eventually end up in a situation in which she had to choose between an otherwise undesired sexual relationship and hunger – is mediated by her household economic status. Though this sample was not large enough to examine this trend statistically, this does emerge as a theme in the examination of female students’ negotiations of sexual relationships in Chapter Nine.

These data suggest that, in general, the increased vulnerability to pregnancy of adolescent school girls is shaped by friction created in the interaction between: 1) the economic and structural characteristics of the school environment, which place a significant economic burden on families while requiring students to live far from their source of economic support, and 2) normative cultural scripts surrounding gendered norms of economic reciprocity in sexual relationships.

As an attempt to address these vulnerabilities, in 2003, lawmakers in Tanzania passed new legislation stating that any individual convicted of marrying or impregnating a school girl can be sentence to up to six years in prison (Children’s Dignity Forum, 2009). Despite these measures, however, school girls in rural Mtwarra are highly sought after by men as sexual partners. Among all adolescent participants (n=69) 68.1 percent (n=47) felt that boys actually preferred secondary school girls as sexual partners over village girls, while only 21.1 percent (n=12) indicated that boys did not pursue students
because they feared going to jail. Not only does secondary school attendance increase a girl’s vulnerability to *vishawishi* by taking her away from her source of social and economic support, it also increases her appeal as a sexual partner according to cultural scripts of sexual attractiveness.

In interviews, participants who felt female students were more actively pursued as sexual partners (n=47) were asked to explain why this was so. In their responses, 60.8 percent (n=38), said that this was because they *kupendeza*. As discussed in Chapter Seven, *kupendeza* is a term used to refer to specific characteristics that are considered desirable in a sexual partner, including lighter skin, a “fat” body, and younger age. The use of this term with reference to female students was perhaps best described by Mudi (age 20):

A boy is very happy if he has a girlfriend who is studying because students *kupendeza* so much. First, their age is attractive, they are young, but they don’t do hard work because they don’t have time. They just ask for food at home. If she wakes up in the morning, she goes to school, but me, I go to the ocean to fish, so of course I am not going to look as nice as someone who wakes up every morning, bathes, puts on their smart uniform, and goes to school. She just goes to school, sits at her desk, writes her lessons, goes home, and she finds food waiting for her, that’s it. But a villager wakes up and goes to the farm to work hard in the hot sun. A student can’t lose weight, so of course she will also have a beautiful fat body and light skin…

As Mudi describes, the lifestyle of the student contributes to the development of physical characteristics that are considered particularly sexually attractive according to normative cultural scripts. The students do not do regular manual labor like the villagers, and as a result these school girls often do appear healthy and robust. In addition, school
girls do not wear the traditional *kanga* (colored cloth) of village women, but instead must wear the “smart,” Western, style uniforms required in all public schools in Tanzania, further distinguishing them from the village women. The dress, as well as the lifestyle and resultant physical appearance of female students, make them particularly attractive by cultural standards. While the requirement to live away from home decreases a girl’s ability to resist *vishawishi*, her student status simultaneously increases her sexual attractiveness and the extent to which she is pursued by men. This represents a third source of friction produced in the interconnection between the structure of Western secondary education as introduced in rural Mtwara and existing cultural norms and values related to adolescent sexuality present in the surrounding cultural environment.

A final source of friction produced in the introduction of the secondary school system in the context of rural Mtwara results is produced in the interaction between high rates of poverty in the community of rural Mtwara and school policy on student pregnancy. This friction serves to increase the consequences associated with adolescent pregnancy for school girls and their families. A pregnancy during the secondary school years represents a significant economic loss for the family and the student, both in terms of money already spent on tuition and fees, and in terms of at least the potential (if not the actual) increased income she might have received as an graduate. As discussed above, putting a student through secondary school in rural Mtwara is a significant economic commitment for the average family.

These consequences are in part exacerbated by education policy in Tanzania which, until recently, stated that girls who became pregnant in school are to be expelled and not allowed to return following their pregnancy. Though the “Law of the Child” Act,
passed by the Tanzanian parliament in late 2009, amends this policy to allow for girls to return to school following their pregnancy, it is unclear whether it will actually be enforced (Cameron, 2009). Though I was working in a secondary school on a daily basis through 2010, neither I nor my fellow teachers were aware of this change in policy at the time, and girls in the school continued to be expelled for pregnancy.

Finally, in addition to the economic losses directly related to the costs of a girl’s education, the boy responsible for impregnating a schoolgirl, for reasons discussed below, may deny paternity, leaving the girl’s family with the financial responsibility to raise the child. As mentioned above, it is illegal in Tanzania to impregnate a schoolgirl, and though many pregnancies go unreported to the authorities, men are occasionally sent to jail for this offence (Regional Committee on School Pregnancy, 2007). In general, this well-intentioned legislation, designed to protect school girls, has had the unintended effect of ensuring that any man who impregnates a school girl will deny paternity and also likely flee the area as well. Students are aware of this law, and 50.0 percent (n=12) of all participants in the school-based sample (n=24) mentioned this law in their interviews as the primary reason boys would deny paternity in the case of a student pregnancy. As Zakia (age 15), a form one student, describes:

If a boys gets a girl pregnant he has to run away. If he gets caught he will get a life sentence of thirty years, so he runs away to Dar es Salaam for two or three years until things cool down, and then he might come back home.

Though Zakia overestimates the severity of the law – the official sentence for this offence is only six, and not 30, years – she and other students were well aware that they could not
expect support from a partner should they become pregnant (Children’s Dignity Forum, 2009).

In this section, I have illustrated four distinct points of friction in the interaction between the secondary school system and the surrounding cultural environment of rural Mtwara. The result of this friction is the increased vulnerability of female students to adolescent pregnancy, as well as the increased consequences associated with these pregnancies for both the students and their families. In the following section, I will discuss the way in which this friction – and the complex issues around pregnancy this friction has produced – is subsequently fueling the emergence of a set of values and expectations surrounding adolescent sexuality that is distinct from the cultural scripts described in Chapter Seven.

8.3 Shifting Expectations of Adolescent Sexuality

In the anthropological literature on cultural change, discussed in detail in Chapter Two, scholars have documented diverse ways in which community norms and expectations toward adolescent sexuality shift in the context of change. For example, Burbank (1988), illustrates that, in an aboriginal Australian community where girls used to be married before puberty, premarital pregnancy (also the result of lengthening age of adolescence due to policy outlawing early marriage and the introduction of formal schooling) was not objected to on moral grounds, but in terms of the implications of these pregnancies for existing clan-based rules around marriage. Condon (1987) also notes an increasing rate of pre-marital sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy associated with cultural change among the Inuit of northern Canada. However this trend is not
considered morally problematic by older generations because it is the age of marriage, and not the prevalence of sexual activity among youth, which has changed.

In this section, I examine how the multiple sources of friction discussed in the previous section are impacting cultural attitudes toward adolescent sexual relationships in rural Mtwara. To examine this impact, I compare attitudes toward sexual relationships and pregnancy for students and villagers. As will be illustrated below, adolescent sexual relationships and pregnancy among villagers is still perceived as unproblematic, both morally and economically. However, attitudes toward adolescent sexual relationships for students are negative, a trend which participants link primarily to the economic consequences of pregnancy for female students.

The significant consequences associated with pregnancy for schoolgirls in rural Mtwara, discussed in the previous section, are in striking contrast to attitudes toward premarital pregnancy in cases when the girl is a villager (i.e. no longer continuing with her education) Though both student and villager participants recognized possible consequences associated with adolescent pregnancy (for a student or a villager), those participants who were villagers (as opposed to students) were much less likely to express these concerns than secondary school students.

When all villagers (n=2661) were asked what they would do in the case of pregnancy before marriage,62 88.5 percent (n=23) stated that they would simply, “have a baby,” or, as Francis (age 23) explains, “She takes care of the pregnancy, gives birth, and once she has finished nursing the baby, she will take the child to the father, and maybe

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61 Data was missing for two villager participants.
62 For girls, this was phrased in terms of her own pregnancy and for boys in terms of pregnancy for their girlfriend.
even she will be married by him, or by someone else.” In addition, participants also reported that premarital pregnancy did not affect a girl’s prospects for future marriage. Among all adolescent participants (n=69) 84.1 percent (n=58) agreed that premarital pregnancy was not a barrier to future marriage for a girl (both villagers and students). For example, as Rabia (age 19) suggests, “Pregnancy before marriage for a girl who is not in school is not a big problem. She will just give birth and then she will get married later, and the child will stay with its father, or with the mother’s parents if it is small, that is just normal here.” These data suggest that adolescent pregnancy is not considered inherently problematic for girls who were no longer pursuing their education.

Only 11.5 percent (n=3) of villagers mentioned a problem associated with an adolescent pregnancy, specifically, the possibility that the father would deny paternity. As discussed in the previous chapter, the father is the primary source of economic support for children, and therefore a denial of paternity could have significant economic consequences for both the mother and child. As Asha (age 20) says, “If the boy is respectable, he accepts that the pregnancy is his and agrees to take care of the baby, but if he is not sure that it is his baby, he might refuse, and then you decide to have an abortion.” Among the three villagers who mentioned paternity denial, the two underlying reasons proposed were, “if he is not sure that it is his baby,” and, “if he doesn’t have uwezo (financial ability).” However, this was only mentioned as a concern by a small percentage of participants.

Contrary to villagers, students’ responses to the question of premarital pregnancy highlight the heightened consequences associated with pregnancy among students.
Among all secondary school students (n=3063), 76.7 percent (n=23) stated that if they or their girlfriend became pregnant, abortion and/or denial of paternity would be the preferred options. For example, as Rabia (age 19) describes:

Yes, if I were to get pregnant, it would be better to have an abortion. Many girls have abortions, mostly students. For example, this year at least three girls that I know about have already had abortions. But for villagers it is not common. Maybe if the father refuses her, but that doesn’t happen often.

Ahmadi (age 17) provides a male perspective:

If my girlfriend is a student, first, we would try to use back ways to get an abortion without anyone knowing. But if that is not possible, I could not stay in this village. I would have to run away and leave my education, and her education would also be ruined. If someone impregnates a student, he has to run away, go to stay somewhere else, maybe Dar. He has to just get lost. If it passes three years, or I don’t know how many, if he knows that she has given birth, or maybe if her parents took her for an abortion, if he hears that she has finished school, then maybe he will return. Because that case will already have died down, and you can be sure the family won’t take you to jail.

Unlike villagers, the majority of students stated that abortion and/or paternity denial would be their response to premarital pregnancy. This difference was statistically significant. The summary of the students’ responses, as compared to those of villagers, are illustrated in Table 20 below.

\[63\] Data was missing for three student participants.
Table 20: Responses to Premarital Pregnancy by Villager/Student (n=56)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Villagers (n=26)</th>
<th>Students (n=30)</th>
<th>Statistical Significance$^{64}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you (or your girlfriend) became pregnant before marriage, what would you do?</td>
<td>Give Birth</td>
<td>88.5% (n=22)</td>
<td>23.3% (n=7)</td>
<td>$x^2=23.7, p&lt;0.00$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abortion or Paternity Denial</td>
<td>11.5% (n=3)</td>
<td>76.7% (n=23)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data suggest that in rural Mtwara, adolescent pregnancy is primarily considered problematic when the girl is a student. For villagers, on the other hand, premarital pregnancy is not perceived as problematic, but a situation that could be accommodated within existing cultural and economic norms of marriage and childrearing.

The steep consequences associated with pregnancy also appear to be fuelling the emergence of a distinct set of expectations around adolescent students’ sexual relationships. Although the rituals of jando and unyago prepare adolescents for engaging in sexual activities before puberty, and sexual debut at puberty is part of normative developmental pathways for both boys and girls, for secondary school students, sexual relationships are now described as “bad.” Among all secondary school students (n=33), 97.0 percent (n=32) explicitly stated that sex for students was inappropriate at least once during their interview. For example, as Sihami (age 15) says:

The girls in secondary school don’t want boyfriends because we really respect ourselves. Like myself, I think that you can’t do two things like sex and school at once. It is better that you concern

$^{64}$ For this analysis, I used a Chi-Square test, and interpreted using Fisher’s Exact Test to compensate for cell value of 3.
yourself with just one thing while studying. If you are here and there, you won’t have any sense.

These sentiments were not only expressed by girls, but also by boys. For example, as Ahmadi (age 18) says:

In our community, at least for us who are studying, I can say that having sex it really bad. Because we have things in front of us that are coming, and it is better that we go with our studies, and later we can get involved with those other things. But for villagers it is just normal because after going to fish or to farm, there is nothing else, they can just have sex. But for us, once we have finished school for the day, we have to study, until the evening there is just studying.

Among villagers (n=28), on the other hand, 42.9 percent (n=12) felt that sexual relationships among adolescents were “good,” and an additional 53.6 percent (n=15) specifically stated that they were fine for villagers, but bad for students and/or bad to have sex with students. For example, as Salima (age 23) states, “I think relationships are good, except if it is a student, because they can get pregnant and leave school, and if you are a boy you can go to jail, but for villagers, sexual relationships are just fine.”

In discussing this issue, the majority (72.5%, n=50) of all participants specifically focused on the female students when discussing why relationships for students were bad. However, a small minority (n=11, 16.9%) of all participants (n=69) also mentioned that sexual relationships were bad for male students. All of these participants were also secondary school students, and therefore represent the majority (64.7%) of all male students (n=17). When asked why sexual relationships were bad for male students,

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65 Data was missing for one villager participant.
66 Data was missing for two participants, and six participants simply stated that relationships were bad for students without indicating specifically boys or girls.
however, seven of 11 participants stated this in terms of the problem created for the boy’s female partner. For example, as Athmani (age 17) states, “For boys who are students, to have a girlfriend is not good because you can make her pregnant and ruin her schooling for her.” In addition, five of 11 participants did mention the legal punishment for impregnating a student as a reason boys should not engage in sexual relationships. For example, as Salumu (age 19) states, “If I have a girlfriend it is not good because if she gets pregnant, I could go to jail.” Among those who felt that sexual relationships for male students were bad, however, all assumed that the girl was also a student, and thus located the source of the “problem” of their own sexual activity in the possibility of pregnancy for their partner.

Though the data above do suggest that a minority of participants view sexual relationships for male students as bad, the majority specifically felt sexual relationships were bad for female students. The difference in attitudes toward sexual relationships and pregnancy for female students compared to villagers suggests that friction produced in the introduction of secondary education within the cultural environment of rural Mtwara is fuelling the emergence of a distinct set of values and expectations surrounding adolescent sexual relationship for female students, which they must negotiate within the context of existing cultural norms, values and expectations. In the following chapter, I turn to an examination of the various ways in which female secondary school students are negotiating their own sexual relationships in the context of these shifting values and expectations.

67 One participant mentioned both the consequences for his girlfriend and the legal punishment.
8.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the way in which the changes underway in rural Mtwara – and specifically the introduction of formal secondary education – have produced friction in the domain of adolescent sexuality. Though education is associated with improvements in girls’ health and well-being across diverse cultural environments (R. LeVine & LeVine, 2001), the friction created in the interaction between certain aspects of the education system in rural Mtwara and existing cultural and economic characteristics of this community is increasing both girls’ vulnerability to and the consequences of pregnancy. As a result, in a context in which adolescent sexual relationships for both boys and girls are not otherwise considered inherently problematic, values and attitudes toward sexual relationships for female students are distinctly negative. This suggests that female students are subject to an emerging set of expectations and consequences with regard to their sexual behaviour, which they must negotiate within the context of existing cultural norms, values and expectations. In the following chapter, I examine the diverse strategies used by female students to negotiate both their sexuality and their education in this changing cultural environment of rural Mtwara.
Chapter Nine
Negotiating Multiple Pathways

9.0 Overview

In the previous chapter, I examined how the interaction of the formal education system with certain aspects of the cultural environment of rural Mtwara has created friction in the domain of adolescent sexuality. These data suggest that female students are subject to distinct set of expectations, vulnerabilities and consequences with regard to their sexual behaviour that they must negotiate within the context of existing cultural norms, values and expectations. In this final analytic chapter, I turn to an examination of the various ways in which secondary school students – and particularly girls – are negotiating their own sexual relationships in this context. Specifically, I examine how female students’ negotiation of their sexual relationships are shaped by: 1) normative cultural scripts guiding adolescent sexual relationships in rural Mtwara; 2) the specific expectations, vulnerabilities and consequences related to their student status; and 3) girls’ individual circumstances and desires regarding their sexual relationships.

This analysis relies on a person-centered approach to illustrate the contradictions that arise as adolescent girls attempt to navigate among existing cultural scripts, school-specific expectations and constraints, and individual desires. I illustrate the various strategies adolescent girls use to actively negotiate these multiple influences and how, in doing so, they forge multiple developmental pathways as they navigate their sexual relationships. As illustrated below, these complex negotiations can make female students
vulnerable to negative consequences associated with sexual relationships, including pregnancy. However, their discussions also illustrate the ways in which adolescent girls in rural Mtwara are finding diverse and creative ways to navigate both their sexuality and their education in the context of change.

In Section 9.1 of this chapter, I examine four different adolescent students’ discussions of their sexual relationships to illustrate the diverse ways in which girls are negotiating these multiple pathways. Among all female secondary school students who participated in the person-centered interviews (n=16), only nine were willing to openly discuss their sexual activity. Among the other seven girls, five were all 15 years old and reported no sexual activity, and the remaining two girls’ discussions of their sexual activity were ambiguous to the point that it is not possible to interpret their meaning. These two girls provided highly contradictory accounts of their relationships, openly referring to a sexual partner in one interview and then denying any sexual activity in the next. Given the significant consequences associated with adolescent pregnancy among school girls, it is not surprising that some of these girls felt compelled to conceal aspects of their sexual relationships, and their actions suggest the significant difficulties female students face in negotiating their sexual relationships.

Despite the small number female students who discussed their sexual relationships, the accounts they gave do contain central elements that were present across all female students’ discussions. Specifically, the cultural script surrounding the relationship between money, sex and love (discussed in the Chapter Seven) is present in some form in all of the girls’ accounts. However, the cases below illustrate the diverse

68These girls were ages 19 and 20.
ways in which female students are negotiating these scripts. These four cases are not intended to be representative of the experiences of all adolescent school girls, nor the frequency with which one type of case occurs over another. Instead, the four cases presented below were chosen to illustrate the multiple and diverse pathways through which female students are navigating their sexual relationships in the context of multiple and conflicting influences.

Following the examination of these four cases, in Section 9.2, I will discuss how the consistency and variability in these accounts can be understood using the related concepts of “sexual lifeways,” and “developmental subjectivities,” (Hostetler & Herdt, 1998). The varying strategies illustrated in these girls’ accounts suggest that girls are negotiating diverse pathways and, as a result constructing individual developmental and sexual subjectivities based on existing cultural scripts, school-specific expectations and constraints, and individual desires.

Section 9.1 Four Girls, Four Pathways

SALIMA

Salima is a 16 year-old student in form one at the time of this interview. She was born and raised in Mnazi village. Her father was married to two different women before Salima’s mother, and has since divorced and remarried, making Salima the 12th born of 16 children on her father’s side. She lives with her older brother and his wife next door to her father’s house. In this section of the interview, Salima is describing her only sexual relationship.

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Interviewer: How old were you when you had your first boyfriend?
Salima: (Long pause)…My first boyfriend, I guess, I can say, well, he is still my boyfriend, there has only been one and no one else.
Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit more about him? For example, how did the relationship start, is he a student?
Salima: No! He is not a student. He is, well, it started, I guess…he has been pursing me for a long time. Since I was in…sixth grade, in primary school. I refused him for a long time, but he just did not get tired. And then I found out that I passed the primary school exam, but father was really not interested in sending me to school. He is old and didn’t go to school, and didn’t really think it was necessary. When they first wanted to open the school in Mnazi, in fact, he really did not want it at all. He and his fellow elders argued with the village leaders, saying that they didn’t want the school because they would make his children eat pork ha ha ha!69
Interviewer: But he let you go to school?
Salima: Yes, well, it was…he wasn’t going to ban me because these days if you don’t send your daughters to secondary school, the government can come and arrest you. So he told me I could go, but then, the way it was, then he didn’t pay most of the tuition, and I was, ah! I was so distressed. My older brother paid the first part and bought me a uniform, but then he went away for business and still hasn’t come back.
Interviewer: So what did you do?
Salima: I looked around and I said – now, I have the opportunity to study, and there is a man who loves me and wants to help me. All this time I am refusing him and he doesn’t quit. Give me a reason why I shouldn’t go to school! He has said that he will pay my tuition until I graduate, and that he wants to marry me afterward. He has already paid for the second semester, and he bought my new notebooks, the big kind that are very sturdy and will last me for a while. And I am still in school, and I am happy about that. I know it is not good for students to have boyfriends, but what can I do?
Interviewer: What about him? How do you feel about him?
Salima: Um, you know, I, well, I just was worried for a long time and felt that as a student I really should not have a boyfriend. But life is so difficult, especially for girls because we have no way to make our own money, we can’t do work like boys to get money. A lot of girls at school, that is, most of them, they are helped by their boyfriends. And, that is…he takes good care of me, he helps me with things, so he loves me and that’s just the way things are…

69 This is a reference to the prevalence of Christian mission schools in the western part of Mtwara Region. As these were the most common type of secondary school in rural Mtwara up until the last decade, Salima is suggesting that her father did not want a school because he associated it with Christian beliefs, including the acceptability of eating pork, which is not allowed for Muslims.
Interviewer: Do you love him?  
Salima: Yes! He has good characteristics and he takes good care of me and he must love me, so I can say that I am satisfied.  
Interviewer: So will you marry him after you finish school?  
Salima: Of course! I know that he loves me, and he will take good care of me.  

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Salima’s narrative illustrates one way in which adolescent school girls negotiate both their sexual relationships and their education in the changing context of rural Mtwara. The arrangement between Salima and her boyfriend, in which she agreed to be his sexual partner under the condition that he funds her secondary education, was not uncommon among secondary school girls. Among all secondary school girls who had a boyfriend during secondary school, all but one (n=8, 88.9%) indicated that their sexual partner was an important source of financial support for their education. Though not all of these girls relied on their boyfriend as their primary source of support for school, as Salima did, they all reported at least economic contribution to school supplies, uniform costs, and/or fees.

Though Salima’s situation – essentially enabling her education through a sexual relationship – may be interpreted in other contexts as a boy exploiting a girl’s desire for education, in the context of rural Mtwara such an arrangement is perceived as socially acceptable, and, for some, even an enviable one. Indeed, as mentioned above, among all secondary school students (n=33), 27.3 percent (n=9) felt that female students studied under better conditions because they were helped by their boyfriends. Furthermore, Salima reported (in a separate section of her interviews) that her father and brother were aware of her arrangement with her boyfriend, and she said that they accepted this
arrangement because her boyfriend was clearly demonstrating his “care” for Salima through supporting her education.

Indeed, in rural Mtwara, where economic support of the girl by the boy is an expected aspect of all sexual relationships, such an arrangement is not perceived as exploitative, but as mutually beneficial. As normative cultural scripts suggest that adolescent girls’ who are not in school will be economically supported by their male sexual partners, for some female students, education is treated simply as another need that their partner can fulfill. Salima did not perceive the reciprocal aspect of this relationship as exploitative, but as an arrangement based in culturally normative rationalities, satisfying her boyfriend’s desire for a relationship while enabling her to pursue her education. Though she does not go so far as to say that she “loves” him, she does enthusiastically agree that she will marry him when she finishes school, and says that she is “satisfied.”

Finally, it is interesting to note Salima criticizes the notion of female students’ sexual relationships in general, though she is in one herself. Though she is clearly aware of the expectations associated with students’ sexual relationships, she is unable to meet these expectations and got to school, and she therefore chooses the latter. This inconsistency is the result of the irreconcilable circumstances female students such as Salima face in negotiating their sexual relationships, and this sentiment is echoed by other students. Among all female secondary school students (n=16), all but one explicitly

70 Though “satisfied” when translated into English is not a strong indication of positive feelings, in is a common term used by girls in rural Mtwara to indicate contentment with their sexual relationships.
stated that sexual relationships were “bad” for female students, regardless of their person
sexual relationships. This pattern will be further discussed in Section 9.2 below.

REGINA

Regina is a 16 year-old student in form two at the time of this interview. Her
parents are divorced, and she grew up living with her father and five siblings near Kilwa,
a coastal city on the road between Mtwara and Dar es Salaam. When she found out that
she passed the primary school exam, she moved south to live with her aunt (her father’s
sister) in a village on the road from Mtwara town to Mnazi because her father could not
afford to educate her on his meager income from fishing. Her aunt, who grew up in
Kilwa town and was trained as nurse, has access to a relatively consistent income, and
Regina now depends on her for everything, including her education. However, her aunt’s
home is too far away from the school to commute every day, and so Regina rents a room
in Mnazi village with a number of other girls. In this section of the interview, she is
discussing her current sexual relationship.

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Interviewer: How old were you when you had your first boyfriend?
Regina: I was 15, in form one.
Interviewer: How did the relationship start?
Regina: It started soon after I arrived at school. He was a student in form three, now he is
in form four, and from the day I arrived he has been pursuing me.
Interviewer: What did he do to pursue you?
Regina: Ha ha! You know…he would just pursue me, you know, he would call me to
come, saying he had greetings for me, but then when I would go to him, he would
start with vishawishi. You know, he would say, “I love you so much, why won’t
you love me, I will help you with everything, I will help you with your studies, I
will…” I don’t know what else. He propositioned me…five times, and I refused,
but then on the sixth time, I agreed.
**Interviewer:** Why did you decide to agree?

**Regina:** Ha ha ha! You know…I just like how he is. He has a good manner, he is courteous and he likes to study. I just liked him the way he is. And he pursued me so much, so I know he loves me a lot.

**Interviewer:** Does he help you with things or give you presents?

**Regina:** Of course! If I have a problem he always helps me. Sometimes, if his parents send him pocket money, he will give some to me for my needs, or if he goes home for break, if he gets a bit of work, he brings me clothes.

**Interviewer:** Do you give him presents?

**Regina:** When I can…maybe, for example, if I go to collect mangos, I will put some aside for him, or if I get some money from my aunt, and he has a problem I can sometimes help him with it.

**Interviewer:** Have you had any other boyfriends?

**Regina:** No! We have been together for almost one year now, and we get along very well. The village men, they pursue me so much, they really hassle me, but I just tell them that I have my person, and I leave them to dry up on their own ha ha ha!

**Interviewer:** What will happen when you go on the long school break? Do you worry about it?

**Regina:** The relationship will continue the way it is. I am not worried, he really loves me. I am not worried, not even a little. He could never go with someone else, ha ha ha!

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Regina’s description of her relationship with her boyfriend was similar to the descriptions provided by two other female students, both from households characterized by economic stability. Unlike Salima, Regina does not need to depend on a boyfriend to achieve her education, and it is unlikely that she would find herself in a difficult position such as Salima, because her aunt provides her with sufficient money and food supplies to last her through the semester. However, even in this context, when economic support is neither the basis for the relationship nor necessary to satisfy Regina’s basic needs, it remains an aspect of Regina and her boyfriend’s relationship, suggesting that this economic support is not necessarily linked to need, but instead represents “care.”
Unlike Salima, who foregrounds the economic aspects in the description of their sexual relationships, Regina emphasizes her own feelings of affection for her boyfriend. While he does provide her with gifts and money, this plays less of a central role in their relationship than it does for Salima. Though the sample of female students interviewed is too small for direct comparison, experiences such a Regina’s confirm that it is not only adolescent school girls from poorer families who become involved in sexual relationships. Regina’s case also illustrates that economic need is not the only reason girls engage in sexual relationships. Despite the consequences associated with pregnancy, some female students clearly choose to engage in sexual relationships not out of need, but due to their own desires. Even when they do so, however, they still expect that their male partners will provide them with some level of economic assistance.

**ANA**

Ana was a 19 year-old form four student at the time of this interview. She is the only child of her father and the second-born of her mother, and comes from a relatively small family of only two children. Her parents are married and live in Msijute, a small village in rural Mtwara, northwest of Mnazi. They are farmers, and though food is rarely a problem, her father does not work outside the home, and they rarely have access to cash income. Her “grandmother,” an older female neighbor who comes from a wealthy family and who gave Ana her name,\(^{71}\) has paid for most of her secondary school tuition. Her father helps her with food and all of the other small expenses associated with her

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\(^{71}\) Among the Makonde, the parents of a newborn child will typically request a friend of the family to name the child. This fictive kin relationship, called *kumwita jina*, is similar to that of a godparent in the United States.
schooling, including transport back and forth to school during the breaks. In the interview excerpt presented below, Ana is discussing her first sexual relationship.

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Interviewer: How old were you when you had your first boyfriend?
Ana: I was...it was in form one, so, I think I was 16...yes.72
Interviewer: Why did you like your first boyfriend?
Ana: Truly, that first boyfriend in Mnazi, I did not like him, but there are vishawishi. I didn't want to have a boyfriend until I had decided for myself, later in life, maybe when I was married maybe, or at least until I finished school, but then there are vishawishi. There I am all by myself, in Mnazi, my parents are far away, and also there in Mnazi there are so many vishawishi! Your friends try to tempt you, until you...Sophia, she tempted me to agree to him, and he also had friends. If I went to the village they would call me, “Ana, come here!” and you know boys tempt, right? They would tempt me!

Interviewer: What would they say to tempt you?
Ana: He would give my friends gifts and money to give to me, but I always refused them. But if I went to the village, his friends would yell at me and say, “We know you, you will agree to him eventually, you should just agree now and stop acting uninterested.”73 And my girlfriends would say, “If you reject him then we won't be your friend.” I don't know what else...

Interviewer: Why would your girlfriends do that?
Ana: I don't know! But I think, well, they all have boyfriends, and so they all have money. And girls, you know, they help each other, and their boyfriends were villagers and they wanted us to be one group all together, and they were my friends from home, from when I was a small child.

Interviewer: So then what happened then?
Ana: Then he had his friend Ndoto who was a conductor, who works for the bus that goes to town...he sent Ndoto. One day, in the evening, around 7pm, he sent Ndoto to tell me that I had a package that had arrived that I should come pick up. He told me to go to a certain place to pick up my package. I told him that I wasn't expecting any package, and he just told me to come, that there was a package, at a home in the village. So I went there to the place he told me to go. I got there, and he was there outside, and he told me to go inside and get my package. But when I

72 See Appendix E: Notes on Translation
73 “Acting uninterested,” has been used as a rough translation for the slang term maposi, from the English word “to pose.” It means acting nonchalant or refusing to be provoked and usually implies a feigned (as opposed to an actual) lack of interest.
went inside he closed and locked the door behind me. And then from the back
door Hamisi came in and locked the door behind him. Then he asked me, “Ana
why do you keep refusing me, why don't you just agree? Until you agree, you
will not get any packages from home, and you will not be able to go anywhere
ever.” In truth, that man, I was not satisfied with him myself. It wasn’t part of
my plan, but right there I was tempted, and I agreed.

**Interviewer:** Did you have sex with him right then?

**Ana:** No! I just responded “ok,” but it was already late, and I had to get back to the dorm
before the headmaster caught me. He just asked, “Have you agreed then?” And I
said, “Yes, I agreed,” and then I went back to the dorm and stayed in the dorm as
much as I could after that. I didn’t see him for around two or three weeks. But I
found out later that he was giving my other friend Maimuna, who was my good
friend from home and was in a relationship with one of Hamisi’s friends, he was
giving her presents and telling her to come and give them to me. But I was
refusing them, and she would keep them and instead tell Hamisi that I had
accepted them. For example if he gave her money, she would just take it and use
it and then tell him that I took it.

**Interviewer:** So how did you find out?

**Ana:** When it was time for school break, and I needed to go home, and I had no money at
all, not even 1000 shillings. So I borrowed Maimuna’s phone that she got from
her boyfriend and talked to my father and he told me to just get on the bus, and
when I got to the end in Mtwara he would meet me and pay for my fare. So I
tried to do that, because lots of students do that, but when I tried to get on the bus,
Ndoto, that conductor, he would not let me on. He said that he knew that I had
money, and I should be able to pay, because he thought I was taking Hamisi’s
money. He kicked me off the bus in front of the whole school. It was so
embarrassing!

**Interviewer:** What did you do then?

**Ana:** I waited three days, and then it was just too much. All the other students had left
and I had no more food and no one to help me. I realized that there was nothing I
could do, and that he would never leave me alone, so I just gave in. And that was
it, he gave me money and I went home. I was so unhappy with it. It made me so
upset I could cry now just thinking about it, that I could have agreed to him, it
must have been witchcraft that made me do it.

**Interviewer:** Did you use anything to prevent pregnancy?

**Ana:** No! I was so young, and I didn’t know about those things, about pills, I don’t know
what else, the injection, what else…

**Interviewer:** I see. Do you see him anymore?

**Ana:** No! I mean, only in the village on the street, but if I see him coming I go the other
way. He comes to see me sometimes, tries to greet me, but I don’t want him, I
Ana’s story illustrates the way in which the friction created by the introduction of secondary school in rural Mtwara may increase an adolescent girl’s vulnerability to pregnancy. Though Ana is the only girl who actually described being put in a situation where she was essentially forced into a sexual relationships against her will, 87.5 percent of all secondary school girl interviewed (14 of 16) voiced concern that, as female students, they were potentially vulnerable to this type of situation. As noted above, the high cost of secondary school, coupled with the requirement that most students live away from home during their secondary education, makes it difficult for some families to meet the physical needs of their children, creating the type of vulnerability Ana describes.

Furthermore, Ana’s insists that she was “tempted,” referencing the cultural scripts surrounding adolescent sexual and gender roles described in the Chapter Seven, and specifically the practice of vishawishi in which a boy who desires a sexual relationship with a girl offers her presents of gifts and money. Her experience suggests that secondary school girls, taken away from the economic and social support of their families, may be less able to negotiate a relationship characterized by “care,” and more likely to enter into sexual relationships primarily out of economic necessity. As discussed in the previous chapter, among all adolescent participants (n=69), 59.4 percent (n=41) felt that a girl always had the option to refuse a boy’s vishawishi. Though
participants did report that poverty could essentially force any girl – not just a student – to involve herself in a sexual relationship out of economic need, given the level of food security in Ana’s household, it is unlikely that she would have been forced into such a situation had she not been at school. Furthermore, as discussed above, the consequences for Ana are greater should she become pregnant due to such an encounter because of her student status. Ana’s experience illustrates how the economic and structural characteristics of the secondary school environment in rural Mtwara can create a situation in which girls are put in a sexually vulnerable position such that they are unable to navigate otherwise normative cultural scripts surrounding adolescent sexual relationships.

**HAMIDA**

Hamida is an 18 year-old student in form three at the time of this interview. She lives with her father and four siblings in a village close to the edge of Mtwara town. Her mother passed away when she was thirteen. Her father has since remarried and has a regular job as a truck driver in town. Hamida’s narrative will be presented as a series of three segments from her interview, as she wove her own personal experiences into her discussion of community norms surrounding sexual relationships.

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**Interviewer:** What do you think motivates girls to get involved in sexual relationships?
**Hamida:** *Tamaa.* These days we girls are so full of *tamaa.*
**Interviewer:** What do you mean when you say *tamaa,* what are they desiring?
**Hamida:** Things! Money! Nice things, a better life, not a difficult life. For example, some do it so they can get money, or to be able to buy nice clothes. And how else will girls get money? We can’t do difficult work like boys. Our lives are just dependent on men. So you have to go to a man to get…you do that act with him and he gives you money to buy food or if he gives you a lot you buy clothes. So
that is what motivates girls to have sex, it is because of tamaa. Tamaa and poverty. Because some girls, they have needs, like me I am going to school in Mnazi, my father is in town. If I run out of money, what should I do? I need someone to depend on, to help me.

Interviewer: So what kind of boys do girls like?
Hamida: The one with money! A good looking man with no money, for what?! How can he help you? He can’t! You will hear women say, “A person is not loved, his pocket is!” Ha ha ha!

Interviewer: How do you know if he has money?
Hamida: Well first, there is the way he tempts you, his vishawishi. If he sends you gifts and you see them for yourself and know that he is serious. But also, if you just look at him, he is smart looking, he has on nice clothes, shoes, he is not just dirty like he has just come from the ocean, he doesn’t smell like fish, then he has a motorbike…that is, he is not just a villager. He looks like he has a life for himself. Yes, I love the ones who look smart and have money. I could never love someone who is just sitting around on his porch, his clothes are old, and he is not working hard to get money…that is bringing yourself trouble, a difficult life.

(Skip to section two of interview)

Interviewer: So who pursues you more, students or villagers?
Hamida: Most of the time it is the villagers, they really pursue us students a lot, and they like us more than the village girls because we kupendeza so much. Sometimes it makes the village girls really mad; they claim that we are stealing their pants ha ha ha! 74 Like me, last year there was one woman, she really hated me, I couldn’t even go to the village during the day because she and her friends, if they saw me they would threaten me, that they would beat me if I came to the village.

Interviewer: Why?
Hamida: Well, she didn’t like me because she said I was stealing her husband. But she was older and tired, and I don’t know why she was surprised that he was going around with younger girls. He has a lot of money; he has a store in town. Do you know the store on the right side of the street with all the household utensils?

Interviewer: Um…that one after the little café there?
Hamida: Eh heh. So that’s him, he owns the store. He helps me with everything, buys me new clothes, if I have any problem, food maybe, anything like that. You know, girls, we study in a very difficult environment. So if a man is willing to take care of you, well, then that’s isn’t a bad thing, it’s a good thing.

Interviewer: So do girl students like villagers or their fellow students more?

74 “Stealing their pants” in this context refers to engaging in a sexual relationship with another girl’s boyfriend or husband.
Hamida: Villagers, because aren’t they the one’s with money? They are the ones with money, students don’t have any.

Interviewer: So the boy villagers like the girl students, and the girl students like the boy villagers?

Hamida: Eeeh! Even the boy students pursue the girl students, but they are defeated, they are not wanted, they are refused by the girls. Like me, I just say to them, “You are a boy, I am a girl. We are both studying. If I get a problem, and you are a student, how will you help me? Because until you send word to home, they send you money or whatever, while me, that time, maybe I am sick, and I have already died!” Now, my boyfriend, I can just go to tell him my problems, even if he doesn’t have money he will go to borrow it. Now can a student do that? He can’t! That’s just how it is.

(Skip to section three of interview)

Interviewer: Why do girls have multiple boyfriends?

Hamida: Aha, yes. Let me explain. For example me, I have my boyfriend here in Mnazi. Interviewer: The one with the store?

Hamida: Yes, that one. But then I have my boyfriend at home, you know. So the one here in Mnazi gives me 5000 shilling, and then if I go home I see my boyfriend in Mtwara, and he gives me…I don’t know how much…maybe 1000 shillings. Therefore it is not difficult to just look and see which one has more money and which one has less, and the one who has more give you more and the one who has less give you for less. And they don’t know that here you are with one person, and there with another. One can even say to himself, “This one doesn’t have anyone else besides me,” so he trusts me, and he gives me money, but if he finds out then I could get a big problem, he might even leave me, and then I will just have one. But to just have one, because no one here is really rich, to just have one it can be that he cannot satisfy all your needs. Why should I eat ugali every day and have a difficult life?

Interviewer: Do other girls at school have one boy at home and one at school?

Hamida: Yes! Many of them do. Some girls criticize me, but they are just jealous because I know how to make sure I am well taken care of. Remember the day of the fire, when my things, and Bahati and Hawa’s things were all burned?

Interviewer: Yes.

Hamida: It is because of that, because of jealousy, they wanted to destroy my nice things because my boyfriend is a big man in the village, and he gives me anything I want, so I always get to wear the newest styles…I am actually gaining weight at school! He has already said that he wants to marry me when I am done with school, but I think I would rather marry a man from town. By that time I will
have my education - I don’t want to be a village wife and live like my mother. Her life was too poor and too hard.”

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For girls like Hamida, being a student positioned them to achieve what they perceived as a better life through strategic sexual relationships. Hamida is essentially using her highly attractive status as a student to negotiate economic support through normative cultural scripts of gendered economic and sexual roles. Given the high likelihood that her secondary education will not lead to employment, and that she will primarily depend on her future husband for support, such a strategy is not without its logic. As discussed in the previous chapters, the majority of girls do not pass their final secondary school exams, and, furthermore, the economic changes underway in rural Mtwara have not yet produced new economic opportunities for rural residents such as Hamida. Therefore, her strategic negotiation of her sexual relationships suggests another way in which girls may negotiate their sexual relationships and their education in creative ways based on their individual desires and goals.

However, as Hamida mentioned, she and her friends who were engaging in similar practices were also criticized by teachers and some fellow students alike, even to the point of burning their clothes. Though she does not use the term to describe herself, in the opening section above Hamida recognizes that such actions may be interpreted as tamaa, or the willingness to engage in sexual relationships purely for economic gain above and beyond one’s basic needs. In rural Mtwara, the complex idiom of tamaa, loosely translating as “desire,” reflects the opposite of the notion of care, or the interplay between sex and money in a relationship when care is absent.
Because behaviors such as Hamida’s are not socially accepted, other participants were hesitant to discuss disclose them, and it is difficult to gauge how many participants actually engage in relationships in the same manner as Hamida. Hamida was unusually open about her sexual relationships and her underlying motivations, which is consistent with her generally gregarious personality. Three other female students also suggested that had engaged in similar behaviors, including multiple partners, though they were unwilling to go into as much detail as Hamida. In addition, among all secondary school students (n=33), 84.8 percent (n=28) said that they knew of at least one female students who had more than one sexual partner, and 39.2 percent (n=13) of all students felt that female students were more likely to have multiple partners than male students. These data suggest that Hamida is not alone in utilizing her status as a highly attractive sexual partner to negotiate for economic support.

9.2 Negotiating Sexual Subjectivity in Rural Mtwara

Through their discussions, Salima, Regina, Ana and Hamida illustrate both the variability and consistency in adolescent girls’ negotiations of their sexuality given normative cultural scripts guiding adolescent sexual relationships, the expectations and constraints of their student status, and their individual desires. They illustrate that despite the significant consequences of pregnancy for a secondary school student, female students do engage in sexual relationships for a variety of reasons specific to their individual circumstances. In addition, though all girls reference the normative practice of economic exchange in sexual relationships, the girls negotiate this cultural script in very different ways, and it plays a different role in each of their relationships.
The consistency and variability in these girls’ narratives calls for an examination of adolescent sexuality that goes beyond the level of cultural scripts to examine how individuals drawn and variably employ these scripts in negotiating and narrating their own subjectivity. As discussed in Chapter Two, psychological anthropologists have long examined the relationship between the individual and culture. Through the long history of scholarship on this topic, scholars have identified the important role of material and structural aspects of the cultural environment (e.g. R. LeVine et al., 1996), shared systems of symbols and meanings (e.g. Geertz, 1973), political economy (e.g. Scheper-Hughes, 1993), local ethnopsychology (e.g. Anderson-Fye, 2003), and the internalization of cultural models (Quinn, 2005), as well as countless other factors in shaping the relationship between the individual (variably defined) and culture (also variably defined). In Chapter Seven, I drew on LeVine’s cultural mediation model to examine how biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors together shape cultural scripts guiding central tendencies in behavior at the population level. However, as illustrated by the four cases presented above (and emphasized by LeVine himself) these cultural scripts only influence – but do not determine – individual behavior or experience.

To understand the diverse ways in which Salima, Regina, Ana and Hamida are negotiating their sexual relationships relative to the cultural scripts discussed in Chapter Seven and the specific expectations and consequences associated with their student status discussed in Chapter Eight, I will draw on Hostetler and Herdt’s (1998) twin concepts of “sexual lifeways” and “developmental subjectivities.” Hostetler and Herdt define sexual lifeways as, “Culturally constituted developmental pathways, embedded within social and symbolic systems, that provide rich and meaningful contexts for the realization of full
personhood in society,” (p. 251). These sexual lifeways are related to cultural scripts outlining normative developmental pathways and sexual and gender roles, discussed in Chapter Seven, but they also include a consideration of the implications of these cultural scripts across different stages of the developmental spectrum.

Herdt and Hostetler’s second concept, “developmental subjectivity,” refers to, “The sense of personal efficacy, of positive self-regard, that emerges from the interstices of culturally patterned ways of being, individual desires (sexual, affectional, relational, and/or life-course desires), and experience-as-lived,” (Hostetler & Herdt, 1998, p. 276). Hostetler and Herdt propose developmental subjectivity as one way of conceptualizing sexual subjectivity. Furthermore, they see subjectivity not as a discursively constructed, but as a constantly evolving sense of self that is forged in the individual developmental processes of accepting or rejecting culturally patterned sexual lifeways in accordance with one’s own unique set of experiences, opportunities and limitations. Therefore, developmental subjectivity refers to a developmental outcome, or the “sense of self in present time,” and is subject to change across the life course (p. 276). Finally, according to Hostetler and Herdt, this process of negotiating one’s developmental subjectivity in relation to existing sexual lifeways is further characterized by “sexual agency,” or an individual’s self-conscious, active engagement in his or her own sexual development, which ultimately shapes his or her developmental (and sexual) subjectivity.

In applying Hostetler and Herdt’s concepts to the context of rural Mtwara, the cultural scripts described in Chapter Seven constitute a key characteristic of the distinct sexual lifeways of men and women in rural Mtwara. As previously discussed, the normative developmental pathway for a girl in rural Mtwara involves initiation in unyago
before puberty, sexual debut at or near puberty, and marriage soon after. It is expected that through this process the girl will be economically supported by men – first by her father, then by her sexual partners, and ultimately by her husband – throughout her life. This dependent status is a central aspect of women’s sexual and gender roles and is also expressed in the teachings of *unyago*, which are intended to impress on girls the value of their sexuality and encourage them to carefully negotiate their sexual relationships for their own social and economic security.

However, the cases presented above illustrate the diverse ways in which girls actively negotiate these gendered expectations of this normative sexual lifeway. Indeed, Ana, Salima, Regina and Hamida alternatively accept, reject, reconcile and/or reconfigure various aspects of existing cultural scripts within the context of their own individual resources, constraints and desires. The specific constraints described by Ana position her in such a way that she is unable to reject an otherwise unwanted sexual relationship. Salima succeeds in reconciling her own desire for education with the cultural scripts of female economic dependence in sexual relationships, but this strategy is in part the result of the specific constraints of her household. Regina is also supported by her partner, but the relative economic stability of her household allows Regina to foreground the emotional, as opposed to the economic, aspects of her relationship. Finally, Hamida illustrates one way in which female students are reconfiguring cultural scripts surrounding sexual relationships and gendered economic roles. Though she does not necessarily need to rely on her boyfriends for economic support, she employs a creative (though socially unaccepted) strategy for attaining her definition of a better life through education.
The various ways in which these girls negotiate their sexual relationships represent multiple developmental pathways. Through their negotiation of their sexual relationships, these girls are forming unique developmental and sexual subjectivities that are both consistent with aspects of the dominant sexual lifeway available to girls in the context of rural Mtwara and specific to their own individual experiences, desires and constraints. None of these girls fully leaves behind the notion of women as economically dependent on their sexual partners, as this is a fundamental aspect of gender and sexual roles in their community, is emphasized in unyago, and is an integral characteristic of the social and economic environment of rural Mtwara. However, each girl also expresses aspects of sexual agency in negotiating her sexual relationships according to her immediate desires, needs and priorities, the social and economic resources available to her, and her individual constraints.

Hostetler and Herdt (1998), in describing the concepts of sexual lifeways and developmental subjectivities, emphasize that although there may be only one dominant sexual lifeway open to individuals in a community, this does not mean that there are not many possible developmental pathways available, resulting in diverse developmental subjectivities. Ana, Salima, Regina and Hamida illustrate this point through their accounts of their own sexual relationships, and suggest the multiple ways in which adolescents are negotiating their sexuality in the context of the changing cultural environment of rural Mtwara.

Finally, although the girls echo the attitudes, discussed in Chapter Eight, that sexual relationships for students – and particularly female students – are bad, they still engage in these relationships. Female students' comments regarding students’ sexual
relationships in general stood in stark contrast to the personal choices they made in regard to their own relationships. Understanding these contradictions I suggest requires a perspective encouraged by Worthman (2011), who contends that understanding adolescence in a rapidly changing world requires recognition that both the adolescents themselves and their surrounding environment are in a state of flux. Though the consequences of pregnancy for a student are indeed steep, completing secondary education in rural Mtwara does not yet come with clear and consistent benefits. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the economic benefits of the gas and oil developments in rural Mtwara have yet to reliably improve access to economic opportunities in rural Mtwara. Furthermore, cultural norms still dictate that those opportunities that are available are the role of men, not women. For most of these female students, therefore, completion of education will be followed by marriage and economic dependence on a man, as dictated by normative sexual and developmental lifeways currently available to girls regardless of their student status. Until the economic benefits of completing one’s education increase, female students may continue to risk the consequences of a possible pregnancy for the immediate benefit of their partner’s support.

9.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the various ways in which secondary school students – and particularly girls – are negotiating their own sexual relationships in the context of existing cultural scripts, the vulnerabilities and constraints associated with their student status, and their individual desires. Through the negotiation of their sexual relationships, these girls are forming unique developmental and sexual subjectivities that are both consistent with aspects of the dominant sexual lifeway available to girls in rural Mtwara.
and specific to their own individual experiences, desires and constraints. Furthermore, understanding these negotiations requires recognition that these individuals – themselves in a transitional life stage – are also living in a context undergoing rapid change. Though these complex negotiations can make female students vulnerable to negative consequences associated with sexual relationships, including pregnancy, their discussions also illustrate the ways in which adolescent girls in rural Mtwara are finding diverse and creative ways to navigate both their sexuality and their education in the context of change.
Chapter Ten
Conclusion

10.0 Overview

This dissertation contributes to multiple bodies of literature in medical and psychological anthropology, including the literature examining the relationship between the individual and culture, the cross-cultural study of globalization and change, and the role of ritual in shaping the enculturation of sexuality in diverse contexts. In Section 10.1 of this final chapter, I first summarize the central conclusions of this dissertation. I then discuss how these findings contribute to the anthropological literature, and, to close this discussion, I examine the public health implications of this work and suggest how it may inform the current controversy over unyago and jando in rural Mtwara. Finally, to conclude this dissertation, in Section 10.2 I discuss additional questions and future directions for research.

10.1 Summary of Findings and Contributions

This dissertation explores the multiple influences shaping adolescent sexuality within the rapidly changing community of rural Mtwara, Tanzania. As illustrated in Chapters Five and Six, the rituals of unyago and jando play an underlying role in shaping adolescent sexuality for boys and girls in rural Mtwara in two primary ways. First, these rituals mark the developmental transition from childhood to ukubwa, a life stage similar to adolescence, during which sexual activity typically begins. To prepare for this transition, these rituals include a range of activities and lessons to prepare boys and girls
for various aspects of the ukubwa life stage, including sexual relationships. The rituals are intentionally conducted prior to the development of any outward signs of puberty in order to prepare boys and girls for the transition to sexual and reproductive maturity. The lessons and skill taught in unyago and jando provide girls and boys with the knowledge and skills they will need to negotiate their new life stage, including sexual activity.

The second way in which the rituals of unyago and jando act as underlying influences on adolescent sexuality is in communicating the different norms, values and expectations of male and female sexual roles. For girls, this involves lessons that are specific to the woman’s sexual role in a relationship. These include concrete skills, such as how a girl should move her body effectively in sexual intercourse and how to clean herself and her partner following a sexual encounter. These lessons also reflect values and expectations specific to the woman’s role in sexual relationships, including the emphasis on the high value of girls’ sexuality and reproductive capacity, and the expectation that a girl will be economically supported by her sexual partners. For boys, the norms and expectations of male sexual roles are primarily communicated in informal conversations with older boys. Though the stories of these older boys, the young initiates learn the various strategies used in negotiating sexual relationships and are explicitly told that once they have completed jando, it is their role as boys to pursue girls.

Though these rituals are an important underlying influence on adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwar, the examination the broader cultural environment of rural Mtwar in Chapter Seven highlights a number of biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors mediating the relationship between the rituals and adolescent sexuality. As illustrated in Chapter Seven, although boys and girls
are prepared for sexual activity in *unyago* and *jando* – before they have reached puberty – the majority do not actually begin to engage in sexual activity until at or soon after puberty. This suggests that the biopsychological changes of puberty play a mediating role in the relationship between the rituals of *unyago* and *jando* and sexual debut. This is also consistent with the timing and purpose of *unyago* and *jando* as discussed in the previous two chapters. These data together suggest that sexual debut around the age of puberty is part of normative developmental expectations in rural Mtwara.

The issue of poverty and basic material needs also permeates every aspect of life in rural Mtwara, including sexual relationships. However, as has been documented in many cultural contexts, the impact of the high rate of poverty in rural Mtwara on sexual relationships varies by gender. In rural Mtwara, the gendered expectations that women will depend on men, and that men will provide economically for women and children, are reflected in the local idiom *watu wa kupewa*. This figure of speech, meaning, “those who are given to,” is used to refer to women and reflects the cultural expectation that women will be supported by men. Men, on the other hand, are referred to as *tegemezi*, meaning, “those who are depended on.” In this way, the relationship between men and women is framed by economic and sexual/reproductive reciprocity, in which men provide economically for women, and women bear children for men and manage the household. This concept of reciprocity was also central in participants’ discussions of normative developmental pathways to adulthood for boys and girls, as well as normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ roles in sexual relationships.

These biopsychological and environmental/economic factors also serve as underlying influences on distinct cultural scripts guiding adolescent sexual relationships,
including: 1) the scripts defining normative developmental pathways for boys and girls, including the meaning of “adolescence” and, subsequently, “adolescent” sexuality in rural Mtwara; and 2) normative cultural scripts guiding boys’ and girls’ roles in negotiating sexual relationships. As discussed in Chapter Five, unyago and jando mark the transition into adolescence, and marriage is considered the primary marker for entrance to adulthood in rural Mtwara. However, girls marry soon after puberty, while marriage for boys is predicated on their ability to economically support a family, resulting in a later age of marriage for boys than girls. As a consequence, the normative developmental pathway for girls includes a much shorter adolescent life stage than for boys, a pattern which inherently limits the period during which girls can actually engage in “adolescent” sexual relationships.

The scripts guiding adolescents’ negotiations of their sexual relationships also reflect the biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors discussed above. This includes the gendered division of economic roles, which is clearly reflected in boys’ and girls’ negotiations of sexual relationships. However, a close examination of the role of money in sexual relationships reveals that the expectation that a boy will pursue a girl through promises of gifts and money and help his sexual partner with her material needs is not perceived as “transactional,” but instead as “care,” a manifestation of his commitment to their relationship. In addition, the cultural scripts guiding sexual relationships also echo many of the specific messages surrounding boys’ and girls’ distinct sexual roles communicated in unyago and jando, suggesting the shared roots of these rituals and adolescent sexual relationships within the surrounding cultural environment of rural Mtwara.
However, the cultural environment in which the rituals of unyago and jando are practiced is currently undergoing a period of rapid change. As illustrated in Chapter Eight, the introduction of secondary education, in particular, is producing “friction” in the domain of adolescent sexuality, as evidenced by the high rate at which adolescent girls are dropping out of secondary school due to pregnancy. This examination of the interaction of aspects of the secondary school system with certain characteristics of the cultural environment of rural Mtwara reveals multiple points of friction that both contribute to female students’ vulnerability to pregnancy and increase the consequences of pregnancy.

The friction produced in the interaction of the formal education system with the cultural environment of rural Mtwara is subsequently fuelling the emergence of a distinct set of values, expectations and consequences surrounding adolescent sexuality, particularly for female students. Indeed, pregnancies among girls who are not in school are generally not considered problematic because their pregnancies, though outside marriage, can be accommodated within the existing norms and expectations surrounding economic roles and childrearing. For girls in school, on the other hand, pregnancy comes with significant economic consequences for both the girl and her family, and therefore pregnancy – and sexual relationships in general – are now considered highly problematic for female students.

Though education is associated with improvements in girls’ health and well-being across diverse cultural environments, the expansion of formal education in the context of rural Mtwara is putting girls in a vulnerable position, caught between two contradictory sets of expectations for their sexual relationships. While in the broader context of rural
Mtwara sexual relationships are expected to begin around puberty, the emerging expectations for students demand the opposite. A close examination of the accounts of four school girls –Salima, Regina, Ana and Hamida – suggests that these contradictory expectations can indeed make female students vulnerable to negative consequences associated with sexual relationships, including pregnancy. However, their discussions also illustrate the ways in which adolescent girls in rural Mtwara are finding diverse and creative ways to navigate both their sexuality and their education in the context of change. Even in rural Mtwara, where women’s economic and sexual relationships are tightly linked and well defined, the variability in these girls’ narratives illustrates the diverse pathways through which girls actively negotiate the gendered expectations of this normative sexual lifeway. Through negotiation of these multiple pathways, these girls are forming unique developmental and sexual subjectivities that are both consistent with aspects of the dominant sexual lifeway available to girls in the context of rural Mtwara and specific to their own individual experiences, desires and constraints.

**Contributions to Anthropology**

These findings contribute to the anthropological literature on adolescent initiation rituals, the relationship between the individual and culture, and globalization in multiple ways. First, this literature contributes to the anthropological literature on initiation rituals by providing a detailed examination of the rituals of unyago and jando as practiced by the Makonde of rural Mtwara, Due in part to the extended isolation of the Mtwara region, these practices had not been closely examined in the literature, and this ethnography of these practices therefore contributes to the body of anthropological knowledge on the diversity of ritual practices worldwide. With the changes in and/or disappearances of
rituals such as jando and unyago in many communities around the world, this research provides a valuable record of these unique and complex cultural practices. Furthermore, by situating these rituals within the broader cultural environment, this work also provides an explanation of the cultural and developmental significance of these complex cultural practices.

Second, this research also contributes to the literature in psychological anthropology by examining the multiple biopsychological, environmental/economic and cultural factors – including the initiation rituals – that shape the enculturation process through which adolescents in rural Mtwara learn the norms, values and expectations surrounding sexuality in their community. This research suggests that normative cultural scripts guiding adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara are shaped through the complex interaction of biological, psychological, environmental, economic and cultural factors. Drawing on LeVine’s (1996) cultural mediation model, this close examination of the context of rural Mtwara reveals the situated nature of adolescent sexuality as embedded within the broader cultural environment.

In addition, this work seeks to extend LeVine’s model to examine how individual adolescents negotiate these normative cultural scripts guiding adolescent sexuality in diverse and creative ways. By drawing on Hostetler and Herdt’s (1998) concepts of sexual lifeways and developmental subjectivities, this work incorporates a person-centered examination of individual adolescents’ discussions of their sexual relationships. This analysis reveals how these individuals are forming unique developmental and sexual subjectivities that are both consistent with aspects of these normative cultural scripts and specific to their own individual experiences, desires and constraints. By pairing LeVine’s
model with a person-centered analysis, this work provides a multi-level framework for understanding the multiple factors shaping adolescent sexuality and for illuminating how sexual subjectivity is forged through adolescents’ negotiations of their sexual relationships within the broader cultural environment of rural Mtwara.

Finally, this research contributes to our understanding of the changing role of ritual practices such as *unyago* and *jando* in the context of globalization. Though these rituals are consistent with normative developmental pathways for boys and girls, the changes currently underway in this region are shifting the expectations of adolescent sexuality – and girls’ sexual relationships, in particular – in ways that are inconsistent with these normal developmental pathways. This examination of the sources of “friction” resulting from these changes contributes to our understanding of the processes through which new values and expectations surrounding sexuality emerge in the context of change. Furthermore, this dissertation pairs Tsing’s macro-level analysis of friction with a close examination of the way in which individual adolescents in rural Mtwara negotiate this “friction” in the context of their own sexual relationships. In doing so, this dissertation contributes a multi-level perspective on the relationship between globalization and cultural change by illuminating the micro-process through which individuals negotiate and shape the changes associated with the macro-processes of globalization.

**Public Health Implications**

In addition to these contributions to the anthropological literature, this research also has significant implications for public health, including core issues in reproductive
health. Specifically, this work has implications for the controversial issue of adolescent pregnancy, as well as access to contraception and risk for HIV/AIDS.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the rituals of *unyago* and *jando* have come under recent scrutiny following the publication of epidemiological data suggesting that 33.7 percent of adolescents in the region become pregnant before age 19, the highest of any region in Tanzania and well above the national average of 23.2 percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2008). These data have caused a wave of concern and a media frenzy in which public officials, non-governmental organizations, and private citizens have rushed to voice their opinion as to the underlying cause of this supposed epidemic of adolescent pregnancy. In this context, *unyago* and *jando* have been drawn into the center of this controversy as a potential cause of adolescent pregnancy.

The data provided in this dissertation provide insight into this controversy. As illustrated in the previous chapters, adolescent sexuality in rural Mtwara is shaped by multiple influences within the surrounding cultural environment. Though *jando* and *unyago* do involve teaching boys and girls the details of sexual activity, this is done as part of a set of developmental and cultural norms and values shaped by the biopsychological changes of puberty, the economic status of the community, the gendered division of labor and normative developmental pathways in rural Mtwara. The rituals of *unyago* and *jando* must therefore be understood as influencing adolescent sexuality inasmuch as they are a teaching tool for communicating norms, values and expectations of adolescent sexual relationships that are embedded within the broader cultural environment of rural Mtwara.
Though the criticism of unyago and jando may be misdirected, the concern over adolescent pregnancy in rural Mtwara is not unwarranted. The high rate of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy represents a significant economic loss for families and may ultimately discourage many some from educating their female children through secondary school. Furthermore, though exact numbers or difficult to determine, female participants regularly commented that female students who does become pregnant would likely seek an abortion to avoid the consequences of pregnancy. Abortion is illegal in Tanzania, and although participants suggested that a local form of abortion is available, abortion is not a safe option for girls.

One potential solution to the difficult circumstances of female students, who are both highly vulnerable to sexual relationships and subject to significant consequences should they become pregnant, is contraception. While participants were marginally aware of contraception, and oral contraceptive pills were reportedly available at the local clinic, the high rates of pregnancy suggest the need to significantly expand access for students. However, it is the policy of the Tanzanian government that students should not engage in sexual relationships, and therefore should have no need for birth control (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2005). The high rates of adolescent pregnancy suggest that this policy is misguided and may need revision to address the realities of students’ lives and protect their health.

Finally, as discussed in Chapter Two, recent data suggest that the rates of HIV/AIDS in rural Mtwara are climbing following the drilling and installation of the natural gas pipeline through the region. Though adolescents were aware of the virus,
Mtwara has also received “patchy” attention from the large NGO community, which conducts the majority of HIV/AIDS prevention work in Tanzania (Bangster, 2010). Given the subsequent discovery of oil and the continued flow of outsiders to the region, as has happened elsewhere, Mtwara appears highly vulnerable to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. Though the rural areas of this region have remained relatively isolated from the growing population of urban Mtwara town, this will likely not last forever, particularly as the rapidly growing economy in Mozambique presents an increasing opportunity for trade (Small Industries Development Organization, 2007). The window of opportunity to prevent an epidemic is quickly closing, and both governmental and non-governmental agencies alike would be wise to finally turn their attention to the south.

10.2 Future Directions

These data raise a number of additional questions related to adolescent health and developmental, sexuality and cultural change in rural Mtwara. In this final section, I discuss these questions and explore directions for future research.

First, the issue of abortion, mentioned above, is an issue that was often mentioned by participants. In their discussions, participants referenced a local abortifacient, *mwarobaini*, which participants suggested is widely used by local women. Further research is needed to understand the extent of its use, as well its perceived efficacy and safety. In further research is needed to fully assess contraceptive use in general in this community. Reports given by participants were contradictory on this topic, but generally suggested that even the limited contraception that is available is rarely used. Additional
research should include a full assessment of contraceptive availability, together with a close examination of individuals’ attitudes and beliefs surrounding contraceptive use.

A second issue that emerged during research was local conceptions of child abuse and the perceived short- and long-term psychological implications of the experience of physical violence in childhood. The anthropological literature has documented wide variation in cultural attitudes and beliefs surrounding child abuse (Korbin, 1981). As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, physical punishment as it is used in jando and unyago is believed to result in positive psychological impacts on the children, as opposed to the negative impacts often associated with physical abuse in Western contexts. In Mtwara, this belief is part of a broader developmental ethnopsychology referred to as kukomaa. Literally translating as “to get hard and dry up,” this verb is used to describe one of the primary goals of child development in rural Mtwara, that is, that the child will psychologically “harden” in order to successfully withstand the physical challenges of adult life in the context of widespread poverty. Though there is some indication that this ethnopsychology mediates many aspects of life in rural Mtwara, including aspects of sexual relationships, further research is needed to define this concept as it relates to broader cultural beliefs and values surrounding emotion and to individual psychology more generally.

Third, questions also arose in the course of research with regard to the expansion of the education system in rural Mtwara. Specifically, further research is needed to understand why, given the high rates of dropout due to pregnancy, high failure rates and limited job opportunities, parents continue to go to great lengths to send to their daughters to school. Though girls currently enroll in secondary school at lower rates
than boys, they still make up a significant percentage of each incoming class of students. Understanding the complex motivations underlying both parents’ and students’ extensive efforts to seek education, given the high risk of economic consequences and no obvious economic benefits, requires an in-depth examination of the meanings and values surrounding education in this community.

Fourth, the changes underway in rural Mtwara are reshaping the lives of the residents of the south – including, but not limited to, adolescents – in multiple and complex ways. Ongoing research to track the shifting impacts of these changes will be needed to understand how these processes continue to impact adolescents and their communities. One question of particular interest stemming from this research is the shifting relationship between education, adolescent pregnancy, and economic opportunities. Recently, scholars in the anthropology of globalization have called for further research on the way in which individuals navigate change and/or development in only one sector within their community (Ferguson, 2006; Nguyen, 2009). As noted in Chapter Nine, the expansion of formal education in Mtwara has not come with an expansion of economic opportunities for secondary school graduates. Understanding the impact of this change in one sector of the community will required continued examination to determine whether economic opportunities follow and, if so, how these additional changes impact various aspects of adolescent health and well-being.

Finally, rural Mtwara has received little attention from researchers – even a cursory examination of the literature quickly reveals that the majority of research from Tanzania has been conducted in the northern regions, which are both economically and culturally distinct from the south. In this under-researched context, the avenues for future
research are virtually endless. Understanding the shifting impact of these changes on the health and well-being of this population will require ongoing research on a wide range of subjects from a variety of disciplines, including, of course, anthropology.
Appendix A: Map of Mnazi
Appendix B: Interview Schedule for Adolescent Interviews

Full Name of Participant

Date of Interview

Site of Interview

Gender

BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS – Initial Contact

1. How old are you?

2. In what year were you born?

3. Where were you born?

4. Where do you currently live?

5. What tribe do you belong to?
   If Makonde:
   A. What type of Makonde (Coastal, Tanzanian, or Mozambican)

6. What tribal language do you speak?

7. What religion do you belong to?

8. Do you go to the mosque/church?
   If yes:
   A. How often do you go?

9. Where were you born, in a regional hospital, a local clinic, or at home?

10. Who do you live with at the home where you live now?

11. How many people live in this home? How many are elderly? Adults? Adolescents? Children?

12. What type of house do you stay in: tree and thatch, tree and sheet metal, or brick and sheet metal?

13. What type of food is depended on in your home as the staple food?

14. Where do you get water in your home?

15. What type of light do you depend on at home?
16. Does anyone in your home have a phone?  
   If yes:  
      A. How many people?  
      B. What is your relationship to the owner of the phone? 

END RECRUITMENT INTERVIEW

BEGIN INTERVIEW ONE

PARENTS

17. Are both of your birth parents alive?  
   If no:  
      A. How old were you when your mother/father died? 

18. Are your parent married to each other?  
   If no:  
      A. How old were you when they separated/divorced?  
      B. Has your mother and/or your father remarried? 

19. Were your parents married when they had their first child together? 

20. Was either your mother or your father married to someone else before marrying your mother/father? 

21. Approximately how old is your mother? Your father? Can they still do hard work? 

22. Did your mother study? Your father?  
   If yes:  
      A. What grade did your father reach in school?  
      B. What grade did your mother reach in school? 

23. Can your mother read a letter? Can your father? 

24. Can your mother do basic math, for example, can they calculate correct change in the market? Can your father? 

25. What type of work does your mother do? Your father? * 
   For each:  
      A. What type of work does he/she do?*  
      B. Does he/she work for a family member, someone else, or is he/she self-employed?*  
      C. How often does he/she work?*  
      D. How is he/she paid for his work? (daily, hourly, by unit produced, in cash,
barter, etc.)*
E. How much money does he/she earn in an average month?
F. How long has he/she been doing this work?*

SIBLINGS

26. How many siblings do you have?*
27. How many siblings from your mother’s side?
28. How many siblings from your father’s side?
29. How many children did your parents have together?
30. Where do you fall in the birth order of all of your siblings (e.g. firstborn)?
31. For each sibling:*
   A. Is he/she married?*
   B. Does he/she have children?*
   C. Where does he/she live?*
   D. What grade in school has he/she completed? Is he/she still studying?
   E. What type of work does he/she do?

DAILY LIFE IN HOUSEHOLD

32. Please describe for me the events in your life in a typical day, for example:
   A. What time do you usually wake up in the morning?
   B. After waking, what do you do in the morning?
   C. Do you eat breakfast? If so, what time?
   D. What do you do in the afternoon?
   E. Do you eat lunch? If so, what time?
   F. What do you do in the evening?
   G. Do you eat dinner? If so, what time?
   H. Do you leave the house at night? If so, what do you do?
   I. What time do you go to sleep at night?

33. Who does the housework in your home?
34. Do you do you help with any of the housework?
   If yes
   A. What types of chores do you do?

35. Who does the cooking in your home? How many people does he/she cook for?
36. Do you wash your own clothes?
   If no
   A. Who washes your clothes for you?
   If yes
   B. Do you wash clothes for anyone else? If yes, How many?

37. In general, who do you think has a more difficult life: children, adolescents, or adults? Why?

38. In general, who do you think has a more difficult life: girls or boys? Why?

EDUCATION

39. Have you ever attended school?*

40. What is the highest level of school you have attended?*

41. What is the highest grade you have completed at that level?*

42. Are you still studying?
   If no:
   A. For what reason did you stop studying?

43. Do you feel comfortable to read/write a letter in Kiswahili?

44. Do you feel comfortable to read/write a letter in English?

45. Can you do basic mathematics; for example, calculate your change when you buy something in the market? in the market?

46. (If still studying) Do you live somewhere different during school?
   If yes or no:
   A. Do you live with other students?
   B. What about your living conditions make it easy to study? What makes it difficult?
   If yes only:
   C. What type of house do you stay in while at school, tree and thatch, tree and sheet metal, or brick and sheet metal?
   D. How many people live there? How many are elderly? Adults? Adolescents?
   Children?
   E. What type of food do you depend on as your staple food?
   F. Where do you get water?
   G. What type of light do you depend on at home?
   H. Do you have access to a cell phone? If yes, from whom?
47. Who is putting you through school? Who pays school fees? What about food while you are in school? If you need money for books or pens, who do you go to?

48. In general, who do you think has a more difficult life: students or villagers? Why?

49. Among students, who has a more difficult living situation, boys or girls? Why?

50. How is the relationship between the students and the villagers?

51. In general, can boys and girls cooperate as friends?
   A. Is there a difference between students and villagers on this issue?

MARRIAGE:

52. In general, in your community, what is the typical age of marriage for boys? And for girls?

53. In general, in your community, is it common for girls to have children before they are married? And for boys?

54. Are you currently married, or living with a man/woman as if you are married?*
   If yes:
   A. How long have you been married?*
   B. How old were you when you were married?*
   C. How did you meet your spouse?
   D. Are you or your spouse married to more than one person?*
   E. Does your spouse live at home?*
   F. In our relationship with your husband/wife, who is in charge of providing economically for the household?*
   G. In your relationship with your husband/wife, who is in charge of making any major decisions regarding the household?*

55. Does your spouse do work to get money?*
   If yes
   A. What type of work does he/she do?*
   B. Does he/she work for a family member, someone else, or is he/she self-employed?*
   C. How often does he/she work?*
   D. How is he/she paid for his work? (daily, hourly, by unit produced, in cash, barter)*
   E. How much money does he/she earn in an average month?
   F. Does he/she keep the money he/she earns, or does he/she share it with you?*
   G. How long has he/she been doing this work?*
56. Have you ever been married or lived with a man/woman as if you are married?
   If yes:
   A. How many times have you been married?
   B. (If living together but unmarried) Why have you not married?
For each marriage/cohabitation:
   C. How old were you when you were married?
   D. How did you meet your spouse(s)?
   E. For how long did the marriage(s) last?
   F. (If divorced) Why did the marriage(s) end?
   G. In our relationship with your husband/wife, who was in charge of providing
      economically for the household?
   H. In your relationship with your husband/wife, who was in charge of making any
      major decisions regarding the household?

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBEARING:

57. In general, in your community, what is the average number of children for one
    family?
    A. How many children is average for a woman?
    B. How many children is average for a man?

58. Have you ever given birth/fathered a child?*
   If yes:
   A. How many children have you given birth to?"

59. (If he/she has children) For each child you have given birth to (or fathered):
    A. Is it a boy or a girl?*
    B. In which year was the child born? *
    C. Is the child still alive? If no, how old was he/she at death?*
    D. Does the child live with you? If no, where does the child live*
    E. Where you married to the mother/father of the child when he/she was born?
    F. Who provides the primary economic support for the child?

60. Are you currently pregnant?*
   If yes:
   A. How many months pregnant are you?*
   B. Did you want to get pregnant at this time?*

61. Have you ever had a pregnancy that was miscarried, aborted, or ended in stillbirth?*
   If yes:
   A. How many times has this happened?*
   B. In what month/year did this happen (for each occurrence)?*
C. How many months pregnant were you when this happened (for each occurrence)?*

62. How many children would you like to have yourself?

END INTERVIEW ONE

BEGIN INTERVIEW TWO

MEDIA

63. Do you listen to the news?
   If yes:
   A. How do you access the news? (radio, TV, at home or neighbor)
   B. How many days per week do you listen?

64. Do you watch television?*
   If yes:
   A. How often do you watch television: almost every day, at least once a week, less than once a week, or not at all?*
   B. What type of program do you watch most often?
   C. Where do you watch TV?
   D. Do you pay an entrance fee to watch? How much?

65. Do you listen to music?
   If yes:
   A. What type of music do you like?
   B. Who are your favorite artists?
   C. What do they sing about?

66. Do you go to disco?
   If yes:
   A. How many times per month?
   B. Where do you go?
   C. Do you pay an entrance fee?

67. Do you read magazines or newspapers?
   If yes:
   A. What types of magazines or newspapers do you like to read?
   B. Where do you get them?
   C. Do you pay for them or borrow them?

ADOLESCENT ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT ISSUES
68. In general, in your community, what type of work do adolescent boys do to get money? What do girls do?

69. At what age are boys expected to begin to depend on themselves (economically)? What about girls?
   A. Are the expectations different for student compared to villagers (i.e. non-students)?

70. Do you do any work at any point in the year to get money?*
   If yes
   A. What type of work do you do?*
   B. Do you work for a family member, someone else, or are you self-employed?*
   C. How often do you work?*
   D. How are you paid for your work? (daily, hourly, by unit produced, in cash, barter)*
   E. How much money do you earn in an average month?
   F. Do you keep the money you earn? If not, who do you give it to?*
   G. How long have you been doing this work?

YOUTH MOBILITY

71. In general, in your community, do more adolescent boys stay at home or move elsewhere to work/live in adulthood? What about girls?

72. Have you ever lived somewhere else besides where you were born and where you live now?
   If yes, for each place lived:
   A. Where?
   B. For how long?
   C. Why did you live there?

73. In the last 12 months, have you ever slept away from home?*
   If yes:
   A. How many times?*

74. In the last 12 months, have you been away from your home or community for more than one month at a time?*
   If yes:
   A. On how many separate occasions?*

75. In general, in your opinion, are the lives of adolescents in your community good or bad? Why?
SOURCES OF SUPPORT

76. If there anyone else that you depend on regularly for support besides your birth parents?
   If yes:
   A. What is your relationship to this person?
   B. What type of work does this person do?
   C. What type of support does he/she provide for you?

77. Who buys your clothes?

78. If you have a problem and need money, who can you go to for help?

79. If you have a problem and need to discuss it with someone and get advice, who can you go to?

80. Do you have friends who are outside of your extended family?

PUBERTY

81. How old were you when you reached puberty?

82. How did you know you had reached puberty? What signs did you see?

83. Did you know about puberty before it happened to you?
   If yes:
   A. How did you learn about it? Who explained it to you?
   B. What did they tell you?
   C. How old were you when you learned about puberty

84. How did you feel when you saw the signs of puberty?

85. Who did you talk to when you saw the signs of puberty?

86. Can you talk to your mother if you have questions about puberty? Father? Brother? Sister? Other family member? Friend? Teacher?

INITIATION RITUALS

87. What type of initiation rituals are practiced in your community for girls? What about for boys?

88. Does everyone in your community go through that ritual?

89. How do you know when a boy is old enough to be initiated? What about a girl?
90. Did you go through unyago, jando or sunnah?
   If unyago:
      A. Did you go through chivelele or mkomango?

91. Were you circumcised as part of your initiation?*
   If yes:
      A. Where were you circumcised? (e.g. home, hospital, forest)
      B. How long did it take for you to heal after the circumcision?
      C. (For girls) Did they remove any parts of your genitals during the circumcision?
         Did they sew any parts?*

92. How old were you when you were initiated?*

93. Who paid for your initiation?

94. Where did you go for your initiation?

95. How long was the initiation period?

96. How many other initiates were there with you?

97. How many of your fellow initiates were family members?

98. Could you explain, as best you remember, what happened from the first day to the last?

99. What lessons did you learn?
   A. Did you learn mizimu? Can you give an example?
   B. Did you learn about puberty? What did you learn?
   C. Did you learn about respect for elders? What did you learn?
   D. Did you learn about sexual relationships? What did you learn?

100. Did they punish you during your initiation? How did they punish you?

101. What happened in the end of the initiation period?
   A. What type of final ngoma did you do?
   B. What type of final celebration did you do?
   C. What presents were you given?

102. After your initiation, did you feel different than before your initiation?

103. Overall, do you see initiation at a good thing or a bad thing? Why?*
104. Will you initiate your own children?*
   If yes:
   A. The same way you were initiated or a different way?

END INTERVIEW TWO

BEING INTERVIEW THREE

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS: GENERAL

105. In general, in your community, what age do boys start to have sexual relationships? Girls?
   A. From your perspective, what proportion of boys/girls is sexually active by that age (few, some, most, all)?

106. In general, why do boys begin to have sexual relationships? What motivates them? What about for girls?

107. How do sexual relationships start?
   A. Who approaches whom?
   B. What are the appropriate ways to express sexual interest in another person?

108. How do boyfriend and girlfriend spend time together?
   A. How often do they spend time alone?
   B. How do they communicate/arrange to meet?
   C. Where do they meet?
   D. When they meet, what do they do?

109. Do a boyfriend and girlfriend give each other gifts?
   A. Who gives the gifts? The boy, the girl, or both?
   B. What types of gifts do they give each other?
   C. Why do they give each other gifts?
   D. How often do they give each other gifts?

110. If a girl likes a boy, can she tell him?
    If yes:
    A. How is she viewed by the community if she does this?
    If no:
    B. Why can’t she tell him?

111. If a boy likes a girl, can the girl refuse him?
    If yes:
A. Even if he continues to pursue her for a long time?
If no:
B. Why can’t she refuse him?

112. When a boyfriend and girlfriend split up, how is their relationship? Can they continue to get along?

113. If the parents of a boy adolescent find out that he has a girlfriend, what do they do? What about the parents of a girl?

114. If a boy wants to abstain from sex until marriage, is it possible? What about for girls?
If yes:
A. What strategies does he/she use to abstain?

NORMS OF ATTRACTIVENESS

115. What type of body shape in girls do boys find most attractive?
   A. What about skin color?
   B. Height?
   C. Other characteristics?

116. What type of body shape in boys do girls find most attractive?
   A. What about skin color?
   B. Height?
   C. Other characteristics?

MULTIPLE PARTNERSHIPS

117. In general, in your community, is it normal for a boy to have a relationship with more than one girlfriend at one time?
A. What about for girls?
B. Do boys or girls have multiple partners more often?
C. Why do you think boys have multiple partners?
D. Are the reasons different for girls?
E. What are the benefits for a boy to have multiple partners? What are the risks?
F. What are the benefits for a girl to have multiple partners? What are the risks?

118. If a boy has two girlfriends and the girls find out that he has another partner, what do they do?
119. If a girl has two boyfriends and the boys find out that she has another partner, what do they do?

120. Will boys compete over a girl? What ways do they use to compete?

121. Will girls compete over a boy? What ways do they use to compete?

122. If a boy is not sexually satisfied with his partner, can he tell her? Can a girl tell her partner?
   If no:
   A. What does he/she do if he is not satisfied?

STUDENTS AND SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

123. What are the benefits to having a boyfriend who studies? What are the negative consequences?

124. What are the benefits to having a girlfriend who studies? What are the negative consequences?

125. What are the benefits to having a boyfriend who is a villager? What are the negative consequences?

126. What are the benefits to having a girlfriend who is a villager? What are the negative consequences?

127. Are boys more attracted to the students or the villagers? Why

128. Are girls more attracted to the students or the villagers? Why

129. What happens to a girl if she gets pregnant while she is in school? What happens to a boy?

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

130. In general, in your community, are STD’s common? Do you hear about them a lot?
   If yes:
   A. Which ones have you heard about?

131. In your community, if someone gets an STD, where can they get treatment?

132. In your community, is there any way to protect yourself against STDs?
133. If there a difference in the rate of STD infection among students compared to villagers?

POTENTIAL INFLUENCES ON SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

134. If a boy wants to learn how to sexually please his partner, how does he learn those things? What about girls?

135. Do you think that music affects adolescents’ sexual relationships? How?

136. Do you think that disco affects adolescents’ sexual relationships? How?

137. Have you heard about pornography being watched in your community? If yes:
   A. What devices do they use to watch it?
   B. Where do they watch it?
   C. Who is allowed to watch?
   D. What type of pornography is it, European (white) or African?
   E. Have you ever seen pornography? If yes, what did you think about it?
   F. Do you think that pornography affects adolescents’ sexual relationships? How?

138. Do you think that unyago affects adolescents’ sexual relationships? How?

139. Do you think that jando affects adolescents’ sexual relationships? How?

PRE-MARITAL PREGNANCY

140. In general, in your community, if a girl gets pregnant before she is married, what does she do?

141. In general, in your community, if a boy impregnates a girl before marriage, what does he do?

142. If a girl becomes pregnant before marriage, what is the relationship like between her family and the father of her child?

BIRTH CONTROL AND FAMILY PLANNING

143. In general, in your community, are birth control methods available? If yes:
   A. What kinds of methods are available?
   B. Where can you obtain birth control?
   C. How much do they cost?
D. Which type of birth control is most popular among adolescents?
G. Whose responsibility is it to prevent pregnancy, the boy or the girl?
H. How do religious leaders in your community view birth control use?

144. Have you ever heard of the following birth control methods (if not already mentioned):*
A. Female sterilization*
B. Male sterilization*
C. Injectables*
D. Implants*
E. IUD*
F. Pills*
G. Condoms*
H. Female condoms*
I. Diaphragm*
J. Spermicidal foam/jelly*
K. Lactational Amenorrhea Method*
L. Rhythm method*
N. Withdrawal*
M. Emergency contraception*

145. In general, in your community, are traditional birth control methods available?
If yes:
A. What kinds of methods are available?
B. How are they obtained?
C. How much do they cost?

146. In general, in your community, is it common for girls to have abortions?
If yes:
A. What type of birth control method do they use?
B. What circumstances might cause a girl to choose to have an abortion?

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS: INDIVIDUAL

147. Have you ever had a sexual intercourse?*
If yes:
A. How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time?*
B. How did this relationship start?
C. The first time you had sexual intercourse, would you say it was because you wanted to, or because you were forced to against your will?*
D. If you wanted to, why were you attracted to your partner?
E. Did you consider this partner to be a boyfriend/girlfriend?
F. If so, what was day to day life like with this partner?
G. Was this partner older or younger than you? By how many years?
H. Are you still in a relationship with this partner? If no, why not?
I. How long did this relationship last?

148. How many sexual partners have you had in your lifetime?
   A. Repeat Question 131 A through F for each sexual relationship.
   B. How many of these sexual partners would you consider to be your boyfriend/girlfriend?

149. In the last 12 months, how many sexual partners have you had?*

150. When was the last time you had sexual intercourse?*
   A. Did you use a condom on this occasion?*

151. Has there ever been a long period in your life when you did not have a boyfriend/girlfriend?
   If yes:
      A. How long was this period?
      B. Why didn’t you have a boyfriend/girlfriend during this period?

152. Have you ever had more than one boyfriend/girlfriend at one time?
   If yes:
      A. How many relationships have you maintained at one time?
      B. What benefit did you receive from having multiple partners?
      C. Did you experience any negative consequences from having multiple partners?

153. Why type of girls/boys are you attracted to?
   A. What personality characteristics do you like in a boyfriend/girlfriend?
   B. What body shape do you like in a boyfriend/girlfriend?
   C. What skin color do you like in a boyfriend/girlfriend?

154. Who can you talk to about your sexual relationships?

155. If you are not sexually satisfied with your boyfriend/girlfriend, can you tell them?
   If no:
      A. What do you do if you are unsatisfied?

156. In general, do you prefer a boyfriend/girlfriend who is older, younger, or the same age as you?
   If older or younger:
A. How many years of difference in age?
B. Why do you like your partner to be older/younger than you?

157. Have you ever had an STD?*
   If yes:
   A. What type of STD?*
   B. How old were you when you were infected?
   C. How did you know you were sick? What symptoms did you experience?*
   D. Did you seek treatment? Where? How much did it cost?*
   E. How long did it take to recover?

158. Are you currently using any method of birth control?*
   A. Which type have you used?*
   B. Since what month/year have you been using this method?*
   C. Where did you get it?*
   D. How much did it cost?
   E. Why did you like using this type of birth control? Why did you dislike it?

159. Have you ever used any other birth control method?*
   If yes:
   A. Which type did you used?*
   B. Where did you get it?*
   C. How much did it cost?
   D. How long did you use this method without stopping?
   E. Why did you like using this type of birth control? Why did you dislike it?
   F. Does your sexual partner know that you are using birth control?*

   If no:
   G. Why don’t you use birth control?

160. In general, in your opinion how good or bad are the sexual relationships among adolescents in your community? Why?

END INTERVIEW THREE-----------------------------------------------------------------------
Appendix C: Ritual Leaders Interview Questions

1. How do you know when a girl/boy is ready for unyago/jando?
2. Why do girls/boys go through unyago/jando?
3. What is the primary goal of unyago/jando?
4. What are the most important things a girl/boy is expected to learn in unyago/jando?
5. Is every unyago/jando you conduct the same? If not, how and why does it vary?
6. How long have you been doing the work of a ritual leader?
7. How did you learn to do this work?
8. How often do you do this work?
9. How much are you paid for this work?
10. During the time you have been working as a ritual leader, do you feel that unyago/jando has changed? If so, how do you feel it has changed? And why do you think it has changed?

Follow with questions regarding clarification of ritual observations.
Appendix D: Barabara Village Survey Questions

1) What type of house do you live in? (mud or brick walls, metal or grass roof)

2) How many people live in the household?
   a) How many elders?
   b) How many adults?
   c) How many youth?
   d) How many children?

3) Is there a radio in the home?

4) Is there a bike or motorbike in the home?

5) What type of light is used at night?

6) How many times do you eat per day?

7) What is the staple food consumed in the household?

8) Were the clothes worn in the household bought within the last year?

9) How many people in the household work?
   a) What type of work do they do?

10) What level of education has been attained by each household member?

11) What religion is practiced in the household?

12) What tribe do the members of the household identify with, and from what area does this tribe come from?

13) What type of male initiation ceremony is practiced, and what lessons are taught in this ceremony?

14) What type of female initiation ceremony is practiced, and what lessons are taught in this ceremony?

15) What is the health status of the household members in general?
Appendix E: Notes on Translation and Quotations

Notes on Translation

1. Assistance in translations from Kimakonde was provided by the three research assistants involved in this project. Translation from Kiswahili was primarily done by myself, though on occasion clarification was also provided by the research assistants.

2. There is no gendered third person subject in Kiswahili (i.e. there is no he/she or him/her, only a non-gendered third-person subject “yeye”). In quoting participants, a gendered pronoun (either he or she) was used if context indicated a gender. If not, the hybrid he/she was used.

3. In Kiswahili, there is no linguistic distinction made between “like” and “love.” The same verb, kupenda is used in both cases. Here it has been translated as “love,” in the context of sexual relationships to indicate an emotion beyond platonic friendship. However, this is not intended to necessarily imply a deep level of emotional attachment or connection as might be implied in the usual English use of the word “love.”

Notes on Direct Quotations

1. Quotations that exceed three lines of text are presented in the form of a block quote. All quotations shorter than three sentences are incorporated into the text.

2. An ellipsis is used in quotes and transcripts to indicate a pause in speech, an unfinished thought, or, at the end of a sentence, trailing off into silence.
Appendix F: Maps of the Research Site

Map One: Tanzania on the African Continent

Map Two: Tanzania Regional Subdivisions

1 - Dar es Salaam
2 - Pemba North
3 - Pemba South
4 - Zanzibar Central/South
5 - Zanzibar North
6 - Zanzibar Urban/West
Map Three: Districts within the Mtwara Region

Figure Four: Map of Mtwara Rural District
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