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Pare women and the Mbiru tax protest in Tanzania, 1943–1947: A study of women, politics, and development

Dorsey, Nancy Ruth, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1994
PARE WOMEN AND THE MBIRU TAX PROTEST IN TANZANIA, 1943-1947:  
A STUDY OF WOMEN, POLITICS, AND DEVELOPMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
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This study focuses on retrospective narrative accounts of Pare women’s participation in a tax protest (called Mbiru after the tax involved) that occurred in the mid-1940s in northeastern Tanganyika. The women’s role in the protest had not previously been discussed in any detail in the written historical record, and one goal of this study was to begin to address both what happened and why these events have not been discussed more widely.

This ethnographic study of the protest sought to answer several thesis questions. What was the nature of the political power that Pare women possessed in the 1940s and how was it expressed? If Pare women had a certain kind of power at that time, do contemporary Pare women continue to have similar power? If there are differences about how this power is available to women in contemporary life or in the form it takes, do these differences tell us anything about how
socioeconomic change has affected Pare women's lives from the 1940s to the present? The main research goal was to relate the research findings to women and development issues.

This study found that rules of discourse that govern how people talk about this instance of women's militant behavior have kept information about women's part in Mbiru under wraps. Although the Pare state that women are passive, we learned that indeed the women did assert their rights and in very real terms changed the course of events. Pare women used a powerful threatening/cursing sequence that some contemporary women continue to use in certain situations, for example when women see their interests in conflict with those of men.

In order for development specialists to reach women with development more successfully—the record until now is dismal—they must learn more about women's expressive culture and how women are situated in society. Learning about discourse patterns and social organization in a particular community, as in this study, is an important first step in this effort.
To Jim, Allison, Jay, and Winni;

with gratitude and love
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interest and insightful comments. I cannot overstate here the importance of Kimambo's extensive work on the Pare. By collecting oral histories and integrating them with written records, he has provided a baseline of information to be used by the ongoing line of scholars studying the Pare. Also, he has provided future generations of the Pare with the documented record of their roots. Dr. H.M. Mlawa, Director of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and his staff aided this endeavor. I benefitted from discussion of women's issues with Rose Shayo and Bertha Koda who served as faculty consultants from IDS, and from interacting with the women of WSG (Women's Study Group) and WRDP (Women's Research and Documentation Project) at the University. Two sociology professors, both Pare themselves, Dr. C.K. Omari and Dr. Abdi Mvungi, provided important information on Pare traditions and social structures.

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African Area Studies
Women in Development
Folklore
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the mid-1940s the Pare of northeastern Tanganyika mobilized to protest a tax called mbiru* that had been introduced recently by the British colonial government. The most dramatic events of the protest occurred early in 1945. In a two-to three-day period in early January, thousands of Pare men left their homes to assemble at the district headquarters in Same where they were determined to stay until the tax was abolished. Meanwhile, those people who remained in the villages—predominantly women—also engaged in protest activities. The second point of high drama occurred near the end of February. In the village of Usangi more than 500 women

*Mbiru is a word that originally referred to tribute paid in pre-colonial times to chiefs in Ugweno, North Pare (Kimambo 1991:89). The reinvention of this old form of taxation in the 1940s by the British colonial government led to the protest that is the subject of this study. The term mbiru was used in two ways by people who discussed the tax protest with us. It was used to refer to the tax itself. It was also used in reference to the entire historical episode between 1943 and 1947, to the chain of events related to the introduction of the tax and the protest that ensued. To avoid confusion, I will use the term Mbiru in its capitalized form to refer to the historical episode. A major portion of this dissertation concerns people’s stories about Mbiru. It is also possible to refer to the story of Mbiru as the collective Pare memory of the protest. Some people are quoted talking about the tax, mbiru, and in those cases, the word will be emphasized (underlined) and will not be capitalized.
mobbed and stoned the British District Commissioner (DC) until he retreated from the village. In addition, the women harassed the local chief for more than two days, non-stop. When the angry women confronted two other Pare chiefs who were in Usangi at the time, the chiefs fled from the village under duress. Convinced by the violence of the women's actions that matters were out of control, the colonial government quickly moved the King's African Rifles into the district to restore order. From that time, the representatives of the British government began to listen to the protest leaders (Pare men) with new seriousness. The subsequent dialogue between government officials and dissenters brought results; the tax under dispute was abandoned. The conclusion seems unmistakable. The women's actions in Usangi tipped the political balance in favor of the Pare uprising and changed the course of historical events (Kimambo 1971:20).” At a time when the empowerment of women is a global initiative, what can be learned from the story of these Pare women who acted boldly and decisively, changing the balance of power in what had become a political stand-off?

My work on this case of African women's political power serves as an appropriate conclusion to my interdisciplinary study. There are many versions of the Mbiru story, each one constituting someone's representation of what happened. Since some familiarity with protest events is important from the beginning, it is necessary for me to describe the protest in some detail. I acknowledge that this version of events is mine which carries its own point of view.
doctoral program in African Studies, Women-in-Development and Folklore. This micro-study fits into the broad mainstream of feminist research that looks deeply at social structures, processes and practices in order to gain a better understanding of "women's condition." It is also both an outgrowth from, and a contribution to, the large volume of research conducted in the last quarter century on African women, a subject currently receiving a good deal of attention by African and Western women scholars (Hay and Stichter 1984).

Until about 1960, representations of African women in literature published in the West were made from male perspectives, as male researchers obtained most of their information about women's lives from male informants in Africa. In this material, women's relationships with men were highlighted, e.g., in marriage and in the family. The first book that looked at the totality of women's experience and portrayed women as agents of change within their own societies was Women of Tropical Africa published in 1960. This collection of articles by female anthropologists set the stage for a wealth of new material that chronicled every aspect of African women's lives, such as, economic activity (Boserup 1970; Clark 1984; Nelson 1981; Robertson 1984), political activity (Ifeka-Moller 1975; Okonjo 1976), women's associations (Caplan and Bujra 1978; Stamp 1986; Strobel 1979; Udvardy 1988; Wipper 1975, 1975-6), women as agricultural producers (Berry 1986; Caplan 1982; Guyer 1986), women and
socioeconomic change (Davison 1989; Etienne and Leacock 1980; Hafkin and Bay 1976; Kershaw 1975-6; Okeyo 1980; Rogers 1980; Sacks 1982; Schuster 1979), women and class (Robertson and Berger 1986; Parpart 1986), women and the law (Hay and Wright 1982), and many others. An expansion of university programs on Africa in Europe, in the United States, and in Africa increased the demand for scholarly material on African subjects, and soon scholars from these programs were themselves contributing to the body of literature available. Materials on African women were also being used at universities in new Women’s Studies Departments and Women-in-Development programs (Hafkin and Bay 1976).

This growing body of literature more accurately portrays "women’s condition" in Africa. However, earlier misrepresentations of African women persist and continue to have an impact on development projects targeted for this group. Many in the development field seem to be unaware of the new feminist literature in which cultural resources and the power of local non-Western women’s groups are recognized (for work that focuses on African women empowering themselves through the creative use of the resources available to them see Amadiume 1987; Bujra 1977; Constantinides 1978; Okonjo 1976; Robertson 1984; Schuster 1983; Spindel 1989; and Stamp 1986, among many others). My research does not concentrate on the negative aspects of women’s lives, although it is hard to quarrel with the view that life for many African women (as for
many Western women) is full of difficulties and disadvantages. My research studies rather the connection between women's folklore and women's power as a way to present women more in their own terms.

Mbiru as an instance of female militancy is connected in two interesting ways with the question of the empowerment of African women. The first connection was pointed out by Jean O'Barr, who studied political structures in Pare District in the late 1960s, and the second is found in accounts of African women's protests like the Igbo women's war in Nigeria in the 1920s. O'Barr related the high level of political activism of Usangi women at that time to the legacy of women's political involvement in Mbiru. She observed that women in Usangi, the first Pare location in her study, held a considerable number of positions as balozi (ten-house cell leaders), whereas there were no women balozi in Mbaga, the second Pare community she studied. The ten-house cell system was established by TANU (Tanganyika African National Union), Tanzania's single political party, in the early 1960s shortly after independence. Cells that functioned as part of the local government system were political structures of both the government and the party. A leader of a cell was chosen by the people living in the ten-house unit (J.O'Barr 1971:6-7).

Today, many people in Usangi recall the fact that Usangi women participated as political activists in a crucial episode and this recollection has an impact at the present time. Usangi people tend to use the women's mobilization as a symbol of female political ability. Both men and women point to it
with a sense of pride and accomplishment. They say women helped men win one of the earliest political struggles known in the district and that Usangi women could be effectively mobilized again (J.O'Barr 1971:102).

O'Barr sought a more comprehensive explanation for the different levels of women's political involvement in the two villages. She looked at a number of variables, i.e., age, religious affiliation, educational level, occupation, and kin/clan ties. She found only one causal relationship, beside the legacy of Mbiru, to explain the relatively large number of women cell leaders in Usangi. She found that a pattern of outward male migration, a contemporary rite de passage for young men, was most pronounced in Usangi. A large number of young men from Usangi left home to earn wages and often remained away from the village for many years. In contrast, a much smaller number of men from Mbaga went out to seek employment for wages in this way.

In Mbaga, not only do women lack a history of political activism but they also lack the impetus to assume political roles which results when large numbers of men are away (J.O'Barr 1971:103,106).

O'Barr concludes her study with the prediction that, for these two reasons, Usangi women will continue to be active in local politics.

The second connection of the Pare women's protest to the question of women's empowerment places this event within a wider African context. There are similar cases of women's militancy from across the continent, the most well-known being the Igbo Women's War in Nigeria. The parallels between Mbiru
and these other occurrences are intriguing. In every case, African women used forms of protest that included non-ordinary behavior; mobilized quickly and acted decisively; challenged government officials—European and African; responded to, and followed, strong women leaders; and surprised the authorities with their aggressive actions (S. Ardener 1975; Busia 1989-90; Diduk 1989; Ifeka-Moller 1975; Lawri 1990; Leith-Ross 1939; Mba 1982; J.O'Barr 1975-6; Ritzenthaler 1960; Rogers 1980; Van Allen 1972, 1974; Wipper 1982, 1989). Some of these incidents from other parts of Africa will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The Mbiru story caught my attention for one additional reason. During our first long stay in Tanzania (1983-85), my husband Jim and I were informally adopted by an extended Pare family who served as our primary support group at that time. Three visits to Pare District between 1980 and 1985 had given me my first impressions of the Pare people and their mountain environment. Not only my interest in women's political activism, but my good experience in "mahali pazuri" (Kiswahili: a pleasant place) and a viable support network brought me to this study. This support group included Dr. Isaria N. Kimambo who, though not Pare himself (he is Chagga), has written extensively on Pare history. His short monograph on Mbiru provided me with the first information I had on the subject. In a letter about my proposed research, Kimambo acknowledged, "the women's side of the story has not been fully investigated," and he supported this new inquiry.
The two sources of information about Mbiru that first came to my attention presented somewhat different views on the women's part in the protest. Both O'Barr and Kimambo described the episode in Usangi in which women attacked the DC and the chiefs. In addition O'Barr, but not Kimambo, wrote about an earlier incident in which women from Usangi marched on district headquarters at Same where the Pare men were camped. According to O'Barr, the women challenged the DC to "impregnate them if he refused to effect a settlement and allow their men to return to their homes..." (1975:24). In addition, whereas Kimambo stated that the Pare men were embarrassed by the women's militancy, O'Barr has used the Usangi women as a proud centerpiece in her writings on the political activism of African women. Should these differences in perspective be understood strictly on the basis of the writer being either male or female or is there something more to understand? As part of my research I sought an answer to this question. It is fortunate that a number of the women and men who participated in the protest were still available and able to give their personal accounts of the events.

Research Goals

This inquiry began with the goal of doing an in-depth study of the Mbiru story. I was seeking an understanding of the role this story has played in the people's construction of their own reality, with an eye to connecting the data about this particular event with larger issues in the study of women
and development. I hypothesized that learning how the story of Mbiru was told within the community and how Mbiru events continued to hold meaning for people would reveal the texture of community values and relationships. My thesis questions are these: assuming that the Mbiru story reveals that Pare women had a particular kind of power in the 1940s, what can we learn about the nature and the expression of that power? If indeed Pare women had a certain kind of power at that time, do contemporary Pare women continue to have a similar power? If there are differences about how this power is available or not available to women in contemporary life or in the form it takes, do these differences tell us anything about how socioeconomic change has affected Pare women's lives from the 1940s to the present? Is our understanding of the Pare women's political role enlarged if we place the case of Mbiru within a wider African context by looking at the studies of African women's militancy from other parts of the continent? My main thesis is that by studying the Mbiru story in this way, in the context of colonialism/modernization/development, information about sociocultural structures and practices will emerge that will aid development specialists in their efforts to reach women with development.

Statement of the Research Problem

Most development efforts do not reach rural African women, many of whom remain at the bottom of the economic ladder. In some cases, development programs have even
adversely affected the quality of women's lives without supplying them any benefits. Most development planners, national and local officials, and extension workers are educated urban men and women (African or non-African) whose lives and interests are very different from those of village women. In Africa for the last half century or so ideas of progress, security and the future have been associated with what is often called the formal sector, with urbanization, industrialization, and advanced technology. In consequence most resources have been invested in that sector, not in rural development or people (Cohen and Odhiambo 1989:74). Because men are more associated with wage labor and the "modern" sector, resources have flowed toward men and away from women (Robertson 1988:442; Staudt 1987B). Bujra describes women's resistance to development projects in Tanzania as a response to policies that "intensified women's work load without giving them...greater control over the means of production or the rewards from production." She also notes "the failure of the programme to 'openly confront oppressive sexual relations in peasant families and communities'" (1990:55).

Because women in Africa produce approximately 70% of the continent's food, their success and well-being should be one of the continent's major concerns. This contradiction—that Africa is dependent on its women for most of its food production and that development benefits usually do not reach the women—is a central concern in current Women-in-
Development (WID) scholarship on Africa. Some of the issues that continue to challenge development planners are that women are invisible; people speak for women, to women and about women; people do not listen to women; men expect, and are expected, to be in control and to do the important things (Swantz 1987; Udvardy 1988).

There is growing evidence that socioeconomic change—change, which, in one view, is termed "modernization"—does not benefit women and men equally. Women are often disadvantaged by such change and few women receive the benefits from such change that men receive. It is my premise that a folkloristic perspective can contribute to the current debate on this issue. The linkage between development issues and folklore hinges on the question of tradition, which is a major concern of folklore studies and a central, critical issue for development theorists. In much of the development arena, especially regarding modernization theory, development and modernization have often been viewed as much the same process. Conversely, underdevelopment, that is, the continued reproduction of poverty and inequality and political and economic dependency on western capital, has been seen as the result of out-dated, "traditional" social structures and practices. In this model, development, i.e., "modernization," and "traditional" ways of life are generally regarded as opposites, or at least as opposite ends of a continuum, in which development is seen as equivalent to progressive change.
and tradition is equated with stasis. Although modernization theory has been substantially discredited since the 1970s, it has dominated development thinking in the United States (Wilber 1988:7) due to its promotion of the extension of capitalism. This theory continues in subtle ways to influence development thinking and programs.

In contrast, many folklorists and cultural anthropologists, among others, see tradition versus modernity as a modern (and false) dichotomy. In folklore studies, change and continuity are recognized as elements of tradition. People may inherit a body of customs and beliefs; but they are constantly drawing upon, inventing and reinventing their cultural resources to suit changing situations and agendas (Waldman 1986; Wilson 1982). I will use "tradition" to refer to a situation in which people draw on cultural resources with an appeal to sentiments of continuity with, for example, particular social hierarchical relationships or particular value systems. Based on this definition of terms, it is important to view what people consider traditional practices or newly adopted practices as interpretive rather than descriptive (Handler and Linnekin 1984:273).

The reference to "people" here includes anyone who makes a claim about tradition in this way, whether I am the one making the claim, or British colonial administrators during Mbiru, or the Pare. When one is thinking about how people use tradition, it is a mistake to think of British administrators,
the Pare, or any group of people, as homogeneous. For example, the Pare are individuals—young, old, male, female, Western-educated, nonliterate, and so on—who make individual and collective claims about tradition throughout their lives, and it is misleading to generalize about the relationship between "the Pare"—groups or individuals—and tradition. Instead, for precise analysis, each individual scenario must be carefully described and examined.

As I discovered in this study, the various, and sometimes contradictory, claims that people make about tradition and its postulated opposite, modernity, constitute one exciting aspect of folklore research (Stahl 1977B:9). Folklorists are interested in the contradictions that people construct and the ways in which they legitimize them. In the case of the Pare, one could argue that there were contradictions involved in the resources people chose to use during Mbiru. Some of the resources people used were considered part of the imported colonial system and other resources were recognized as part of Pare culture at that time. In Chapter 3 we will see how the participants in Mbiru used different resources available to them in support of their positions in the political dispute. We might expect that the Pare who were most involved in the colonial system would avoid making claims about Pare tradition and would support colonial policy. This was not the case. In fact, those Pare who were in the forefront of the change brought by colonialism had no hesitation in using what they
considered a Pare tradition (a taboo against counting one's possessions) as an excuse to resist a colonial policy. For their part, Pare women saw no contradiction in choosing as their leaders literate women who could speak Kiswahili, the lingua franca for the colonial territory, and at the same time using cultural practices that were in conflict with the new sociopolitical forces in the community: Islam, Christianity, and Western-style education. (Perhaps the fact that some women were embarrassed when they reflected on their actions later indicates that some women were aware of a contradiction between the cultural resources they had used and their new roles in a changing society.) Chapter 5 raises questions about why contemporary women in many African countries continue to use customary cultural practices to make political statements at a time when men rely on the newly created institutions based on Western models.

It is critical that those interested in development understand how perceptions about tradition (and modernity) influence what goes on in development arenas at every level. Since development involves the introduction of new sociocultural structures and practices, attitudes about tradition and modernity held by those making the decisions about which structures and practices are "improved" or "appropriate" will influence how programs are designed. To emphasize the complexity of this point, here are three examples from Tanzania of how appeals to "tradition" have
legitimized, in these cases, male agendas. These examples are especially interesting because of the contradictions involved that reveal the political nature of claims about gender roles, which, rather than being biologically determined as some believe, are a negotiated reality.

An American aid worker working in Tanzania described a recent project in which gasoline-powered rotary tillers were supplied to village farmers. Villagers quickly discovered that these new mechanical devices were well suited to work that was normally done by women. Because with colonial influence work with machines has been viewed as the exclusive province of men, men were soon engaged in work that had previously been done laboriously with a long-handled hoe (Kiswahili: jembe), only by women. There were two separate and contradictory claims about tradition here. First, this work had been viewed (by both men and women) as work that women did, as work not appropriate for men. Secondly, men, and rarely women, had been associated with machinery in any situation in which machines had been introduced. The change in attitudes, in this case, about the division of labor regarding this particular work carried with it a disadvantage for women that might not be obvious at first glance. Although it is hard to imagine that the women would have objected to having less work to do, they were being shut out of the opportunity to learn and use the improved technology.
In the second example, an interesting contradiction in Tanzanian society reveals the ideological nature of claims of domesticity (Bujra 1992). In Tanzania, since colonial times, a large majority of those formally employed as servants have been men. The work done by male servants at their jobs, e.g., cleaning and cooking, washing and ironing, even childcare, was gender-stereotyped among Africans themselves as "women's work" and was performed at home by girls and women (although some men regularly washed and ironed their own clothes and some men were involved in certain aspects of childcare). As in the first example, there are two conflicting appeals to tradition here concerning established gender roles. The claim that, based on tradition, men were the ones to engage in wage labor legitimized the performance by men of work that, according to tradition, was done only by females. In this instance, men performed work for wages but they did not do the same kind of work at home for which no one was paid. In both this case and the first one, men managed to claim precedence over women in work assignments. There were clearly benefits for the men involved, in the first example, the development of a new technical skill which might lead to subsequent employment, and in the second, the opportunity to earn wages.

The last of the three examples is from my research in Usangi. At one time Pare men traveling to and from their farms carried only weapons and their own tools, and women and children carried tools for their own use and farm products.
In this way the men, carrying less, were prepared to protect themselves and their families from wild animals or raiding parties. It was not uncommon for women to carry very large, heavy loads. Although raids by neighbors or attacks by animals are no longer feared, the practice continues that most men in North Pare do not carry loads, although they do carry their own jembes (hoes) or pangas (machetes). The continuation of this practice is no longer based on necessity. The reason for the custom is lost, but the custom persists. The contradiction, as I see it, is that the women are carrying heavy loads without help that is available from men who have no excuse except "tradition." While people may not talk about these matters as contradictions, there are other indications that they recognize the contradiction involved. On several occasions in conversation with African men, I have mentioned this last case about men not carrying loads based on a situation that had changed. Each time, the men laughed in a way that seemed to acknowledge that they recognized the contradictions in how this customary practice is currently legitimated.

There are interesting appeals to modernity in these examples as well. Regarding the first two cases, it is true that, in Tanzania, men in general have had more experience than women with two newly introduced features of Tanzanian life, i.e., jobs for wages and machinery. But what is the rationale being used here? Are the men involved being given
precedence based on the fact that some other men had certain experiences with jobs and machinery? Is the claim that when certain new (modern) kinds of opportunities arise men are somehow (inherently/biologically) better suited for them? In the third example about who carries loads, there is no appeal to innovation, such as a "modern" adaptation in which men and women would divide up the goods that needed to be transported, each according to her/his strength, but rather, the custom holds. Has a new tradition been established that men have precedence over women in making decisions about whether tradition will be overridden or perpetuated, and about matters concerning innovation/development/urbanization/Westernization?

In all of these cases, the category of what was traditional was negotiated, although the negotiations were invisible. It is interesting to see that the claims of tradition (and modernity) in these instances conveniently benefitted men. The argument was made that the benefits for men were based both on "tradition" and "modern traditions." It is often the case in arguments about how things should be done, that tradition is invoked as a rationale for "the way we do things." It is important in thinking about development, to see that "tradition" is very malleable. Claims about how things have been done, are done, or ought to be done should be analyzed carefully to see who is making the claims, for what purpose, and to whose advantage. Claims of tradition do not
follow a single pattern, as the examples above demonstrate. This is why tradition is such a slippery category and why some scholars resist using it. At the same time, if we are to understand the problems the word tradition creates, we cannot ignore the term. Investigating the ways that tradition was claimed was an important aspect of my study of Mbiru, as the reader will see, especially in Chapter 3.

Because any society has to be viewed as constantly changing, it is important to guard against the tendency to rely on a traditional/modern orientation. In this regard, identifying Pare folklore as being a cultural resource avoids the heavy value judgment associated with typical western ideas about African "tradition." This opens the way for seeing how colonialism, development, and efforts to "modernize" have interacted with Pare cultural practices, the full context in which the Mbiru protest was played out, and the context within which contemporary women and development issues must be understood.

By studying Pare women's explicit political actions I was seeking to learn two things. One, did the socioeconomic changes brought by the colonial intervention in fact disadvantage Pare women, and if so, in what ways did this occur? Also I hoped to identify some of the specific consequences of changes with regard to pre-colonial women's practices. It is important for development planners and practitioners to learn whether women have access to cultural
resources, and if colonial and post-independence structures and practices have diminished or imposed limits on women's ability to use cultural resources.

Although people may share the same culture, cultural resources are not available to everyone on the same basis. Factors such as age, gender, status, education, and so forth, in large part determine a person's ability to use available resources, and an individual's capabilities and personality also affects the equation. I am defining cultural resource as "something that can be turned to for support or help; an available supply that can be drawn upon when needed; an ability to deal with a situation effectively." In other words, cultural resources, such as social organization and discourse rules, are means at hand for people to use.

In Pare communities women need access to various resources if they are to fulfill their responsibility to grow a large part of family food supplies. They need access to material and psychological resources: land, seeds and other inputs, family labor, tools, as well as knowledge of how to perform the tasks, the strength to do them, and their own time--free from other demands--for performing the work. The means of speaking available in a community can be deemed cultural resources as well. Rules for speaking, such as "community norms, operating principles, strategies, and values which guide the production and interpretation of speech," enable people to state their views and promote their own
interests or alternatively the rules for speaking may limit their abilities (Bauman and Sherzer 1974: 7). In Pare society men and women have had different access to all of these resources, from material things such as land and agricultural inputs to means of speaking. The relationship between people and their access to resources changed dramatically during the colonial period.

If development practitioners learn about women’s ability to use cultural resources, what would that accomplish? Although nothing can assure successful development, if development practitioners know about women’s relationship to available resources, they might not make the mistake of assuming that the cultural resources to which the women have access are of little or no use. They could begin to understand the ways in which women successfully manipulate the resources they have at hand. They could begin to understand the women’s knowledge base and the ways in which the women use it. Perhaps they could then begin to provide women with appropriate inputs of information and materials that would fit in with the resources to which the women already have access. Perhaps they could resist the inclination to make demands on women that are based on unsuitable ideas and models. (See the Conclusion for a discussion of the Mwea Irrigation Scheme in Kenya, a development project flawed because project planners and implementers failed at every stage to recognize the importance of women’s access to cultural resources).
An ethnographic approach was the best way to learn about women and the cultural resources available to them. This part of the research coincides with Geertz’s early ideas about "thick description." Geertz described "'inscription' ('thick description') and 'specification' ('diagnosis') as setting down the meaning particular social actions have for the actors whose actions they are, and stating, as explicitly as we can manage, what the knowledge thus attained demonstrates about the society in which it is found, and beyond that, about social life as such. Our double task is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts, the "said" of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behavior (1973:27).

One subfield of ethnography had particular utility for this research project, the ethnography of communication. This kind of study looks at patterns of discourse, such as, status differentials among speakers; subjects that are allowed in or excluded from a particular communicative exchange; ways that people communicate indirectly; when, where, and under what conditions certain communicative events take place; in fact, the entire social context in which people use language (Hymes 1986). An ethnography of communication reveals social relationships, including social hierarchies. Chapter 2 discusses some of the ways in which the Pare talk or do not talk about Mbiru; the remaining chapters seek to understand the significance of the ways in which Mbiru stories are
communicated. Perhaps the most important aspect of this phase of the study is the way in which people talked (or did not talk) about the women's involvement in Mbiru. For example, during interviews we conducted with Mbiru participants, a number of people told us about one communicative device used by the women—a threatening/cursing sequence. Chapter 3 describes the process by which the research team learned about this cultural practice, and Chapter 5 constitutes an in-depth analysis of the practice. This threatening/cursing sequence which was used during Mbiru was considered by some informants to be women's ultimate weapon. Some women continue to use this practice.***

The relationship that this research sought, between women's access to cultural resources and the process of change, did in fact emerge in the data. Social organization and discourse patterns are the two main themes that give this research report continuity; my main conclusions will deal with these issues.

As Robertson says, "Gender...has become a primary determinant of access to power and authority [in Africa]" (1986:259). Beginning in Chapter 2, we will see how changes in the ways Pare society was organized by gender appeared early in the period in which the Pare were being incorporated

*** Because this cursing sequence provides a major point for analysis, I want to begin early to distinguish it from the Western category of "curse," which is not appropriate in this case. For the Pare this practice constitutes symbolic action; it is behavioral, although words may also be used.
into the colonial capitalist system. The same chapter introduces the idea that patterns of discourse heavily influence (1) the kinds of situations in which people are free or not free to speak, (2) subjects (some concerning women) that are considered appropriate/inappropriate, interesting or important by the Pare and by Tanzanians, and (3) ways in which people talk about or do not talk about some aspects of women's lives. In some cases, rules of discourse may limit women's access to cultural resources.

An important aspect of this research involves the way people talk about this significant event and what that discourse reveals about Pare society, especially women's place in that society, past and present. It was my expectation that certain kinds of misunderstandings about women's political activism could be cleared up. For example, in Tanzania siasa, the Kiswahili word for politics, is generally understood as an activity in which men participate. In this context, talking about wanawake na siasa (Kiswahili: women and politics) makes little sense. What is the effect of this kind of perception? To go further, is it possible to understand women's political actions in a different way if an ethnographic account of the circumstances surrounding their actions is included? By focusing on an event of historical and political significance to Tanzania and the Pare, can we gain a greater understanding of social structures and cultural practices that persist to the present and seriously impede development efforts for
women? The following are some of the relevant issues regarding the role of women in political action.

1. Women's political activism is often misunderstood. If women act in ways associated with male behavior, their actions may be regarded by men of that same culture as inappropriate. Of course, adopting this kind of "inappropriate" behavior may be a useful strategy for women who want to communicate a particular message (Collier 1974, Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974, Smith 1987:62; Wipper 1989).

2. Much of women's political activism is drawn from cultural resources developed over time. For example, as part of their protest activity, African women have used cultural practices such as obscene language and gestures of a blatant sexual nature (S. Ardener 1975; J. O'Barr 1975-6; Wipper 1989).

3. Women's political action may be invisible to outside observers because much of the women's political activity occurs in family and community settings, rather than in the public eye. In contrast to the objection raised in #1 where women appropriate methods of protests associated with male behavior—methods that may be recognizable to outsiders—some political actions may be comprehensible only to cultural insiders who understand the code that unlocks the meaning of the actions. In addition, although women may be as fully involved in the political process as the men, it is possible their actions are considered insignificant, or at least less significant than those of the men, either by male insiders or

4. Poor rural women may face the problem that certain men (or elite women) exercise a patron-client relationship over them. These people stand in for and speak for women, whether the women agree to the arrangement or not (Hale 1986, Udvardy 1988, Staudt 1987B; Wipper 1975). According to Robinson, patron-client relationships which are founded "on the exchange of noncomparable goods and services between people unequal in status, wealth, and influence" are "a frequent locus of political competition in Africa" (1986:140). Although such interventions may be taken with good intentions, such a "mode of structural inequality and dependence" hampers women's initiative, makes it difficult for women to control their own labor, and prevents women from gaining direct benefits for their efforts (Udvardy 1988:231).

5. The gender of informants must be considered as an important factor. Male versions of community life or of historical events which emphasize the actions of the male actors may dominate the record, oral or written. This raises questions about which version or versions of events gain acceptance (Weiner 1976) and the consequences for the community if the views of some community members are not represented.

6. The generation of informants is another important factor. In much of contemporary Africa, access to formal Western-style
education leads to enhanced status. In some cases, the activities of older women, who probably have less of this kind of education than younger women and men of all ages, are not considered to be important by others with more education. Stories cannot be transmitted (told) without the presence of a receptive audience. The stories of old women may be of interest to some and not of interest to others. Some stories might be suppressed by discrediting the tellers as "uneducated" or "out-of-date."

These issues raise questions about whether women are in some ways relegated to particular domains and excluded from what might be considered the political domain. It is possible that the concept of domains aids one in understanding how social practices and cultural practices affect gender relations (Fishman 1986; Rosaldo 1974; Nicholson 1986). I will return to the concept of domains in the conclusion.

All of these issues involve one of the central issues in women's studies today--how women perceive themselves and their world, and how others (male and female) perceive women (S. Ardener 1975). Of course, caution must be used so that cross-cultural research is not shipwrecked on Western-oriented frames and categories (Rosaldo 1980). Although as Westerners it is not possible to avoid the use of Western-oriented frames and categories, it is possible to attend to commentary that arises from within a culture when Western models are used. For example, in the case of different ideas about what

Feminism has many definitions. One suggested by Kathleen Staudt describes in non-polemical terms the heart of the matter. "Feminism refers to approaches which place gender squarely in explanatory frameworks" (1984:64/ FN1). Lerner defines feminist consciousness as

the awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; that their condition of subordination is not natural, but is socially determined; that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally, that they must and can provide an alternate vision of societal organization in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self-determination (1993:14).

Feminist research is interested in how women are situated in society. There are different ways to study women's situation. My approach to this study of Mbiru has been to ask questions that elicit women's views of their own lives, give those views priority, and use women's own words as much as possible. Although Kimambo's account of Mbiru revealed that Pare women had been important actors in the tax protest, he left unanswered many questions about the women's activities. It has been an important goal of this study to document the women's actions using their own words, and to add their story to the historical record.

However, documenting the Pare women's Mbiru story was not enough. This study incorporated two additional modes of feminism—gender analysis and the moral imperative to promote change. Dorothy Smith, whose work will be discussed later in
this chapter, states that women’s experience is "embedded in relations of ruling" (1987:7). Feminist research studies social relations so that the ways in which society has been constructed to subordinate women are revealed. An inquiry into the Mbiru story provided the opportunity to analyze gender relations in Pare society in terms of social hierarchies. Equipped with this new information about the ways in which social relations play a role in events, it becomes my responsibility as a feminist to look beyond the knowledge gained and towards possibilities for change.

The Research Design

As stated, this study set out to discover an expanded view of Mbiru events. Collecting the oral testimonies of people who participated in Mbiru, especially the women, was one way of doing this. In addition, I was concerned with the particular way the events of Mbiru and discussion of contemporary Pare life are integrated. The way in which the events are discussed is an important part of my understanding of the events themselves. The oral narratives collected about Mbiru are not merely a backdrop for actual events, nor is the oral narrative intended merely to provide more color.

Oral narrative provides an especially rich focus for the investigation of the relationship between oral literature and social life because part of the special nature of narrative is to be doubly anchored in human events. That is, narratives are keyed both to the events in which they are told and to the events that they recount, toward narrative events and narrated events (Bauman 1986:2).
In this ethnographic model, one cannot separate the events of Mbiru from discussion of these events in contemporary Pare life. What my Pare research associates (I will introduce Aissia Ngadaya and Margaret Mshana later in the chapter) and I wanted to know at every turn was under what conditions stories about Mbiru would be told. We were investigating the particular ways in which the story has been shaped.

My inquiry into Mbiru included not only the personal testimony of protest participants, but also stories about Mbiru from an additional group of targeted informants--Pare who, although they did not participate in the protest themselves, had some knowledge about Mbiru. In fact, even discovering that certain Pare did not know anything about Mbiru turned out to be significant in itself, given the importance of the events in question. The question then arises, why did some Pare know nothing about Mbiru? What does the ignorance of some Pare about this event suggest about current Pare society?

It is important to make clear that the research was designed to elicit the stories about Mbiru that people told freely. This is more than a minor point. During my first long stay in Tanzania, I recognized a dilemma I faced if I wanted to study and write about Africa. As I lived in Tanzania, my attention turned naturally to issues of development that affected women. But the social science approaches with which I was familiar seemed intrusive, even in
conflict with, certain things I was learning about Tanzanian cultures. I saw that people considered personal matters to be private in a way that contrasted sharply with how personal matters are viewed in the United States. Kopytoff describes this tendency (which may be more characteristic of East Africa than West Africa) as "the avoidance of characterological judgments" and relates it to,

the general pattern of what might be called 'externality' in African cultures—the unwillingness to probe into the inaccessible interior of persons (precisely what modern Westerners so excel at). The African preference is for dealing with behavior in terms of external and visible features, without conflating them into a global statement about the interior person (1990:89).

In the same vein, when Mbilinyi worked on the production of the life history of a Tanzanian woman from Rungwe, she encountered a similar problem which she describes as reticence about private matters.

Kalindile's seeming reticence about directly personal matters in not unusual in Tanzania, where people in principle do not indulge in private confidences for public audiences. Alternative modes of communication are adopted which require sensitivity and subtlety on the part of both speaker and listener, author and reader (1989:211-212).

My concern was how to do research that inquired into social life, especially gender relations, without betraying friendships I valued or offending norms of behavior I respected.

For me the addition of a folklore component to Women-in-
Development studies began to address this ethical concern. A
feminist sensibility challenged me to learn to listen to, to hear ("to learn by the ear"), and to record African women's voices. Whereas feminism provided the motive, folklore theory, methodology and analysis provided a modus operandi for studying women's explicit cultural expressions and the confidence that an inquiry could elicit a great deal of data without unduly offending local norms of behavior. In tune with the current scholarly focus on arenas of social and cultural history, folklorists, as well as some historians, believe that folklore is a key means of getting at attitudes, values, and world view, those intangibles of historical experience that rarely show up in historical documents. ...they mine folk materials for information about what people believed in order to understand how they behaved (Montell and Allen 1988:63-4).

It was hoped that by studying women's folklore in this way, as part of the cultural message, it would be possible to learn to "listen" to people and to begin to "see" the structure of their lives. I am aware of the pitfalls involved in this kind of approach by a cultural outsider, but it is my position that if one carefully and conscientiously makes this effort, some gain, even a small one, can be made.

In addition to collecting people's own stories as they chose to tell them, my research partners and I asked questions to obtain specific information. In a small number of cases, follow-up interviews were conducted. In some follow-up interviews, we were unable to elicit further important information from the women about their activities. In these
cases, we settled for what we had. The fact that we could not readily get this information is interesting in itself. I will return later to this issue of not being able to obtain certain information and the implications of that.

As part of my ethnographic approach, I designed the research to learn everything possible about current life in Usangi, especially as it affected women. The following questions set a framework within which I worked. My description covers these questions to the extent that they were relevant to this study. What was special or distinctive about women’s lives in Usangi? Was life noticeably different for women of different generations? Were there active organizations for women in the village? What evidence is there of women’s political activity now, and what is the relationship between this current activity and women’s actions during Mbiru?

Methodology

As we began the inquiry about Mbiru, it was my belief that as we listened and observed, the process of learning would guide the subsequent work. I had read as much as I could find to prepare me, and I had some questions that I thought were going to be the relevant ones. However, I felt that a predetermined list of things to learn would impose my own limited view on the events I wanted to understand. I was prepared to reevaluate continually the questions to be asked. Having a team of people who did not enter the work with my
pre-conceptions and goals was probably the most effective guard against unnecessarily circumscribing the study. Whitehead and Conaway describe a feedback process involved in the relationship between the fieldworker and the field community; that is, the impact of the personality and actions of the fieldworker on the field community, which simultaneously has an impact on the personality and actions of the fieldworker (1986:1).

Other issues upon which these ethnographers touch are the particularities that develop in relationships between the researcher and key informants, the fieldworker's discovery of the self while attempting to understand others (Whitehead and Conaway 1986:8), and matters of age and gender. I expected that my particular interests and my middle-aged, middle class, female American identity would have a major impact on this research project. This was certainly the case. While my differences were obvious— that I was American, white, and more educated than most people I encountered— what is interesting is the elements I shared with many women. The bond formed with my research partners and relationships with the Pare we interviewed, especially Pare women, followed a particular pattern in part because of who I was. For example, the fact that I was a grandmother like many of the women participants in Mbiru appeared to provide a point of commonality. Some women asked me about my children and grandchildren and were interested in looking at family photographs. In these two ways, being female and being middle-aged or older, we shared some common concerns.
My relationship with the Pare which had developed prior to the fieldwork also influenced the research process.

A scientific discussion of field work method should include considerable detail about the observer: the roles he [sic] plays, his [sic] personality, and other relevant facts concerning his [sic] position and functioning in the society studied. A peculiar character of field work in anthropology and in other social sciences is that the scientist has to communicate with the objects studied and they with him [sic], and that he [sic] is part of the situation studied (Powdermaker 1966:9,286-7).

Following Powdermaker and others’ model of revealing factors that influenced the research process, I will describe here my previous relationship with the Pare.

At the time that a friend and I were preparing for a trip to Africa in 1980—my first visit to the continent—we were advised that travel in Africa is easier if visitors have a number of contacts. We proceeded to ask questions of Africans we knew and to seek out others who had direct experience in Africa. These contacts opened the way for us to have some rather extraordinary experiences. One of the most interesting took place in the North Pare Mountains in Tanzania. My sister-in-law’s Lutheran Church in northern Ohio wanted to deliver some money expeditiously to the Kifula Lutheran Church in Ugweno, North Pare, just at the time we were planning our trip. Therefore I arrived in the Pare Mountains in March, 1980, as an emissary for others and was treated as an honored guest.

Although we have no formal connection with the Lutheran Church, during our time in Tanzania my husband and I developed
a relationship of affection and mutual respect with people in the Kifula Church. During that time we served as links between the Kifula Church and two Lutheran churches in the United States on several occasions and delivered some gifts from the American churches. When I arrived in Usangi in 1990 to conduct this dissertation research, it was natural for me to visit the Kifula church and greet people there. As part of the formulaic greetings to the congregation, I had an opportunity to describe briefly the research I was doing on Mbiru. It followed as no surprise that the church staff organized some interviews with Mbiru participants living in Ugweno and provided guides to help us find the scattered homesteads.

It is difficult to determine exactly how the people in Kifula perceived me. Perhaps they thought I was a Lutheran, although I tried at different times to explain my informal connection to the American Lutheran churches. By then, most of them realized that I valued my contacts with them. Although I have not felt in any way impelled to discredit others’ belief systems or to recommend mine, I must confess to one area in which I have used my relationship with the Kifula Church to intervene. Although my intention not to offend local sensibilities was very strong, on a few occasions when it did not seem inappropriate, I spoke in meetings either with church leaders or with the congregation about women and development issues. I would hope that I managed to balance my
advocacy for women and local normative rules of behavior. My moments of advocacy appear to have been received in the spirit in which they were presented.

In contrast to my ten-year relationship with some people in Ugweno, I arrived in Usangi as a stranger. Pare friends had made a few contacts for me, but most people in Usangi would not have known about them. My two research associates eased my introduction into the community there. During the fieldwork period in Usangi, in situations during which women's issues were discussed, my involvement undoubtedly revealed my bias on the side of women.

Usangi was chosen as the initial site for research because I had read that the women there had been the most militant during Mbiru (Kimambo 1971). I reasoned that the inquiry could be expanded from Usangi as needed. My plan was to begin with the usual protocol, presenting credentials to officials and explaining where I would be located and what I would be doing. Next, I would talk with those people in Usangi whom Pare friends identified as contacts, beginning the actual work by talking to anyone—in this first phase in English—who had information about Mbiru. From the first group of people I met, I would choose a woman to work as translator/associate. Although this plan made sense when it was devised in Columbus, Ohio, the reality was that during the time I was in Usangi, I never met a single woman who was both capable of doing the work and available to do it.
In fact, a scenario very different from the one planned developed. On the day before I was to leave for Usangi, at a public meeting at the University of Dar es Salaam during which I described my research program, I met Aissia Ngadaya, a Pare woman who worked as an administrator at the University. During a short conversation following the meeting I hired her on the spot to assist in the fieldwork. Soon after beginning the fieldwork in Usangi, I realized how fortunate was my chance meeting with Aissia. It is important for an understanding of the research process as it evolved to discuss in some detail the relationship that developed between us, and the subsequent relationship with Margaret Mshana, the third member of the research team.

From the beginning of our work together I considered Aissia and Margaret as partners in the work. When I negotiated a contract with them, I used that term. Because of who these women were, the data collection took a particular turn which greatly benefited the project. It is only recently, in hindsight, that I have realized the significance of both the process of forming the relationships and the impact of those relationships on the research itself.

Both Aissia and Margaret brought significant experience and qualifications to the work. Both had well-formed views on women’s issues; both had experience with women’s groups actively involved in the struggle to improve women’s condition; and both had previously worked with Westerners.
Because of their experience with Westerners, it was possible for us to maintain a relatively equitable working relationship. Margaret had done extensive nursing studies in Germany. Aissia, through her work at the university, had worked with Europeans and Americans and had studied for a short term in England. Once they saw my working style, they appeared comfortable with an easy, non-hierarchical relationship.

Both Aissia and Margaret were born and raised in North Pare. Not only are their natal homes in the research area—Margaret’s in Usangi and Aissia’s in Ugweno—but both women retain close ties to the village communities through family members who continue to live in the villages. Although Aissia’s family is from neighboring Ugweno, she has a number of relatives in Usangi and knows many other people there. Though we encountered people in Usangi she did not know, she was never an outsider because people either knew someone in her family or someone with whom she or a member of her family had gone to school. In every case, with just a few words, she was able to establish her identity as a village insider. Both families are respected and widely known, due in large part to some family members attaining high levels of education.

Additionally, Aissia and Margaret had a personal interest in the Mbiru story, in part because both their fathers had been actively involved. Aissia’s father, Mikaeli Msuya, was one of the men who went to Same, leaving his wife and small
baby, Aissia's older brother, at home. Aissia's mother, Esteri Mikaeli, did not participate in the women's protests because of her need to be at home with her young child. Margaret's father, Gerson Marisa, was deeply involved in Mbiru politics from the beginning. As the protest developed, he had to take his protest activities "underground" because he was a school teacher. Although Margaret's mother had to keep her distance from visible protest activities because she was the wife of a teacher, she furnished food and endless cups of tea for the men who came to their house to meet with her husband about protest matters. Aissia and Margaret were also personally concerned about keeping this episode of Pare history alive. Furthermore, they agreed that it was important to document fully the women's involvement.

Both women had an ability to reflect on their own lives and their culture, as well as a willingness to share their insights with me. This particular contribution was of inestimable value. Both women also had administrative experience. Aissia works in administration at the University of Dar es Salaam; Margaret has designed and coordinated a number of social and health related programs for the government, pre- and post-independence, and for the Tanzanian Lutheran Church. Also, they brought the insights of mature women to the work. At the time we worked together, Aissia was 44 years old, Margaret 58 years old. Aissia is the mother of five children, the oldest in her late teens when I first met
her. Margaret has three adult children and a grandchild. Because of this, they had knowledge to add about the various facets of women's lives.

As the work began, we settled into a comfortable relationship. The three of us sought to learn all we could about Mbiru. The second task for me was to learn about what constituted contemporary life for Usangi women. An easy reciprocity developed. I took the lead in the overall management of the research, but deferred naturally to Aissia and Margaret in a number of circumstances. After all, they were the experts on Pare matters; I was not. Whitehead and Price write about strategies...

followed by the fieldworker to gain both acceptance in the field community and a fuller appreciation of the sociocultural dynamics of the field culture. "The industrious active style of work demanded by a successful career...while state-side had to be suspended and replaced by a more passive, more adaptable style in the field. I wanted to be guided in the field, not be a leader or innovator. When in the field one becomes a 'student' in the fullest sense of the word, passive, humble, insecure, and at the same time, receptive to learning new values, ideas and the outlook of a different culture" (1986:290, quote from Lobban).

Aissia, Margaret and I talked at length about what we were learning from the interviews and its significance.

I also discussed with them the wider context for the research. Both were interested in hearing what I had learned from extensive reading about African women during my graduate studies. In turn they talked about the local scene based on their own personal experiences and knowledge. During these
conversations, the three of us developed together what I will call a raised consciousness about the work we were doing. The term, feminist research, that is, "research by, for and about women," appears to define our efforts. Research "by women" who identified themselves as women first, and research "about women" were the easy parts. But also we were clearly conscious of doing research "for women," research that would somehow benefit women. The three of us talked at length about what it would take to make the lives of these women better, and how the knowledge we were gaining might help Tanzanian women in general. Although we conducted many interviews with men about Mbiru and we considered men's testimony essential to the overall picture, we conscientiously maintained our focus on women. Of course, I realized that the research would be flawed if it excluded men.

Dorothy Smith's concept of an inquiry from the standpoint of women coincides with the approach we took. Smith argues that such studies will represent women's lives more accurately than studies produced in the male-oriented sociological approach.

Established sociology has objectified a consciousness of society and social relations that "knows" [women] from the standpoint of their ruling and from the standpoint of men who do that ruling (1987:2).

With her research, Smith set out to create "a way of seeing, from where we actually live, into the powers, processes, and relations that organize and determine the everyday context of
that seeing" (1987:9). She sees this process as "the first and essential step to the making of an intellectual and cultural discourse in which we are subjects and speak for ourselves" (1987:16). Smith completes this line of thought by perceiving the everyday world as problematic.

Constituting the social organization and determinations of the everyday world as a problematic is a method of guiding and focusing inquiry (1987:91).

This idea of a problematic anchors the inquiry and helps one understand Smith's methodology. She makes a distinction between the everyday world as problematic and as phenomenon.

...the everyday world is taken to be various and differentiated matrices of experience—the place from within which the consciousness of the knower begins (Smith 1987:90,88).

An inquiry then is "organized by this problematic—how does it happen to us as it does? How is this world in which we act and suffer put together" (Smith 1987:154)?

Since "within our everyday worlds, we are expert practitioners,...our everyday worlds are in part our own accomplishments," then it follows that "so far as their everyday worlds are concerned, we rely entirely on what women tell us, what people tell us, about what they do and what happens" (Smith 1987:110).

The sociology I have wanted to create...proposes discourse organized differently, where knowledge does not become a body of knowledge, where issues are not crystallized, where the conventions and relevances of discourse do not assume an independent authority over against its speakers and readers. It would have the capability of continually opening up a different experience of
the world, as women who have not yet spoken now speak. Each speaker from a new site discloses a new problematic for inquiry. It is in this continually opening up that the sociology I have wanted has its home and sense (Smith 1987:223).

The on-going dialogue about the research extended to another circle. All three of us found occasions to discuss what we were doing and learning with others not involved directly in the research. In turn we brought back to the research team additional information or insights from these encounters. In my own case, I talked about the research with people within my established network (Pare and non-Pare) and with others whom I contacted for that specific purpose. Since my first trip to Africa, I have found in a number of instances that things I understood in one way were later turned on their heads as I gained new insights. Also I had heard horror stories from Tanzanian friends about scholars from the West who came to conduct research in a village and managed to look like fools in everyone's eyes. And so I sought out people who might be interested in discussing my research to ask them sincerely, "Please help me understand what I am learning." Some of the best data came from such encounters.

For someone who wants to understand another culture, doing research might be considered being "in training." Moffett believes that "Europeans cannot generally understand African culture, but that this situation is able to be remedied through training" (quoted in Forster 1992:34). My research project benefited from the willingness of cultural
insiders to serve as trainers. This was especially true of Tanzanians who had experienced, i.e., lived in, the West, who, in a sense, had one foot in my world as I was placing a hesitant foot in theirs. Being able to find two research partners who fit this profile was a tremendous asset to this research.10

In this section I have attempted to reveal the dynamics of the research process. There was activity on at least three levels that fed into the operation: (1) structured interviews for the explicit purpose of collecting data and the review of the data by the team; (2) a three-way dialogue about issues of common interest, the purposes of the work, and our responsibility to the women we were encountering; and (3) a wider dialogue which the three of us undertook in our independent circles. Frank reports that some anthropologists choose "to replace the inquisitional format of the interview with dialogue."

One must be an insider to dialogue...to demonstrate one's capacity for understanding. To dialogue and to interview are contrasting modes of research, each with its own social organization, symmetrical in one, asymmetrical in the other, and with its own purpose, in one the exploration of a world and in the other the acquisition of information (1985:128, emphasis added).

Within the research frame, an exploration of the world of Usangi was going on at a number of levels.

The Interview Process

As our inquiry progressed, we tried to maintain some level of direction and a degree of flexibility at the same
time. Each of us adopted procedures for the interviews based on our own personal styles. Margaret preferred to use a tape-recorder since she felt that producing a notebook would hinder the process. In contrast, Aissia had little difficulty conducting interviews and taking notes at the same time. Aissia's decision was somewhat influenced by our initial concern that a tape recorder might be intrusive. Before we completed the work, the three of us had recorded many interviews. The presence of the recorder never seemed to interfere with people's stories, although some people declined to have their interviews recorded, and a few people asked that the recorder be turned off for short periods while they gave certain information. In addition, the three of us kept notebooks of information we were gathering outside the interview structure.

My collection of data includes texts in three languages, Kipare, Kiswahili and English. The texts fall into two main categories. One group consists of exact transcriptions of interviews we recorded. Recorded interviews in Kipare and/or Kiswahili have been translated into English by either Aissia or Margaret, depending on who conducted the interviews. Because Aissia and Margaret had full control of the interviews they conducted, they felt free to communicate fully with the people with whom they talked. Since many Pare speak in two or three languages, the interviews might begin in one language and switch into and out of another, or mix different languages
throughout. Another group of texts are reports in English by Aissia and Margaret about interviews that were not recorded. Many of these reports include key words or phrases in either Kipare or Kiswahili.

I have studied Kiswahili and am competent in the language at a conversational level. I do not speak Kipare, although during the fieldwork period I learned the greeting ritual and a few other words. It had been my intention to participate directly in some of the interviewing in Kiswahili, especially as I learned the vocabulary that people were using in their Mbiru stories. However, the interview procedure with which we began produced very satisfactory results, and I realized that my direct involvement might only hinder the free flow of information (See Chapter 4 for a more complete description of the interview process). I would describe the scenario that emerged as that of a Pare elder telling an important Pare story to a Pare daughter (Aissia/Margaret). When we worked in this manner, I was able to concentrate on observing the setting, the social dynamics, and the storytelling performances I witnessed, and, apart from the interviews, direct the overall inquiry. As we worked together it became clear that because Aissia and Margaret were very capable, they needed little guidance from me in the actual information gathering. They collected considerable amounts of valuable data if they were free to pursue opportunities as they arose. The stories people told were given precedence over all other
considerations. It appears that this method worked well for the following reasons: Aissia, Margaret and I were committed to this research; we were aligned in purpose; and we were constantly communicating about how the work was progressing.

Before leaving the United States for Tanzania, I had read Powdermaker's description of her association with an outstanding research assistant in Zambia in the mid-1950s. Powdermaker did not know the Bemba language. Perhaps the special nature of the successful relationship she described helped me make the choices I made in working with Aissia and Margaret.

Phiri...became a kind of alter ego, and I can not imagine how the study would have been made without his help. He understood what kind of data I needed and he interviewed, recorded, and observed continuously... During the survey I knew he was the best interviewer [among her assistants]... Equally important, he became truly engaged, identified with the project and with me (1966:260-1).

The research team of Aissia, Margaret and I interviewed a total of 159 people: 96 women and 63 men (see Appendix for the complete list). Interviews about Mbiru included: 25 women who had gone to the chiefs' courts; 13 men who had gone to Same; 16 Pare (11 women, 5 men) whose parents had gone either to Same or the courts; 3 children and 2 grandchildren of Chief Sabuni or Chief Minja; 7 who were government officials during Mbiru; 6 who were teachers during Mbiru. There were many other interviews in which Mbiru was a subject.
Those who were interviewed about contemporary life in Usangi included: 8 local officials (4 women, 4 men); 4 Lutheran pastors; 1 Muslim sheik; 2 school administrators; 1 current MP (Member of Parliament) and 1 former MP; 9 women pottery makers and 2 pottery traders (1 woman, 1 man), and a number of people with connections to Usangi who lived outside the village.

Writing the Research

Soon after beginning my graduate program, I read something written by Clifford Geertz which helped me visualize the kind of research I wanted to do in Tanzania. Geertz describes the aim of anthropology as "the enlargement of the universe of human discourse" in which anthropologists seek to gain access "to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can...converse with them" (Geertz 1973:14,24). People should not expect anthropology to "answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others...have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man [sic] has said" (Geertz 1973:30). The analysis of culture then is "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz 1973:5). The idea of enlarging the universe of human discourse to include more African women appealed to me. I was interested in "answers that others (African women) have given." Adding to "the consultable record" what the Pare women who
participated in Mbiru said about their experiences seemed an important research objective.

My methods are best characterized as fieldwork. "We are all fieldworkers whenever we must make sense of strange surroundings and pass on our understandings to others" (Van Maanen 1988:ix). Whereas it was once thought that the link between fieldwork and writing was obvious, it is now recognized as problematic (Van Maanen). It is not sufficient simply to describe the theoretical framework and the methods used. There are choices to be made, some of them ethical ones, as one transforms fieldnotes into an ethnography.

The ethnographer "inscribes" social discourse; he [sic] writes it down. In so doing, he [sic] turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted (Geertz 1973:19).

The following are some of the questions that influenced the writing of this dissertation. They are presented to reveal a framework, not to be answered in kind. How does one choose a style of writing? In what ways is experimentation with styles of presentation allowed or not allowed? What are the ethical and moral considerations in the representation of other people, other cultures? Whose voice is heard in the writing? Should different voices be identified? What implications accompany the question of how voice is represented? What findings should be highlighted? Should any of the findings be purposefully left out? What ethic guides
the analysis, the interpretation of the data? Is the research report fiction, non-fiction, or something else?

The way in which I enter the discourse when I report on my research has been influenced by ongoing debates on these issues, especially those taking place within anthropological circles.

Anthropology...is a science whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate. What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other. Monologues are of little value here, because there are no conclusions to be reported; there is merely a discussion to be sustained (Geertz 1973:29).

Now that I have stated some of my concerns, in the next section I want to concentrate on two matters: first, the continuing responsibility involved in representing others and one minor, but important, ethical dilemma.

My first trip to Africa in 1980, which included visits to West, East and Southern Africa (Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, and Lesotho) provided strong impressions of the continent’s incredible diversity. My ignorance about that part of the world surprised and embarrassed me. My shock and embarrassment came not so much from what I was experiencing, but from my inability to make sense of it. The burning question was, why had nothing in my American education, formal or informal--I had read a great deal and seen numbers of films and television programs about Africa--prepared me to understand what I was experiencing?
During the period that followed my initial visit I read extensively about every facet of African life, lived in Tanzania (together with my husband) for two-and-a-half years (1983-1985), and subsequently began a doctoral program on women, development, and African culture at The Ohio State University. My studies have been driven by my perception of a gap between the Africa that is communicated by media, including scholarly print media, and the Africa I have experienced. Others have recognized the ambiguities involved in personally experiencing a situation on one level while studying it as a scholarly subject on another level and have begun to write about their experiences. To varying degrees, this new kind of ethnography: experiments with writing form and style; employs a plot and characters to construct a story; includes the author as a character in the story; reveals the research process; chronicles the author’s experience of coming to terms with the place and the people being studied; portrays people and their culture in part based on the author’s experience of personally knowing the people and actually living within their society; and, fits within the field of humanistic social science, i.e., humans learning about, and from, other humans, and in that process, learning about themselves.

Anthropologists and folklorists have been giving considerable attention recently to questions about the limits of ethnographic description, about the relationship between
description and analysis, and about the distance that sometimes exists between a description and the analytical questions that are raised. In much of the material on Africa, something else "outshouts" listening to African people and their representations of their culture. For example, Foster writes about one article, "It is difficult for [the author] to see that his dissatisfactions with anthropology out-shout the voice of the Faqir (the subject of the study)" (1983). In this case there is a problem because the voice of the analyst becomes a larger player than that of the faqir. I have tried to understand the ways in which my issues have influenced this research project. At the same time I have attempted to have the work be more about what the people say and to pay careful attention to the issues that they raise.

The final point I want to discuss is an ethical dilemma relating to the problem of representation. During the year of research several Pare told me about a group of Tanganyikans referred to as "Manamba" who, in colonial times, were swallowed up by the system of forced labor on foreign-owned sisal plantations in the area. These unfortunate people lost all rights and the usual protection from families and local authorities, and even their names--each was given a "namba" (number) for purposes of identification. Escape from this life as virtual slaves was next to impossible. Hearing about the "Manamba" made me think seriously about cross-cultural accounts, spoken or written, which reduce people to ciphers.
In contrast, some books written by Westerners manage to provide portraits of Africans based at least in part on African perceptions and bring the African scene to life.

But certain questions arise on the obverse side of this dilemma. As I began writing about what I learned in Upare, I noticed a tendency to want to protect people who gave us information. Because certain information is clearly sensitive, concealing the identities of the speakers is required. Such cases do not present a problem. The dilemma relates to an inadequacy I feel to predict whether revealing the sources of certain information would embarrass the informants or would in some way cause problems for them. There are different ways to confront the dilemma. It is not difficult to disguise someone's identity, to report, "one woman/man told us," or to make up a composite of bits and pieces of information that came from different informants. But in using any of these methods, am I resorting to the "Manamba" system? Am I working contrary to my personal goal, to bring home a realistic portrayal of African people and give real people center stage? Powdermaker wrote of resisting an approach "interested in people primarily as cogs in a social system" (1966:42).

The question of how to represent others in my work is never out of my mind. Until I found the field of folklore studies, I was convinced that it would be impossible to complete research that was acceptable to the people in the
study and yet have some value. Because I had previously established relationships with many Pare, the question of how to represent them has been more than a concern; it has been my number one priority. If I have misrepresented anyone, I regret that very much. If someone is aware that I have misrepresented anyone, please take the time to educate me. I continue to be a student of things Pare, of things African. Although it has been necessary to write this dissertation with an eye on graduate program requirements, I consider the Pare, especially Pare women, to be my conscience regarding my work.

Notes

1. The correct Kiswahili words, singular and plural, for the people living in the Pare Mountains are Mpare/Wapare. However, because historian Isaria N. Kimambo uses Pare for both singular and plural and I have quoted his work extensively, I will use the forms he uses to avoid confusion. In this context, Upare is the proper term for the Pare homeland.

2. Tanganyika and Zanzibar united to become the nation of Tanzania in 1964.


5. I am defining "modernization" to mean the attempt to replicate the political, economic, and sociocultural systems
of the West. This includes a capitalist market economy, a representative democratic political structure, and a mass consumption society that emphasizes individualism.

6. It is interesting that Kimambo attempted to explain the Mbiru protest by using the traditional-modern dichotomy in his 1971 publication. His use of terms like "anti-modernist" and "anti-traditionalist" was cumbersome and this passage does not appear in his 1991 book.

7. When she moved to Usangi, a South Pare woman was surprised to find that it was actually taboo for men there to transport crops. She said,

   It is not taboo for men to ferry crops from the fields in other areas [in Pare District], but in Usangi it is. So everything that has to be carried has to be done by women. Coffee is almost completely a man's crop but then a Usangi man can't ferry the crop to a cooperative to sell. A woman takes it and then he takes the money.

   (Name withheld.)


10. Since returning from the research year in Tanzania, I have discussed this work with African women at every opportunity. I gave two presentations about my research findings at seminars sponsored by the African Studies Center at Ohio State University, one a co-presentation with a woman colleague from
Uganda. The comments of African women have been especially useful during the writing process.

11. Polanyi observes,

    one may understand all the words and all the grammatical constructions of a language and still not understand what insider speakers are talking about (1981:101).

Obviously, the interviews that I conducted in English with English speakers followed a different pattern because of the insider/outsider identity of speaker and listener.
CHAPTER II
THE PARE AND THEIR HISTORY

Introduction

This chapter prepares the way for the discussion of women and Mbiru by providing background information in several areas regarding the Pare of Tanzania, who get their name from the mountains they inhabit. For a long time the Pare have thought of themselves as mountain people, distinctive from the people of the plains. Surveying their geography, tracing their origins, and examining their particular colonial experience will provide the necessary backdrop to the Mbiru story.

The Land and the People

A number of striking geographic forms are part of the Tanzanian landscape. Among them are the country’s spectacular mountain groups, some of which constitute a portion of the largest rift valley system in the world that extends from Syria in the north to Mozambique in the south. The Pare Mountains, part of this rift system, are impressive by any standard, the highest peak rising more than 8000 feet above sea level. But the Pare range is overshadowed by Africa’s
highest mountain, Mt. Kilimanjaro (19,340 feet), just to the north, and the better-known Usambara Mountains to the south.¹

Pare District in northeastern Tanzania runs approximately 115 miles north to south and incorporates just over 3,000 square miles (see page 60 for a map of Pare District). It includes three distinct mountain groups—north, middle, and south—and the surrounding lowlands. Viewed from the west, from the main road that connects south and central Tanzania to the north, the mountains present a series of formidable rock faces rising abruptly from the plains. From this perspective, there is little sign of human habitation. In contrast, the more benign eastern slopes which gradually descend to the plains on the Kenyan border are interspersed with clusters of cultivated homesites. North Pare forms a single plateau which has allowed for a higher concentration of population than South Pare where "broken plateaux and ridges...could accommodate only dispersed population" (Kimambo 1969 5,16,19).

The plains (2000-3000 feet above sea level) that surround the mountains are plagued by annual floods, scanty rainfall, saline soil, and malarial swampy areas. In recent years, due to land scarcity in the highlands, there have been individual and governmental efforts to open up the undeveloped lowlands. The mountain area can be roughly divided into three sectors. When the foothills (3000 to 4000 feet) receive adequate rainfall, they are the most productive part of the district. In this sector extensive irrigation systems have been
FIGURE 1  Pare District (Kimambo 1969:12)
constructed to channel water from the high plateau in order to supplement the local rainfall. Most parts of the heights (4000 to 6000) have sufficient water supplies. This explains in part why this zone has the highest population density in the district. Above 6000 feet the land is mostly reserved for forests. Because the hills that constitute Middle Pare are one of the driest parts of the district, this area has continuously been only thinly populated (Kimambo 1969:16-18).

When he did an ethnography on the Pare in the 1960s, William O'Barr noted a "close tie between social identity and residence in the mountainous homeland" (1971:47-8). Indeed, the course of events in the Mbiru protest was influenced by the rugged mountain setting (Kimambo 1969:14).² The Pare consider themselves as mountain people, "watu wa milimani" in Kiswahili, "highlanders" in English, who have historically thought of the plains surrounding the hills as suitable only for social misfits (Kimambo 1969:14-16), or as an area to be used by the mountain dwellers, e.g., for hunting, for collecting herbs and roots for traditional medicine, for herding or growing special crops (W.O'Barr 1971:60). The general Pare perception is, "The mountain country is the preserve of people. The surrounding plains are preserves of animals and foreigners" (W.O'Barr 1971:50).

Oral traditions and archaeological findings suggest that Bantu-speaking agriculturalists, who began to arrive in the Pare Mountains at least by the thirteenth century, and
possibly much earlier, absorbed and/or replaced the gathering/hunting people already living there. The newcomers came from the Taita Hills to the east in Kenya and from three main areas in Tanzania: Kilimanjaro, Usambara, and the Nguu Mountains to the south. Because South Pare was in part settled by people from North Pare, networks of kin can be traced throughout the mountains. Although the Pare were never politically unified under a single ruler, Kimambo feels that there is enough evidence of linkages to treat them as a single entity, and he adds, "today there is no doubt about the cultural unity of the Pare people" (Kimambo 1969:103, 223-5).

By the eighteenth century a complex political organization which united all of North Pare was centered in Ugweno in contrast to the small-scale political units scattered throughout South Pare. The hegemony of the Gweno rulers extended beyond Ugweno to Usangi, and Kigweno was the language used in all of North Pare while Chasu was spoken in South Pare (W.O’Barr 1973:29). By the end of the eighteenth century, due in part to some ineffectual chiefs, the Gweno state began to weaken. With help from South Pare, especially from the Mbaga clan, Usangi was able to break away from Gweno control. In the process, Chasu-speakers were granted land rights in the area between Ugweno and now independent Usangi, and Chasu (Kipare) became the mother tongue in Usangi. Although oral testimony indicates that the clans settled throughout the mountains are more or less connected (Kimambo
traces links between North and South Pare back sixteen generations, one generation = 30 years), the presence of two ethnic languages provides a real, if blurred, dividing line (1969:32). Kigweno is the mother tongue in Ugweno, the most northern settlement in the mountains, whereas Kipare (formerly called Chasu) is the first language used in Usangi, the division south of Ugweno, and in the remainder of Pare District. It is not surprising to find that the Kigweno language is closely related to Kichagga, the language of the Chagga, the neighbors immediately to the north of Pare country. Today most Kigweno speakers use Kipare freely while the reverse is not true.

In the period before European contact, the most important units of social organization were localized patrilineal clans. An individual was most involved with his/her household, close relatives—especially those on the father’s side—and the clan unit. It was common to have meaningful relationships with one’s mother’s kin as well. Pare society was anything but static. There was a continual movement of outsiders joining clan clusters or settling nearby and people moving away seeking other opportunities. Because of this movement of people, there was considerable cultural mixing. Ritual life was clan-based or limited to closely related clans. Female initiation rituals, kueka (Kipare:growing older), were conducted within a single clan over several days. Male initiation, mshitu (Kipare:forest), was a supraclan ritual
held in the forest that took up to two weeks. "Pare identity" was a later creation of the British government when all the Pare Mountain area was consolidated into one political unit in 1928. Until that time, besides their identification as mountain people, people identified with their clans (W.O'Barr 1973:43-4;48;50-1,47).

Although hoe agriculture was the main means of subsistence, most people kept livestock and some had sizable herds. Some clans managed their livestock cooperatively. Wattle-and-daub construction was used to build beehive-shaped houses which had partitions separating kitchen, cattle-keeping and sleeping areas. People with more resources had a second building that contained a formal sitting room used for special occasions and one or more bedrooms. Banana (plantain) trees planted close to dwellings supplied the staple Pare food. There was little specialization until the nineteenth century, except for two major crafts, ironmaking done by men and pottery making done by women (W.O'Barr 1973:31-2,39-40,44) (see Chapter 5 for more about pottery making in Usangi).

The Pare Colonial Experience

To understand the circumstances surrounding Mbiru, it is necessary to know about the impact colonialism had on the Pare. Beginning with the German invasion of the 1890s, the area later known as Tanganyika was under European domination until the country's independence in 1961. As World War I
ended, British forces occupied the land. Taking advantage of the situation, the British devised a way to continue their occupation of Tanganyika.

British annexationists borrowed from liberal intellectuals the idea that former German colonies should be administered as "Mandated Territories" under loose supervision by the proposed League of Nations (Iliffe 1979:246-7).

By the time of Mbiru in the 1940s, the British colonial government had administered Tanganyika for more than two decades.

When the colonial period began in the 1890s, Pare country consisted of "not less than a dozen independent units in North Pare and as many as twenty-two in South Pare." However, before the nineteenth century "the Pare had lived in much more compact political units, represented by at least one centralised kingdom in North Pare (Ugweno) and not more than seven smaller units in the middle and southern parts" (Kimambo 1991:1). It is obvious that something momentous had occurred during the nineteenth century to cause this fragmentation of political units.

These internal changes were the result of the penetration of the capitalist trading system that extended from the coast to the hinterland of East Africa (Kimambo 1991:1). Map 2 on page 66 shows the nineteenth century trade routes that extended north/south on both sides of the Pare range and intersected at Same, the midpoint. The proximity of the Pare
FIGURE 2 19th Century Caravan Routes (Kimambo 1969:23)
to the trade routes assured them contact with the Western capitalist system (Kimambo 1991:1-2).

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, ...European commodity export had come to dominate the Indian Ocean trading network. Both long-distance trade and colonial invasion represented different phases of capitalist penetration (Kimambo 1991:2,1).

As a result of this contact, the self-sufficiency of Pare subsistence economy was affected, initiating what Kimambo terms "an unprecedented struggle for survival" (1991:1-2).

Up to the 1860s the Pare had only limited contact with the trade routes. Prior to this time, trade for the Pare had consisted mainly of the exchange of foodstuffs, iron, salt, livestock, and, in some areas, tobacco, internally and with neighbors (Kimambo 1991:2,27). Two kinds of markets were well established by the beginning of the nineteenth century, internal markets located on the mountains and regional markets at the fringe of the highland areas. At these markets women dominated the exchange of foodstuffs while men controlled other items (Kimambo 1991:24-5). As contact with traders developed, Pare cultivators residing in the highlands sent supplies of foodstuffs to caravan camping stations in exchange for imported goods. Writing about the Chagga, the Pare’s neighbors to the north, Moore describes "a considerable petty trade between the women of ordinary households and the ordinary bearers" attached to the caravans (1986:32). The early Arab-Swahili traders spent little time in the Pare
Mountains because their interests lay in Kilimanjaro region and the interior of East Africa (W.O'Barr 1976:122-3).

When a demand for ivory and slaves developed by the late 1860s, the consequences for the Pare were disastrous. A period of violence disrupted normal life, interrupted agricultural production, and led to widespread hunger. Traders who were acquiring power based on wealth began to challenge existing authority structures. This emergent kind of leader was more interested in making profits than in the welfare of people (Kimambo 1991:3,4). Iliffe sees these events, which were duplicated in many parts of Tanganyika, as leading to "a particularly vicious form of underdevelopment" as people began to specialize

in the production of ivory and slaves at the cost of other economic activities, only for the supply of ivory and the demand for slaves to collapse at the time of colonial invasion, leaving the country peculiarly ill-equipped to respond to the colonial period (1979:77).

Although certain decisions about the future of Tanganyika were made in Germany beginning in the 1880s, the actual incorporation of Pare communities into the colonial state was not accomplished until early in the next decade. During this period, both before and after the arrival of the Germans, the coincidence of outside forces and internal dynamics led to massive changes in Pare life. Communal labor was gradually supplanted by individual labor. The new class of Pare leaders served first as agents of slave traders and later as agents of imperialism during the colonial period. Individuals became
producers for the benefit of the capitalist system, that is, independent producers who controlled their own labor were being transformed into peasants (Kimambo 1991:5) in a process Forster and Maghimbi describe as changing "the existing system to the extent that features incompatible with the new structure are eliminated" (1992:29).

In the case of Upare, capital was penetrating a precapitalist mode of production characterised by dominance of kinship relationships with communal ownership of land (Kimambo 1991:5, see also 50). As was true across much of the continent, the kinship structure was maintained to take care of the wage earners' reproduction requirements so that large profits could be obtained from male labor for the imperial order. "The costs of reproduction of the peasant are shifted to the precapitalist organized society, making the peasant a 'no cost producer' to the colonialists" (Kimambo 1991:5, quote from Tenga 1979:20).

Kimambo's description of socioeconomic change fails to take gender into account, as does a large part of the written material on Africa. Bujra stresses gender as an important factor in this period of dramatic change, "analysis of transformations in the political economy of Tanzania requires an explicit recognition of gender" (1990:52). Colonial labor systems were predicated upon women's unreported and unpaid labor, although they did not acknowledge that debt.

In many African societies women were responsible from early times for the production of family food supplies,
although the production of this food had included substantial inputs from adult male kin and children, men being responsible for heavy and seasonal work. As men moved into wage labor, the women had to pick up the slack, which meant that women did even more work. In the process, men were increasingly alienated from work that in earlier times was the responsibility of men. This change in the division of labor has seriously affected development efforts in Africa.

Women were incorporated into colonial capitalist development, first as wives and mothers of men who left the villages to seek wage labor.

In that capacity they continued to provide for families left behind, and to provide a subsistence base to which men...could return. Effectively women subsidised cheap migrant labour. As time went on women were also integrated into capitalist development by their production of agricultural commodities for sale, as they attempted to find the cash needed for survival. In short, capitalist development never excluded women, though the part they played in it was often different to that of men (Bujra 1990:60).

Over time, the colonial regime continued to "intensify exploitation of Pare labour for capitalist production" (Kimambo 1991:5).

When the Germans took control, they divided the Pare Mountains into two administrative units, connecting the north to Kilimanjaro and the south to Usambara. The British continued this arrangement until 1928 when they consolidated all Kipare (Chasu) speakers into a single political district. This political arrangement of a single Pare District continued
until 1978 when, at the request of the Pare, the post-independence government again divided Pare country into two districts. Currently, Mwanga District, which includes the North Pare Mountains and surrounding areas on the plains, is administered from the expanding plains settlement of Mwanga at the point where the main north/south road intersects with the road up the mountains to Ugweno and Usangi. Same District, which includes South and Middle Pare, is administered from Same.

There were differences in German administration of the two divisions. In the south the German administration in Lushoto adopted a system common in the coastal area at that time. Local leadership was provided by jumbes—unpaid, hereditary village headmen who were compensated by tribute and services from their subjects. Akidas, who supervised the territory of several jumbes were paid officials who were not required to be members of the ethnic group they administered (Kimambo 1991:5).

Because there was no history of akidas in Kilimanjaro from which North Pare was administered, and there were fewer political units, Northern Pare chiefs communicated directly with district officials in Moshi. German administrators relied heavily on these agents, the akidas and jumbes of South Pare and the chiefs of North Pare, and had only limited direct contact with Pare communities. This gave the local agents
substantial power, "which could only be checked when European agents, such as missionaries, were present" (Kimambo 1991:6).

There were marked differences between the government systems in North and South Pare. In South Pare there was the potential for the akidas to abuse their power at the expense of local interests.

After the imposition of hut tax in 1898, support of armed soldiers made the appearance of the akida or sub-akida in any village [in South Pare] a terrifying thing. The authority of jumbes was therefore overshadowed by the power of the akidas, while in North Pare the chiefs were able to develop their own authority as agents of the colonial power to such an extent that two of them, Minja Kukome and Sabuni Naguvu, came to dominate the scene by 1928 (Kimambo 1991:6-7).

Minja of Ugweno and Sabuni of Usangi—main actors in the Mbiru story—appear to have been more active than their South Pare counterparts in this period. These two North Pare chiefs cooperated both with their district officers and missionaries in the area, although both had become Muslims in a period of Islamic expansion during the German period (Kimambo 1991:70). Utilizing the Pare practice of self-help known as mutharagambo, these chiefs mobilized community labor and resources to construct all-season roads that connected communities to the territory’s road networks at Mwanga. They also developed new methods of communication. In this way, the Pare were duplicating some of the developments taking place in Moshi and Usambara (Kimambo 1991:65). Although Chiefs Minja and Sabuni were targets of the Mbiru protest, Pare informants who knew them expressed respect for these two men who served
as chiefs for many years, Sabuni from the 1890s to 1948, Minja from 1912 to 1960.

A severe famine known as mnyime, which occurred about 1887-92, is remembered by the Pare as a major historical marker in this period. This famine was not the result of drought, but a combination of the chaos of the times and the introduction of new human and livestock diseases by the Europeans (Kimambo 1991:44,52). The colonial period brought many changes to Pare country that affected political, economic and social life. Some of these changes began to affect the shape of gender relations.

Changes in Social Structures

Although colonial control virtually ended the slave trade and the deadly raids, taxation and forced labor represented a different kind of invasion. By 1928, when the British consolidated Pare country into a unified, single political entity, the Pare had been firmly incorporated into the capitalist system of production. The main enforcer of incorporation was the hut tax for all adult males introduced in 1898. In order to earn the cash required for tax payment, the Pare had to sell their labor, some of the agricultural products they normally grew, or craft items such as pottery, or to grow newly introduced cash crops. In addition, the colonial regime forcibly recruited labor for sisal plantations in the lowlands (i.e., the "Manamba" mentioned in Chapter 1), for construction crews which built the railway beginning in
1905 and roads after 1907, or as porters. Many Pare men preferred to seek employment opportunities on their own in Moshi town or on plantations in the area. The families of these men typically remained in the mountains to produce the food that sustained family members at home and in town (Kimambo 1991:7-8, 49-50).

The beginnings of gender imbalance in Pare society come into view here. We can see that Pare men began to have access to a wide array of new cultural resources in this period, resources that in general were not equally available to women. In contrast to Pare women, most of whom remained in the villages, Pare men who went out to work had many new experiences and opportunities. They learned new skills, including facility in different languages. They received money for their labor and controlled its use at a time when money was increasingly associated with prestige. They learned that groups had varied norms of behavior and that people in towns were less bound by established authority, i.e., the authority of the elders, than people living in villages, and they moved into privileged positions vis-a-vis women who did not have similar experiences and opportunities. Although Pare men faced many trials and hardships in conjunction with these new experiences, they derived certain advantages from increased access to cash and knowledge. The exposure of Pare men to a greater variety of experiences than Pare women increased their ability to cope with the socioeconomic changes.
taking place, an ability which translated into power, authority and control.

With no direct experience or knowledge of the outside world, women were dependent on those who had this experience and knowledge (men) to inform them about the outside world. Men therefore had the opportunity to exploit this situation to their advantage, to give women certain information, and to interpret this information in ways that benefited themselves, or alternatively, to bring their wives new ideas about changing female roles, as Wikan says happened in Oman (Waldman 1986:334).

On the one hand, women were at a disadvantage because of the belief that it was not appropriate for women and girls to leave the villages to seek outside opportunities. On the other hand, because the colonial system was all but closed to them, women did not have to compromise their beliefs and values in the same way as the men who sought access to the colonial system. Later in this chapter we will see how the women's greater distance from the colonial government, vis-a-vis the men, gave women more freedom than men to support Nyerere's nationalist movement in the 1950s (Geiger 1987).

**Changes in Agriculture**

Among the new crops being introduced, rice had early success and has continued to be important. Following the mnyime famine, new land was opened up for cultivation. Cultivators began to move to the plains, especially in South
Pare, to undertake wet rice cultivation, which later became a major cash crop for the Pare. The area market system expanded after the famine in response to this new agricultural production. The Pare typically exchanged foodstuffs and iron products for livestock with the Maasai, their neighbors to the west. The lowlands in North Pare had been in use for the cultivation of annual crops since before the colonial period (Kimambo 1991:52,10).

Those Pare who attempted to grow coffee or cotton learned painful lessons about the arbitrary nature of colonial rule. For example, the cultivation of coffee was alternately encouraged and then discouraged. At one period mature plants were actually uprooted by public officials as the government tried to balance its promotion of cash crops produced by Africans against the demands of European settlers. European farmers who demanded that their interests be given priority did not countenance competition on equal terms with African growers (Kimambo 1991:8-10; J.O’Barr 1971:56-57).

During the 1930s there was a major expansion of coffee growing throughout the mountains. The cultivation of coffee and other cash crops increasingly led to a shortage of arable land, which was more of a problem in North Pare than in South Pare. Changing patterns of land use led to periodic food shortages. The Pare Mountain ecological system required careful balancing. Crops grown in different parts of the mountains complemented one another. If a crop grown in one
area did poorly one season, other crops grown in other zones under other conditions could provide adequate subsistence. However, as land was increasingly being used to grow cash crops, food supplies were sometimes in jeopardy. By the early 1930s, colonial government reports mentioned a need for famine relief in Pare District, and in some places in the mountains, periodic food shortages became common (Kimambo 1991:10). Women had special problems during this time. In an annual report in 1938, Pare District Commissioner Pringle noticed a mood of discontent among the Pare, and he linked this mood in part to "the repeated encouragement, often amounting to pressure, which the females feel more than males, given to increased crop production" (Kimambo 1971:87, emphasis added).

Kimambo lists three main sources of frustration felt by Pare peasants in the period leading up to Mbiru. First was the arbitrary nature of colonial rule; second, land shortage; third, the Pare chiefs. As part of the policy of indirect rule introduced by the British in 1925 (Iliffe 1979:254), all of the Chasu-speaking people were consolidated into one political unit in 1928. Iliffe characterizes the policy shift to indirect rule as "a deeper penetration of society by the state, and a most important standardisation of Tanganyikan life" (1979:325). While British administrators talked about a new period of social progress, indirect rule was actually a means of tightening social control, with the chiefs as the key to making the system work. Although some chiefs had an
historic claim to authority, others were nothing more than
colonial replacements for chiefs who were not cooperative
enough to suit the British (Iliffe 1979:325-7). When the new
union of all Pare country was formed, the Pare optimistically
looked forward to better times. But instead of taking the
opportunity to serve the people’s interests, the chiefs moved
to consolidate and increase their own power (Kimambo 1991:9-
10).

At a time when land shortage was becoming a major concern
for many Pare, the chiefs moved to increase their prerogative
over land rights, claiming this was the chiefs’ historic
right. Additionally they imposed penalties for failure to
observe certain seemingly arbitrary rules about land use.
These actions, which appeared to be a thinly disguised power
grab, angered the Pare. The new tax system known as mbiru was
the next instance of what many people saw as oppressive
legislation (Kimambo 1991:10). Clearly, the colonial
government was not prepared for the Pare response to the new
tax—at first, defiance, and soon, open rebellion.

Crisis in implementing rural development policies
in colonial Tanganyika was widespread. But most of
the open civil tensions and revolts belong to the
1950s. Therefore, the mbiru revolt [1945-7] was
shocking both to the chiefs and to the district
colonial officials. It took almost three years to
end the revolt and several more years to restore
production to its pre-revolt condition. The Pare
peasants had made their point about colonialism
(Kimambo 1991:11).

At the beginning of World War II the British government had
passed certain Defence Regulations which they used as an
additional mechanism for maintaining order in the territory (Kimambo 1991:107). For the Pare to challenge the British government in 1945 while the war was still in progress indicates how seriously they viewed the tax issue.

The Construction of Mbiru

The history of the Mbiru tax protest is not merely an assembly of facts, even though these events occurred in a chronological order and therefore can be called a history.

When we attempt to answer the question, What is history?, our answer, consciously or unconsciously, reflects our own position in time, and forms part of our answer to the broader question, what view we take of the society in which we live (Carr 1961:5). Any history that is being told is the result of people assembling relevant facts for whatever story they want to be telling based on whatever agenda they have (perhaps subconsciously) in mind. (My narrative of Mbiru in Chapter 3 is an example of such a construction.) The picture here shifts depending on different perspectives. Although the process of figuring out what the Mbiru story means is very complicated, probing the complexity is not merely an exercise. Uncovering the meaning of this protest and how people talk or do not talk about it is vital to making the connection with development issues later.

There is not much literature about Mbiru. Kimambo (1971) chronicled the protest in some detail and then revised his material to serve as the climax for his 1991 book, Penetration
and Protest in Tanzania: The Impact of the World Economy on the Pare 1860-1960, on the incorporation of the Pare into the global capitalist economic system. The Cambridge History of East Africa includes nothing about Mbiru. In his history of Tanganyika (1979), Iliffe based a three page account of the protest on Kimambo's article and a few additional sources.

Sally Falk Moore's book on Chagga "customary" law does not mention Mbiru per se; however, this ethnography and Kimambo's political economy (1991) provide invaluable background information about the changes that were occurring in all facets of regional life in the period leading up to Mbiru. These two books are the main sources of material that sets the stage for understanding this interesting historic event.

Although Jean O'Barr's initial work on local political institutions in Pare District in the late 1960s did not have a feminist orientation---her research was conducted prior to the surge of feminist scholarship on women that occurred in the United States in the 1970s---she was interested in information about women's part in Mbiru that emerged in her data. She recognized the influence of Mbiru on the level of political activism of Pare women at the time she was doing her research (1971). Since then she has written extensively about Pare women from a feminist perspective (1975,1975-6,1984). My research revealed there were problems with her data on Mbiru, which I will discuss shortly.
Another fact pertinent to this inquiry is that comprehensive knowledge about Mbiru is not in wide circulation among the Pare themselves. It is important to understand why the story of Mbiru has not reached a wider audience and why the story has so little currency even among the Pare. Reasons the Mbiru story did or did not get told include:

1. the Mbiru story has not been chosen to serve as a part of Tanzanian national history;
2. in Tanzania, the government has promoted national identity over "tribal" identity;
3. the ruling apparatus has emphasized the "modern" over the past in Tanzanian life; related changes have taken place in the rhythm of social life and discourse patterns;
4. some tellers of history may not perceive women as being full political actors, which might explain the lack of attention to what the Pare women did;
5. a community follows rules of discourse that govern how difficult subjects, i.e., embarrassing incidents and past conflicts, are talked about in colonial discourse, in written history, and in Pare society.

Some of the obstacles to telling the Mbiru story originate at the national level, others occur at the local level, and some are a factor at both levels.
Stories Used by Tanzania as Emblems of National Resistance

Two other stories of protest against the colonial order serve Tanzania as the most important emblematic events representing national resistance to foreign control. The most well known is the Maji Maji uprising from 1905 to 1907, "an explosion of African hatred of European rule," which attempted to end colonial control by force. This resistance movement began with the stateless peoples of the south-east and spread a great distance across the colony to the newly created states of the Southern Highlands. During Maji Maji an estimated 250,000-300,000 Africans died. Many of the rebels, emboldened by the belief that a medicine supplied by spiritual leaders would protect them from German guns, died in battle. Others were killed during reprisals by the Germans or died from the disruption and famine that accompanied the uprising (Iliffe 1979:168,170,200).

The second episode that has taken on symbolic significance for Tanzania is the defiance of one man who fought against a German takeover until his death at his own hand. The Germans arrived in southern Tanganyika in 1890 at a time when the most powerful group in the area, the Hehe, were in a period of expansion. The Hehe leader, Chief Mkwawa, chose to defy the Germans rather than submit. His bold exploits, at first backed by hundreds of Hehe warriors, and subsequently alone until his death in 1898, have made Mkwawa a major Tanzanian folk hero (Iliffe 1979:107-116).
These two stories about resistance to colonial rule and a few others considered less significant are part of the mandatory curriculum in Tanzanian primary and secondary schools. The story of Mbiru is not part of that curriculum. It seems fair to assume that most Tanzanians do not know about this episode of Pare courage and political acumen.

There are also other factors that might explain why the Mbiru protest has not been given a prominent place in Tanzanian history, and thus in the school curriculum. Although large numbers of Pare were among the first wave of mission-educated government workers and teachers who later served in leadership positions in the post-independence era, and the Pare currently play a prominent role in Tanzanian national life, they only comprise 1% to 2% of the country’s population (TADREG 1990:23). This protest occurred at a time when discontent with colonial rule was widespread in the territory. There were many protests of various sizes and sorts during this period arising from assorted discontents, protests similar in one way or another to Mbiru. It is possible that because no one was killed during Mbiru, those Tanzanians who establish school curricula and make decisions about which aspects of the nation’s history to promote might think the protest was not really serious. In this regard, the Mbiru protest may be better understood in a more recent context, that of massive non-violent movements, such as those
led by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Certain Mbiru events evoke images of such movements.

One important consequence of the exclusion of the Mbiru story from the mandatory school curriculum is that children attending schools in Pare District, among them many Pare children, do not learn about Pare history such as Mbiru in that institutional setting.

Tanzania's Stress on National Identity

The Nyerere-led government, from independence in 1961 to 1985 when Nyerere voluntarily stepped down, emphasized a Tanzanian identity based on policies of African socialism, detribalization, and national homogenization (Moore 1986:11). This program of national integration is one of the country's great success stories. Schoolchildren from all over the country are taught the same block of knowledge deemed important for Tanzanian citizenship. Some degree of conformity has also been reached in political, economic and social institutions that, since independence, are based on standardized organizational charts prepared by the government and the ruling party (Moore 1986:11). Within this organizational rationale, Maji Maji is a story of Tanzanian resistance to foreign domination that belongs equally to all Tanzanian citizens, and Mbiru does not have a place. The fact that women were dominant political actors in Mbiru may also contribute to the minimizing of the protest's importance nationally.
Emphasis on the Present Over the Past: Related Changes in Social Organization and Discourse Patterns

My research revealed that the full story of Mbiru is not in wide circulation among the Pare. For most Pare, the knowledge they have about Mbiru is limited to their own personal experiences in the chain of events surrounding the protest, or what others have told them. Some know about Mbiru because family members were involved and the stories of those experiences are part of their family folklore. Some Pare have read Kimambo's comprehensive account of Mbiru, but his publication is available only in English. Although the literacy rate in Kiswahili is very high in Pare District, there is no Kiswahili or Kipare version of Kimambo's article for people to read. This situation especially limits Pare women's access to this story since women are less proficient than men in English, and even in Kiswahili.

Additional reasons the Mbiru story is not known by more of the Pare relate to changes in local discourse patterns that have affected the way people learn and what they learn about things like Mbiru. There have been alterations in the context in which stories about the past are told, in the direction in which information flows, and in ideas about what information is important or interesting enough to transmit to others.

Onesmo Sabuni, one of Chief Sabuni's sons, pointed out that the structure and rhythm of life have changed dramatically. These days children go out to school and many people leave the village to work. The situations in the past
during which groups of the old and young sat together and the elders entertained, educated and enlightened with stories are not there as in the past.

Additionally, the direction in which some kinds of information circulates has changed. Not very long ago, the main flow of important knowledge in Pare society was from the old to the young. Significant community history and knowledge were transmitted by elders to the younger generations. Because of special relationships the elderly had with the young, it was common for grandparents, especially grandmothers, to teach grandchildren family history and what was expected of them through folklore, that is, stories, proverbs, riddles, and so on. Grandmothers also served as special confidantes to the young. They were known to keep secrets, and often took the part of young people in conflicts between the children and their parents, who were expected to be tough disciplinarians. Much of what Pare children learned about Pare life was passed on to them by their grandmothers.

However, the shift of emphasis to new ways of life means that new ways of thinking and doing things, knowledge that is learned in school settings, and experience in the wage sector have gained place and precedence over village-based knowledge and ways of life. Most members of the older generation have less knowledge about, and experience in, the world outside the village. Therefore, they are not in a position to instruct the young about what many people consider most relevant to
contemporary life. One grandmother told us her grandchildren are not interested in hearing stories about the past or other things about which she knows a great deal from experience. Instead, her grandchildren bring their school books and read to her. Our research team tried to ask every Mbiru participant if s/he told her/his children and grandchildren about the protest. Some people said their children did know about Mbiru. In a few cases they knew because someone in the family had a name related to the protest. In at least two cases the younger members of a family knew about Mbiru because their families were especially interested in Pare history. However, most responded that their children and grandchildren were not interested, that they had never asked.

Here is one such exchange. In successive interviews with Mama Magdalena Fundisha and Mzee Fundisha Kitia, wife and husband, Margaret asked them if they told younger people about Mbiru.

Margaret Mshana: Have you ever told the story of Mbiru to your grandchildren?
Mama Magdalena: No, they have not yet asked and they are not interested to talk with us old people and also are not inquisitive. I remember myself when I got married in this clan of Meeda, I took time with the grandmother of this clan who told me so many things concerning this clan. And so I learned how to live well with these people. Also I learned some idioms this grandmother taught me.

Margaret: (During her interview with Fundisha) Do you tell your children and grandchildren about these interesting things?
Mzee Fundisha Kitia: I told you because you asked for the information. Look at this one (his granddaughter) who has just left. She is not interested. Did you see her showing an interest?
Lack of Attention to Women as Political Actors

Women actors have often been left out of historical accounts of important events except as supporters of men's actions. For example, the only American women presented as historical figures in my public school education in Ohio, as I recall, were Molly Pitcher, who took water to soldiers in battle; Betsy Ross, who sewed up the first American flag; Florence Nightingale, who nursed soldiers on the battlefield; and Jane Addams, an early advocate for social reform. It has only been in the last ten years that I learned about Anne Marbury Hutchinson (1591-1643), the religious leader and dissident who was banished from the Massachusetts Colony and expelled from her church because she preached that every believer had equal access to God's grace; and Margaret Sanger (1883-1966), who led the birth control movement in the United States and founded Planned Parenthood. Because of the control of the historical record by what Dorothy Smith calls "the apparatus of ruling," which is male-dominated (1987:3), these women were not available to me as heroines or role models. Because Hutchinson and Sanger were resisting the existing order, stories about their lives might be seen as a continuing threat to the powers-that-be who dominate the knowledge system. Since any history is constructed, and constructed from a particular position, in any history some issues will be obscured and some topics will be left out entirely. I am aware that I am doing just that as I write this dissertation;
I have already admitted my bias on the side of women. If historical accounts are constructed by those who recognize women's agency only in support of men, what women do will be misrepresented or not represented at all. The new women's history movement that originated in the 1960s in the United States has called for a history "that would provide heroines, proof of women's agency, and explanations of oppression and inspiration for action" (Scott 1991:42). Scott's statement parallels the goals of my research.

Little information about Tanzanian women was included in the colonial historical record. Currently a group of faculty women at the University of Dar es Salaam who are both scholar/theoreticians and activists are correcting this lacuna. An extensive annotated bibliography, *Women in Tanzania* (Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi 1983), traces the key women's issues that are being raised in conjunction with research that the university women and others are doing. One group of activists, the Women's Research and Documentation Project (WRDP), released their own publication in 1991, *Unsung Heroines: Women's Life Histories from Tanzania*. The purpose of this life history project is to counteract "Women's Voicelessness" that,

gives the impression that women are consumers rather than producers and shapers of history. Indeed this is a wrong impression. Women have contributed handsomely in both socio-economic and political development of their societies and these contributions are extremely important historical facts worth recording and preserving for future
understanding and analysis of social change (Ngaiza and Koda 1991:2).

The life history approach was chosen to document "the varied places and strategies of women in specific situations which reflect both [their] class and gender," beginning with "the specific and the person, at the grass roots" (Ngaiza and Koda 1991:5).

Geiger (1987) has described the important part that Tanzanian women played in the nationalist movement and the leadership role taken by one Muslim woman, Bibi Titi Mohammed. Earlier in this chapter we learned that women's relationship to the colonial regime was more distant than that of men. Women were less compelled to conform to colonial mandates and lifestyles because this kind of conformity was demanded only of those who sought access to the system, most of whom were men. Because of this distance, women were able to participate more freely than men in political activities that challenged colonial rule. Geiger's study provides an especially important insight into the nature of Tanzanian women's ongoing struggle for equality and economic security.

In the late 1950s, large numbers of Muslim women in Dar es Salaam joined Julius Nyerere's TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) party (Geiger 1987:18). Many of these women were divorced and middle-aged and consequently no longer as constrained as younger Muslim women or the small urban population of Christianized "elite" women. Bibi Titi emerged as the leader of this group. However, because women did not
by themselves constitute a power base at independence, male policy makers determined what government positions were appropriate for women to hold and how the government would deal with women’s issues. Women’s issues were assigned to the ministries of Social Welfare and Community Development and an agenda was mandated, "which came not out of popular political mobilization but out of Western middle class understandings of ‘women’s place’ in society" (Geiger 1987:25). Women’s leadership in the country shifted from the Muslim women activists to women educated in mission schools in Western domestic science. "With this shift, ‘ordinary’ women were no longer seen as having leadership skills relevant to nation-building" (Geiger 1987:25). Since independence men have dominated the Tanzanian ruling apparatus.

Rules of Discourse that Govern "Hot Topics"

During the Mbiru protest, women in Usangi adopted extreme behavior. They cursed Chief Sabuni by bending over and exposing themselves, and they defiled his compound, as part of their protest action. Discourse norms in the community and the biases of historians have conspired to keep these events undocumented. The matter of getting information about these cultural practices was difficult because of rules of discourse which I have been able to identify at three levels. First, the colonial officials who learned what the women did were undoubtedly ignorant about African women’s culture. They could write about the women’s violence in official reports,
but beyond that, they had no context for understanding what was going on or writing about it with any accuracy. Second, Kimambo was confronted with rules of discourse that made dealing with the facts of what happened extremely awkward. Because he could not find a niche within which to discuss the women’s behavior, he ended up misrepresenting what happened. I will return to this point shortly.

The third level where rules of discourse make this subject difficult to discuss is Pare communities in which, as in any community, certain subjects are not considered appropriate for ordinary discourse. The women’s behavior during Mbiru appears to be such a topic. Most women who recounted their stories to us were obviously proud of their bold actions and talked enthusiastically about them, generally without any sign of embarrassment. However, some women told us they would not talk to their children or grandchildren about some of the things the women did during Mbiru. In fact, some women declined to talk to us about the women’s actions at all and some told us sanitized versions of events.

As mentioned earlier (see Chapter 1), there was a discrepancy between accounts by Kimambo and Jean O’Barr about what Usangi women did during Mbiru. During our inquiry we found no evidence to support O’Barr’s report that Usangi women confronted the DC at Same and challenged him to impregnate them all since he was responsible for keeping their husbands away from home. However, Pare women described one incident in
Usangi (not in Same) that resembles the one O'Barr related. A second incident similar to the one O'Barr described in which women confronted the DC at Same was mentioned by two informants. In this case, women from South Pare—not Usangi women as O'Barr reported—harassed the DC at his headquarters in Same. It was certainly difficult for our research team to get as much straightforward information about the women's actions as we wanted. Because of people's circumspection on the subject of the women's out-of-the-ordinary actions, it is easy to speculate that O'Barr misconstrued what the women said and what it meant. This raises the question of whether certain local rules of discourse allow for only a certain kind of talk, e.g., indirect talk, about this subject, or if there is a code used when people discuss it which only insiders know.

There were two groups of interviews that we undertook knowing that some people might be reluctant to talk with us about Mbiru. One group consisted of the women who participated in Mbiru and their families, and of course the troublesome subject in this case was the women's behavior. Having read extensively about the Igbo women's war in Nigeria in the 1920s and other instances of African women's militancy (see Chapter 5), I knew that the women involved in these episodes behaved in anything but ordinary ways. Under normal circumstances this kind of behavior would have been considered extremely inappropriate. After a few interviews we became
aware that in fact a number of people were embarrassed on some level when they talked about the women's actions during Mbiru. In this case we waited to see if foregrounding the interview was needed to put people at ease. Sometimes we mentioned the instances of women's militancy from other parts of Africa; sometimes we discussed the extraordinary pressure on the women while the men were in Same. Putting this sensitive issue in its historical context at the start of the interviews in most cases prepared the way for people to tell their stories comfortably. Aissia and Margaret generally took the lead in putting people at ease about the subject of the women's conduct.

The second group of potentially difficult interviews was with the chiefs and their families, and the disturbing subject was the changing social order. I was aware that not only had the chiefs been treated badly during Mbiru, especially by the women, but as a consequence of the revolt, the office of chief and the chiefs as individuals lost considerable power. Knowing that it was important to hear the chiefs' side of the story—we were convinced the chiefs' relatives could provide insights not available from the majority of Pare who had supported the revolt—we wondered under what conditions they would be willing to talk with us about events that were obviously painful to their families. In order to create a conducive atmosphere for interviews with members of the chiefs' families, we introduced the subject of rising African
nationalism in a few remarks, when it seemed appropriate. We stated what was obvious to us, that the chiefs were in an untenable position, caught in the middle between the colonial administration and the Pare people at a time when it was increasingly impossible to please both. This indication that we understood the chiefs' dilemma cleared the way for some excellent interviews in which members of Chief Minja and Chief Sabuni's families described the difficult experiences of these two men and their families during Mbiru.

Besides the difficulty with interviewing these two groups, there is an additional problem with how the story of Mbiru gets told. In Pare society there is an emphasis on resolving conflict and bad feelings quickly and then burying them permanently. The Mbiru period, a time when "there was no peace," divided families, neighbors, and entire communities. We were told that when trouble arises, the Pare are encouraged to restore peace as soon as possible, and once matters are settled, talking about the trouble is discouraged. Mzee Fundisha Kitia told us, "After our coming back home [from Same], nobody mentioned Mbiru." If discourse about conflict is restricted by cultural rules, how is resistance dealt with and how is it discussed? Women used some cultural practices available to them in oppressive situations. It appears that there are fixed cultural rules that not only control how women are allowed to use these
practices, but also about how community members can talk about them.

Motivation for Writing the Mbiru Story

Kimambo explains his initial reason for writing about Mbiru.

It has been assumed that the pre-mass party "tribal" revolts against colonial policies were spontaneous and unorganized. The main aim of this study is to illustrate how the Mbiru protest reveals a clear combination of traditional methods of resistance against oppressive rulers with modern techniques learned from the colonial period to achieve specific ends (1971:8).

It is easy to imagine that the colonial discourse defined the Mbiru episode as "spontaneous" and "unorganized." Kimambo set out to correct this faulty perception and he certainly accomplished his goal. His narrative described in detail how Pare men met, made and carried out plans of action, and continually responded boldly and creatively to every twist and turn in this political dispute.

Although Kimambo collected extensive oral testimony about the Mbiru revolt and wrote its story from start to finish, he gave the women's participation only minor attention. He described in some detail the women's days of violent protest in Usangi, but he failed to provide background to this incident, i.e., women's meetings and strategies. This gives the impression that the women acted "spontaneously," in contrast to the men, whose every organizational move he describes in detail. He credits the women with breaking the
impasse between the men at Same and the government. But without an explanation of any kind, he states that the men were embarrassed about what the women did at Usangi "and the leaders, including Mashambo, began to feel ashamed that their 'non-violent' procedure had been destroyed" (1971:20).

After reading Kimambo's account, I was left with two distinct negative impressions about the women's actions. First, it was easy to conclude that the women's actions were considered irresponsible or at the least misguided, as if they—the women—were insensitive to real Pare objectives. Secondly, the implication was strong that the women in some way undermined what the men were doing, and either that they had been or should have been reprimanded for and ashamed of their actions. Kimambo did portray the difficulties of village life for the women during the period the men were in Same.

At the time of the mbiru revolt, there is no doubt that the removal of thousands of men from the villages greatly strained village life in Upare and increased the pressure on the women left there... Women and children had to be mobilised in supplying the daily necessities of the demonstrators (1991:105).

This seems a fair depiction of the burden the women faced.

However, in one additional statement, Kimambo made an especially unfortunate choice of words, describing the women "in their homes alone missing their husbands" (1991:106). This phrasing is especially annoying when one knows that the women were in every way actively involved in the protest. The
dynamics of the protest were extremely complex, but the women were hardly "in their homes alone" pining for their absent husbands. Not only were they responsible for a double workload, caring for children, the sick and the elderly, and supplying food for the demonstrators at Same, but in addition they were talking and meeting with others in the villages and applying political pressure on their chiefs. Women were as involved as the men in the politics of Mbiru. Mzee Kime from South Pare describes events in that area.

During Mbiru, those who carried food to Same (from South Pare) were mostly women, a few men. The women were shunting up and down. There were women leaders in every village. Women supported the protest the whole time. They carried food. They remained home to look after children. In Gonja, women stoned the DC.¹⁵

Kimambo’s account of Mbiru is definitely HIS-story, revealing a male perspective, highlighting what is important and interesting to one male researcher/historian, and privileging the Pare men’s actions at every step. It is worth noting that, although he changed little in his account of the Mbiru story from the 1971 publication to his 1991 book, Kimambo did add the following passage.

Many young Wapare today consider the action taken by the women in Usangi as the most heroic part of the whole protest. Non-violence as a method of fighting oppression may sometimes succeed, but after prolonged suffering. They point to what is happening in South Africa. Non-violent methods of protest can be ignored by imperialism if the results do not give it advantage. Nobody can deny this (1991:116).
My study of women's political actions and cultural practices has an aim similar to that of Kimambo, i.e., to demonstrate that what the women did was not "spontaneous and unorganized," not random or mindless, but fully comprehensible given the attendant circumstances. Three perspectives aided in accomplishing this aim, ethnography, folk history and feminism. First, this inquiry broadens the ethnographic base of what is known about Mbiru in order to gain a greater understanding of the culture, the economy, and social and political relationships in general and local concepts of wealth and property in particular, and how these impinged on the actors and the action during Mbiru. The narrative of Mbiru events in the next chapter reveals that this protest was not simply a revolt by people who did not want to pay taxes. Rather, Mbiru was a culturally specific tax revolt which involved the full complexity of men's and women's cultural roles and relationships.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that major changes taking place in the Pare Mountains affected women and men in different ways. Increasing numbers of men left the mountains. Many left as a matter of choice and others left as conscripted laborers. Some left for short periods solely to earn cash for tax payments. In some cases, the men's new experiences gave them advantages over women, because what they learned frequently led to more and better opportunities, opportunities not open
to most women. It could be said that there was an noticeable increase in the range and variety of cultural resources available to men. With a large percentage of men away and many children attending schools, the structure of village life was changing dramatically and women’s lives changed in consequence. To compensate for the loss of the labor previously supplied by husbands and children, it was necessary for women to shoulder increased workloads and to take on new responsibilities for their families. In a period when the Pare were being pressed hard by the colonial government to increase agricultural production and introduce new cash crops, the additional work fell mostly to women. The transformed division of labor began to be accepted as the way things were done, as "natural," even though men were no longer doing work that generations of Pare men had done regularly in the past.

Chapter 3 will provide further evidence that, beginning in the colonial Tanganyikan territory and continuing into post-independence Tanzania, another major shift was taking place in Pare society that began to disadvantage women. Whereas women had once been involved along with men in every aspect of community life, i.e., economic activity, education, and politics, men were now moving into dominant positions in the emerging institutions based on foreign models and located outside the villages. The fact that the new locus of power was outside the villages meant a loss of power for most women who continued to live in the villages. It could be said that
women continued to have access to cultural resources within the village setting but not to the majority of cultural resources that were becoming newly available outside the village. It should be added that even though men worked away from the village, the nature of patriarchal society gave the absent men continued rights and privileges in the village, for example, concerning land and other property. Thus men continued to have access to cultural resources that were men’s prerogative in the village and new opportunities to use cultural resources available outside the village.

When the change occurred which gave the extra-village world more power and prestige than the village community, changes in discourse patterns also occurred. Knowledge about the world outside the village began to take precedence over knowledge about village life. Because most of the important things that women knew concerned village life, their central place in society in some ways lost value. Before the change, when both men and women lived in face-to-face relationships in the villages, women had the chance to use indirect communication effectively to influence events. With the men gone and the main power nexus outside the village, women’s ability to influence many events became more limited. The following chapters will provide more evidence to support the argument that changes in social organization and discourse patterns have disadvantaged Pare women.
Notes

1. The Usambara Mountains gained renown at the turn of the century as the site of the German colonial government and the center of German settlement in Tanganyika.

2. Kimambo feels that Upare's geography has extensively influenced its political development, when compared with the development of its neighbors. Lacking a "compact structure" for habitation, the Pare people are "less homogeneous" than the Shambaa. On the other hand Upare's "environment was sufficiently rich to encourage development of political institutions which were more centralized" than those of either the Taita to the east or the Maasai to the west (1969:13).

3. Throughout the development of what is now Pare District, this political unit centered in Ugweno is the only one referred to as a "nation" or "state".

4. The designation, the Tanganyika Territory, was introduced by the British in 1920. The name Tanganyika, which means "the land (Kiswahili:nyika) beyond Tanga" (the seaport city), was retained after independence in 1961 until 1964 when Tanganyika and Zanzibar joined together to become the United Republic of Tanzania.

5. Iliffe reports that rinderpest entered the northern part of Tanganyika early in 1891, possibly by way of Ethiopia where diseased cattle from India were brought by the Italian army (1979:124).
6. For one example of how a story functions emblematically for a society, helping "to constitute and reshape society," see Bruner and Gorfain 1984.

7. Privately run secondary schools may adopt variations on school curriculum and testing depending on their orientation.

8. There are undoubtedly exceptions to this generalization. Although, according to some teachers, there is no time in the schedule to teach extra material, Mwajabu Possi Kachenje, a Pare lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, described one case of individual initiative. In a primary school in Pare District where she taught, school personnel invited elders from the community to teach the students important local history like Mbiru. In a similar vein, important local history was not emphasized in any of my schooling in Ohio public schools.

9. Family tradition is one of the great repositories of culture. It contains clues to our national character and insights into our family structure (Zeitlin 1982:2).

10. Mama Upendo Mgaya, interview in Usangi, 10/15/90.

11. Interview in Usangi, 1/3/91.

12. Interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.

13. Hassani Minja ascribed the remark that "during Mbiru there was no peace" to his father, Chief Minja. Interview in Ugweno, 1/15/91.


15. Mzee Kime, from South Pare, interview in Lushoto, 10/13/90.
CHAPTER III

MBIRU: THE PARE TAX PROTEST, 1943-1947

Introduction

It will become clear in this chapter in what ways the eye of a folklorist adds depth, color and meaning to historical interpretation. In the case of Mbiru, three cultural practices figure prominently in the historic drama. These are: 1) the belief that one should not count one's possessions/wealth; 2) the "lukunga," the Pare call to arms/action; and 3) a threatening/cursing sequence, "kufololotia." Kimambo mentions the first two, although he does not grant them as central a role as this interpretation will, and, as already stated, he excludes the third. Learning not only how the use of these practices was interwoven with events but also how these practices actually influenced events provides important insights into Pare social structures and social relations during the Mbiru period. A folkloristic perspective reveals the intricate and changing nature of tradition.

One historical perspective influenced this research. Folk history is especially useful because it emphasizes what happened at the grassroots level in a community of people,
rather than with a small number of public figures acting within the seats of power, and how the "folk," e.g., the Pare people, perceive the events.¹ (Currently in folklore studies, the term "folk" is nearly synonymous with "group"). To that end, my analysis emphasizes what the folk did and what the folk said. Folk history enriches our understanding of events by its use of oral narrative accounts. Instead of seeking to verify events, I was interested in examining various interpretations of events in an effort to see multiple perspectives. This approach provides access to a repository of knowledge that is very important, a knowledge that is quickly slipping away with the deaths of the participants.

The fact that women (and gender relations) were placed in the center of the study opens the door for a further, more nuanced gloss on the Mbiru data. A new reading of events is not meant to replace former analysis, but should reveal a potential for complementary interpretations from multiple perspectives and provide more than one legitimate view of events. Rather than being an inquiry into what happened, this study is a search for meaning of the events from the people’s point of view, including the women’s point of view, while not excluding others. An inquiry is more than just gathering information and writing a report of what one learned. What is needed is a complete ethnography of communication in order to understand why people talk about what they talk about. People talked about Mbiru; some people had selective memories; some
people were shy about discussing certain events; others clearly revised history, e.g., when they told us that women did not perform certain acts of extreme behavior.

Rather than trying to reconstruct past events, we were looking at storytelling events taking place in the present for indications of how people continue to shape and reshape their identities, as individuals and as a people—the Pare—in relation to their different narrative interpretations of this past event. In other words, the goal here is not to discover or create the story of Mbiru but to study how stories of Mbiru continue to figure in people’s lives today. Stories of Mbiru are based on what people remember, and any subsequent analysis will be largely based on what these stories suggest about Pare society.²

The collection of eye-witness accounts of Mbiru revealed a series of dramatic events and a number of interesting historic actors from a variety of different perspectives. To construct my Mbiru narrative, I have used Kimambo’s material as a baseline and added information obtained in interviews with a large number of Pare. The oral testimony that people gave us is rich in small details and personal insights. With only a few exceptions, the women gave their testimony about Mbiru freely and enthusiastically. I have felt a heavy responsibility during the writing stage as I have used the texts constructed from the interviews to create a coherent story. It made no sense to me to write just the women’s
I wanted to integrate their testimonies into a multiple-voiced narrative so that a reader could glimpse what different actors were doing during the protest. It was also my intent to give the women's own construction of their experiences a central role. I am aware of the barriers to achieving this particular goal. The production of interview texts (see Chapter 4 for more about how the texts were constructed) required translation of the women's words from Kipare and Kiswahili into English and an interpretation of what the women's words meant. None of the three of us on the research team is a linguist, and the texts reflect our training and abilities.

I do not claim that my constructed narrative fully represents the women's view of events or the exact meaning of their words. However, I know how deeply I came to respect these women, and I have tried to the best of my ability to present their views as fairly as I could. I have repeatedly asked Pare women and other African women to read and respond to what I have written about Mbiru. I take their comments seriously, and I sincerely welcome further comments from readers. I intend to continue extending the boundaries of my understanding of this material and the issues it raises.

It is not surprising that the story of Mbiru gets told within the context of taxation. After all, Mbiru was a tax revolt. However, the choice, to begin by focusing on the colonial tax, conditions the way the story is told. Perhaps
one of the reasons that women get left out of the Mbiru story is that women were not taxpayers. In any case, starting with the tax issue is a good way to understand the economic relations between the participants, and therefore I have chosen to begin my Mbiru narrative that way. As the story unfolds, the reader will be able to judge for her/himself just how deeply the women were involved in the protest.

The Mbiru Tax Protest

In April 1941, the British colonial government asked the Council of Pare Chiefs to consider implementing a graduated local tax, the new tax to raise funds for the Native Treasury. New income was required to answer "a widely felt need [by the Pare] for an education system supported by the local government" (Kimambo 1971:8). "The Pare people were very much after education."

"The Pare were chosen for this new tax (to be used for local development) on an experimental basis, because the colonial administration believed they had demonstrated that they were progressive (Kimambo 1971:9).

The Pare had paid taxes on a regular basis since the imposition of colonial rule on the Pare Mountains in the 1890s, but for that long period each taxpayer had paid the same flat rate (Kimambo 1971:7). Just prior to Mbiru, ten shillings was the rate for all taxpayers, i.e., adult men. The ten shillings due for the Hut or Poll Tax covered the family of an adult man, with the exception that a Plural Wives Tax (Kiswahili: Mke wa Pili) of five shillings was charged for
each additional wife after the first. "If one’s husband was
dead the widow would not pay tax." Tax revenues were divided
80% to the central government and 20% to the native authority,
of which 10% was the chief’s salary. In contrast to the old
flat tax, the 1941 tax had different rates for different
people.

In precolonial times, "the most important symbol of
acknowledging authority was the payment of...tribute" (Kimambo
1969:108). Most Pare we interviewed knew about the tax called
mbiru from earlier times and several described it in these
terms.

In Kipare a "kivale" (pl:vivale) is six ears of
maize tied together. The Chief would distribute
land to people to cultivate. When they harvested,
everybody would pay "vivale" to the Chief according
to the size of the harvest.

Kivale was a tax of six ears of maize, or a cow or
goat. A person’s tax was from one to twelve
vivale. This was the chief’s income tax.

Tribute was also paid to ritual leaders in exchange for their
services (Kimambo 1969:92). In some cases chiefs ascended to
power based on their positions as ritual specialists. People
gave some of their harvest to the chief because the chief was
the one who slaughtered a goat for worshipping. The tribute
also filled a community need.

The whole harvest belonged to the chief but also it
was the treasury for the whole community. If there
was a shortage of food, then the chief would allow
food from his store to go to the people.

The Mnjama [Chief Minister] would assess what every
family would pay according to that year’s
harvest.
Then when "wazungu" (Kiswahili: white men) came they abolished mbiru and introduced a flat government tax [to be paid in the form of money].

In the 1940s the chiefs agreed with the DC [the British District Commissioner who administered Pare District] to use the "kivale" because they wanted something known to the people.

In the 1940s one "kivale" was equated to fifty cents, or half of one shilling.

The government did not remember that mbiru was refused by the Pare. When [the Pare] said mbiru should be abolished, the German government abolished it. But the British used it again.

Following the decision by the District Commissioner (DC) and the Pare chiefs to introduce the new stratified tax, government-sponsored meetings were held in all the Pare villages to explain the matter. Mzee Kiangi said the meetings did not provide satisfactory explanations about the tax.

I recall Chief Minja calling a meeting where Chief Kibacha Singo [of Same] addressed us saying that we would continue paying the ten shilling flat tax and people who had more income would pay more. Whenever a person spoke against the tax, Chief Kibacha would say, (Kipare) "Avata sheria ya Gavana." (He is tramping on the Governor's law).

Chief Kibacha visited the nine chiefdoms telling people about the tax, but in all the chiefdoms, people objected.

In spite of any objections, after a delay in 1942 due to a drought and the poor harvest that resulted, the first tax collection took place in 1943. A system was established whereby committees of elders would assess each taxpayer "according to their knowledge of each individual" (Kimambo 1971:10). As in the past, "mbiru was paid according to one's harvest—the more the harvest, the higher the tax."
Appeals were to be allowed for those who thought their assessments unfair (Kimambo 1971:10). Mzee Mohamad Makadi, who served as Mlao (Sub-chief) in Ugweno at the time of Mbiru, recalled, "the tax was assessed by the Mnjama (Chief Minister) and passed down to the Mlao (Sub-chief) and the Mchili (Headman) for action." In fact, people paid the new taxes for two years without serious incident. Although aware of some grumbling about the new tax during those two years, the government was in no way prepared for the massive protest that occurred during the first week in January 1945, the time when the payment of the next annual tax was due.

Beginning January 4, and for the days immediately following, thousands of men arrived at the District Headquarters in Same. Estimates of the size of the gathering range from 2,000 to 15,000. Kimambo thinks the truth is somewhere in the middle (1971:14). In a short time the men had set up campsites and stated their intention in clear terms—they were there to stay until the tax was abolished. Anyone familiar with the rugged highland terrain and with conditions in the mountains at that time would realize that the mobilization of such a large assembly on short notice signaled something momentous. That thousands of men had suddenly left their homes and families and walked to Same, the majority of them coming great distances, indicated an unprecedented unity of purpose. But if it was true that the Pare were not rebelling against the idea of paying tax--
after all, they had paid taxes on a regular basis for years—what was behind the revolt, and what do the particulars of this revolt tell us about the Pare and the times?

There is evidence that two important socio-political forces were influencing events at this time. In the first place, the Pare were increasingly dissatisfied with colonial rule in general and the actions of their chiefs in particular. Under the British system of indirect rule, the chiefs were supposed to represent their people to the government and the government to the people. By the 1940s the Pare considered the colonial government "to be corrupters of the chiefs" and their chiefs "to be behaving like tyrants" (Kimambo 1991:96). There were mechanisms available to the Pare during precolonial times which protected them from the tyranny of their Chiefs. The council of elders could remove a chief if a consensus was reached, although such a removal was rare, or people could move out of the community entirely if they felt unduly oppressed (Kimambo 1971:11).

A slightly different view of precolonial politics was provided by the Pare interviewed by Jean O'Barr in Usangi and Mbaga. They described a close relationship to those in authority, but admitted feeling "relatively powerless to remove the individual from office or to change the course of events" beyond what a person could do through the influence of kinship. They said that in most cases people simply waited for circumstances to change (1971:34-35). Moore reports that
the Germans eliminated the military functions of the Chagga age-class system, a change with political implications for the relationship between chiefs and their people. Previously a chief had depended on the age-class to enforce his authority, but at the same time this group held the chief in check. In the colonial period, the chiefs shifted their reliance to the colonial power "as the source of their legitimacy and effectiveness"; one result was that they were no longer accountable to their subjects (Moore 1986:96).

Secondly, by the 1940s there were signs of a rising African nationalism. In large part this spirit was fueled by a new breed of leaders--men educated in mission schools who began to challenge the existing system (Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first President, fits this profile.) Iliffe describes the ambitions of these educated young men as "a new and disturbing element in local politics" (1979:495). The African nationalism that was on the rise was a two-edged sword. In one direction this vital force was challenging foreign rule. In the other, the sharp edge of a new power block was beginning to chip away at the old order, embodied by the chiefs but co-opted and corrupted by foreign rule.

By August 1944, a year and a half after the introduction of the tax, there was a flurry of protest-related activity throughout Pare country. The nature of the activity and the identity of those involved tell a lot about the social change that was in process.
In the middle of 1944, people began to question the principles on which this tax was based. It was...not difficult to mobilise people against an unpopular tax. Outspoken leaders began to meet and discuss the behaviour of their chiefs. In this way informal committees were formed in many villages in all chiefdoms [and] petitions were made in different chiefdoms. Coordination was achieved by each village committee sending its envoys to find out what other committees were doing. In these meetings, they wrote down their complaints and elected delegates to present their case to the Pare Tribal Council (Kimambo 1991:91,96-7).

Although Kimambo uses the word "people" here, he is apparently referring to men. Our interviews revealed that these activities were things men were doing. In spite of the fact that only men were taxpayers, it is shortsighted to assume that women were not involved in the ferment over taxes. After all, family labor was required for agricultural work, whether food production for family, production of excess food for sale, or the production of cash crops. In addition, for a long time Pare women have produced baskets and pots for exchange or sale in regional markets, which also involved the development of extensive communication networks. It is clear that by this time Pare women were involved in the cash economy and shared the responsibility of providing money for tax payments, school fees and the growing list of desirable items that money would buy. In an interview, Aissia asked Mama Naetweeli Mbati of Usangi, "Why were women so angry during Mbiru?" Mama Naetweeli answered, "They were angry because of the tax. During our mothers' time a woman would pay tax for her husband."23 Mama Esteri Mikaeli Msuya (Aissia Ngadaya's
mother), born in 1914, recalls her involvement in the money economy as a child,

In order to get money to buy school uniforms, I had to buy pots at Usangi, take them to Himo [on foot, a distance of twenty-five miles] and sell them. The money was also used by my mother to pay the house tax of ten shillings per year.24

This last testimony indicates that girls and women were traders as well as producers for market, and this was indeed the case. Although she is writing about the Chagga to the north, Moore’s account of women’s markets hints at colonial policies which probably affected Pare women traders as well. According to Moore, large markets operated by women—as they are today—dominated local trade on Kilimanjaro from early times. One traveller reported visiting a market there in 1861 which had at least 500 women traders. When the German government attempted to take over control of these local markets in 1911, "The women continued to maintain one of the...markets in defiance of the government order." Although the government soon backed away from their original policy because of local resistance, this intrusion into local affairs disrupted women’s long-time right to control this kind of market, a right they never totally regained (Moore 1986:23, 102).

An important factor in the Mbiru story is that, while Pare men were utilizing newly adopted forms of political participation during the protest, the actions of Pare women followed existing patterns. By the time the protest ended
with the abolition of the tax in 1947, political activity and political power in Upare were defined in new terms. In large part the new politics were the outgrowth of mission education.

In providing Western-style education to relatively few Africans the missionaries sowed the seeds of revolutionary change by altering both values and the means of access to power (Robertson 1986:250).

Beginning in 1900 mission stations started to appear in Pare country. In North Pare, chiefs had already begun to face the difficulty of finding clerks and interpreters whose abilities to read and write, and to speak German and/or Kiswahili were required in their dealings with the colonial government. Observing that their Chagga counterparts were aided by the products of mission schools, Pare chiefs began to receive missionaries especially for education (Kimambo 1991:61). We have already seen that by the 1940s the Pare valued this new kind of schooling highly and were eager to expand such educational opportunities for their children.

It is easy to speculate that the chiefs had some ambivalent feelings about promoting this new education. After all they were of the old order. Chief Sabuni of Usangi, for example, was never literate. He was dependent in many ways on his educated advisers who were part of the new order along with the school teachers. The inevitable conflict between literate and non-literate is illustrated in this recollection by Mzee Kavugha Fanuel Simeon, a retired teacher from Ugweno.

Sabuni couldn't read or write. He closed the schools because of Mbiru. He went around to the schools and told the children, "Now, because of
your teachers, you will not be taught again." The children said, "You are the best paid man in Usangi but you can't read or write." Such a disrespectful remark by children addressed to the chief indicates the loss of status the chiefs suffered due to Mbiru.

Changes brought to Pare country by education relating to new experiences, organizations, ideas, and the new position in society held by educated people emerged in the Mbiru story. Mzee Simeon who was a teacher in Ugweno during the Mbiru disturbance, told us, "Teachers were hated by the government, especially Lutheran teachers. There were so many." The threat felt by the government may have been partly due to the number of Lutheran teachers, but probably more due to their growing influence and the fact that they were organized. At meetings of different kinds outside the district—an opportunity that came with literacy—educated Pare men began to develop new and wider networks, broaden their outlook, and in the process grow in self-confidence and status. To give just one example, when Usangi teacher, Fanueli Kaleya, was a member of the Pare Council of Chiefs prior to Mbiru, he represented that body at regional meetings in Tanga. In addition, the Lutheran teachers had formed the Lutheran Teachers Association specifically to negotiate with the government for salary levels equal to those of Native Authority teachers, and to address other grievances.

It does not seem farfetched to connect the series of letters, petitions and delegations to the new education as
well. Those who could read and write were using the new channels of communication available to them to send clear statements of their position: in a letter to King George; in letters to E. W. Mathu, the first African member of the Legislative Council in Kenya; (Kimambo 1991:112) in separate letters from Citizens of North Pare and Citizens of South Pare to the Chief Secretary of the colonial government in Dar es Salaam; and in letters to Mambolo Leo, the territorial newspaper. Delegations were sent to Dar es Salaam because, as Kimambo says,

> For some reason, the Pare had come to believe that somewhere in Dar es Salaam there was a just person whose duty was to look after the interest of "natives" (1991:98).

All these initiatives indicate that the Pare identified the problem as one of local administration, that is, with the DC and the Pare Council of Chiefs, and were seeking ways to reach beyond the problem area for a resolution.

Certainly teachers played a leading role in the increasing agitation against the tax. However, before long their role in the protest changed. As the DC and the Pare Chiefs began to take action against male leaders, a consensus was reached that the teachers should withdraw from any overt involvement because people did not want "the schools to be spoilt." As these teachers took their activities behind the scenes, leadership was taken up by cultivators and traders, many of whom had themselves been educated in missions schools (Kimambo 1971:12).
Open support for the protest held some risk for any Pare but was especially risky for those on government payrolls who could lose their salaried positions. Information obtained in interviews reveals a variety of imaginative ways many of these people supported resistance activities and the protestors covertly. This widespread backing of the protest by the people reveals the bankrupt nature of the colonial system with its pretense of legitimacy, "indirect rule."

As is the case with many conflicts, it appears that the two sides, the District Commissioner (DC) and the Pare Chiefs on the one hand, and those Pare protesting the tax on the other, were talking past each other. Representatives of the British government, mostly in the person of the District Commissioner, T.E. Pringle, headquartered at Same, devised responses to the growing protest. In the early stages of the standoff, the government refused to recognize the legitimacy of any Pare group other than the Council of Chiefs. Thus letters, petitions and unofficial delegations, which in reality represented the majority Pare position on the new tax, were rejected as having no authority. Late in 1944 the government moved to end the affair by identifying and exiling protest leaders, assuming that once a few troublemakers were removed, the affair would end. Because they did not understand the nature or the depth of the protest, colonial administrators blamed the chiefs for being weak. They demanded that the chiefs stand firm or face dismissal. As
Mzee Aza Mturi, Sabuni's clerk in the 1940s, told us, "DC threatened the chiefs, 'If you don't stand with the government, we will sack you.'"

These two social forces, one in decline, i.e., colonial rule, and the other on the rise, i.e., Pare (African) nationalism, were not discussed as such by informants living in Pare District, although some remarks pointed to them. When people told us what they recalled about Mbiru, almost everyone mentioned two matters as leading to the protest. These were, first, the confusion over the way the tax was administered and, second, the government's approach to eliminating the confusion. Because of the emphasis given these two matters, they could be viewed as the immediate, direct causes of the protest.

The new tax itself was anathema to the Pare. In 1943 and early 1944 there were many complaints from individual taxpayers about the particular rates they were assessed. It was clear that mechanisms set up to handle appeals did not address people's grievances satisfactorily. What is more, everyone's rates rose twice during the first two years of tax collection without adequate explanation, while "none of [the tax payers] could be convinced that he had become slightly wealthier" (Kimambo 1991:92). Additionally, little development of any sort resulted from the new tax, probably due to continuing pressures on the economy in wartime (Iliffe 1979:495).
Most of the evidence suggests that once the tax was approved by the DC and the Pare Council of Chiefs, its introduction was tacitly allowed by the Pare, who took a wait-and-see attitude, although some people said they never accepted the tax. In any case, Pares paid their taxes in 1943 and 1944. One could conjecture that there would have been no revolt over the tax if the Pare had been satisfied that it was administered fairly and their interests, e.g., increased funds for development, had been served. Despite oppressive colonial rule, the Pare might have survived their smoldering resentment until the country's independence in 1961, never having turned a spark of anger into the fire of revolution, as indeed did occur. But the following comments disclose how unacceptable the tax was in the manner it was assessed. Mwalimu Yese Marko, who was a young teacher just starting to teach in Usangi when the protest began, said,

> It was an unfair tax which was assessed by court elders and the chief. I say it was unfair because as a teacher I paid eleven shillings, but a rich shop owner like the late Mr. Solomon paid nine shillings only.\(^{16}\)

Peter Kisumo, an executive with Tanzania Sugar Corporation in Moshi and a former MP (Member of Parliament) representing North Pare, felt that the main problem lay with those people who were responsible for assessing the tax. He said,

> The problem started from the method of assessing individuals' income. It was not the tax structure. It was the crude method of assessing the tax. People who were assisting the chief did not assess themselves correctly. They went to the poor people and overcharged them.\(^{17}\)
According to Mwalimu Kaleya, people became increasingly unhappy about the tax. He told us,

> After paying it two years, then people found it didn't work well. Some people who had more money, more cattle, they paid lower mbiru. That's why they said, "Oh, this is not right."\(^{40}\)

Furthermore, the very nature of the tax—that it was stratified and its assessment required someone to judge what a fair payment was in proportion to what each owned—ran counter to one of the deepest of Pare cultural sensibilities. In 1944 the government decided the only way to answer the complaints was to record the property of each Pare. In this way, it was reasoned, assigned rates would be fair. However, the government's order to assess individual wealth was in direct conflict with the Pare convention that people do not count their possessions. In many ways this collision of government edict and cultural practice is the most interesting point of analysis, especially for a folklorist. At a time when there was a great impetus for accepting newly introduced ideas, practices, and social institutions, and in the process leaving some familiar ways behind, the very people who were in the forefront of change used this convention to rationalize their revolt.\(^{41}\) Discontent with the old order (the strange admixture of indigenous chiefly authority and foreign rule) had been growing apace. The friction generated when this government policy ran into this Pare ethic produced a spark that ignited a revolution, the turning of things upside down.
It was interesting to learn in what terms people referred to Mbiru. In the conflict between Igbo women and the colonial British government in Nigeria, the colonial government called the events that challenged their rule "riots" while the women involved talked of "war." I had this exchange with Mzee Kavugha Fanuel Simeon of Ugweno.

Q: You talk about "revolution" and "war."
A: This was a revolution. PC (the British Provincial Commissioner based in Tanga) called it "the war of the women."
Q: In what way was it a revolution?
A: People wanted mbiru to be abolished. Everything was a revolt. After Mbiru the chiefs were very afraid of the people. One of the chiefs used to say (Kipare),

Mpare kighera na nganga.
Kighera kiliwa.
Kishighwe kadengese.
(The chief is the iron. The people are the rust. The rust will finish the iron.)

Mzee Joseph Mgonza of Ugweno who was working in Moshi during Mbiru told about a visit by a male elder from Upare who asked for his support in "vita vya maneno (Kiswahili: a war of words), a war against mbiru."

Mama Magdalena Fundisha felt that the women took action because, "they were joining in the war of fighting mbiru with their husbands." Describing the men's preparations for leaving for Same, she said, "When going to war, you don't look for cars."

Mama Adija Hamisi recalled, "Food was contributed by every house whether they had a husband or relative in Same or not. Ne ngondo." (Kipare: It was war.) Mwalimu Mbia said, "It was a cold war."
Returning to the point that the Pare were told that their property would be assessed, the following statements given in interviews reveal people’s views of this matter. There appear to be at least three main themes in the statements on this issue. The first implication is that people believed that counting one’s property might bring something evil upon oneself. Sabuni’s Clerk, Mzee Aza Mturi said,

In our tradition we cannot count our property. It is not allowed to count your property. Even my children don’t know. My wife can know. Otherwise they (the animals counted) can die.”

Mwalimu Abdi Mkindi described this Pare convention.

Mostly, as we believe, we Pare, we never count children and cows. We just give them in numbers or in colors, but we never give a specific number, say 3 or 4 or 5. We believe that if you count your cows, 1,2,3,4,5,6, they will die... And even if you come to my children, I can just give you the names of my children, or I can say, but mostly, I can say I have two children, but I can’t count them, 1,2,3. “

The next statements might be read to support at least an appearance of egalitarianism in Pare society, in which people were not judged or regarded by the number of their possessions. Mzee Kaleya described the problem this way.

The people started to pay the tax but it became very complicated. There were problems because people didn’t know who was rich and who was poor. People didn’t like to tell. The people said it was illegal to tell the truth about their property.”

In his shop in Same, Mzee Richard Tekina explained this Pare custom to us.

Historically the Wapare refused to pay mbiru because it was graded, giving the reason that they are all equal. They don’t have rich and poor
people. Those with cows, shops, or those with shambas were all equal.\textsuperscript{50}

The following testimony hints that secrecy about one's possessions was a cultural norm. Mama Asia Ismail stated,

It was really based on guesswork as no Mpare would tell anybody what he owned.\textsuperscript{51}

When Aissia and Margaret were trying to help me understand this convention which many Pare continue to follow, Margaret said with a laugh,

Don't be like Mpare. You ask Mpare how many cows he has. He says two. He has ten.\textsuperscript{52}

Aissia agreed with Margaret, and added, "Pare will not even tell their salaries."\textsuperscript{53}

It appears that imaginative ways of camouflaging what one owned were an important part of Pare life. For example, a system of cattle loaning was common practice among the Pare by the beginning of the nineteenth century. (Kimambo 1991:23).

This system which continues in use is a creative way of concealing one's wealth. Aissia explained how this system works.

A person transfers a cow to another person to keep. The second person cares for the cow, takes the milk and the calves are shared, the first going to the cow owner, the second to the cow keeper.\textsuperscript{54}

This system benefits both of the participants. While the owners continue to hold title to their cows and can claim them at any time, they manage to conceal from scrutiny this part of their wealth and at the same time transfer the daily responsibility to another, a significant advantage, especially
if pasturage or labor is scarce. At the same time, the caretakers are able to start herds without any personal capital investment. Moore mentions a similar cattle loaning system practiced by the Chagga, a system that is not as straightforward as it appears. Because it is based on "hiding" cattle, there is a good deal of room for cheating (1986:69). Moore reports that although in Chagga society men have been the primary livestock owners, women could have property rights to livestock, which a woman obtained either through gifts from her father or through trade. In most cases, a woman had the prerogative to dispose of her own livestock (1986:66). Sometimes when a Pare woman married, she chose to leave her livestock or other assets at her natal home, since if she took them with her, these assets could have been perceived as the property of her husband and his clan and no longer her own.55

There may be another reason to explain the Pares' reluctance to have the number of their cattle a matter of public record in the 1940s. In earlier times it was the prerogative of the chiefs in many circumstances to make claims on cattle belonging to their subjects. Moore describes the situation for the Chagga in some detail. A chief was...under continuous pressure to keep himself supplied with cattle to maintain his position of political authority and inversely a great many of his exercises of political authority were also concerned with obtaining cattle (1986:63).
In this way, a chief was actually at the center of a cattle redistribution system. In this role he had access to a large number of cattle, through taxes, legal fees, and bridewealth payments for daughters and adopted daughters, and as the result of tribute and warfare. There were specific claims on the cattle he accumulated. He exchanged cattle for goods brought by traders, used them as rewards for special service, and slaughtered them for ritual occasions and to feed his people during famine (1986: 63-5). Under these circumstances, concealing one's cattle was a defensive strategy. One Usangi resident credited Chief Sabuni with abandoning this custom early in his reign. It is possible that in the 1940s the Pare feared a return to this arbitrary practice.

It appears that the practice of not counting one's possessions means different things to different people and it should be added that many Pare describe this practice as a very serious and important matter. Not counting one's wealth or one's children and concealing one's cattle wealth from view were conventions Pare follow. Looking at how the Pare used this custom to resist paying a tax they opposed provides an example of the role "traditional" practices have sometimes played in contemporary political events.56

Realizing the weight the Pare place on the taboo against counting one's wealth, it is no wonder that people were convinced their chiefs had been corrupted when they agreed to a policy that forced the Pare to break this taboo. Although
the Pare would not expect the British administrators to understand what was involved here—after all, they were not Pare—they would definitely expect the chiefs to side with them on this important issue. Two years of the new tax had revealed to the Pare that not only had the chiefs ceased representing Pare interests, but—and perhaps this was the most galling—the chiefs no longer were acting like true Pare as measured by adherence to "traditional" practices. During the first two years of the new tax system, a major impasse was generated. The chiefs were caught in an impossible position between the expectations of two groups, the Pare people and the British administrators. This impasse led to the gathering of men in Same and was broken by the women’s militancy in Usangi.

The Gathering of Pare Men at Same

The spark needed for the revolution was generated in Mamba, South Pare.57

On 4 January 1945, the chief of the area, Daudi Sekimanga, held a tax baraza (Kiswahili: public meeting) during which his people were required to pay the controversial tax. Some people did attend, but refused to pay the tax. As a result the chief arrested 44 of them and hired a lorry to carry them to Same so that they could be conscripted for labour since they had not paid their mbiru. About 300 other men who had attended the chief’s baraza started marching to Same to demonstrate their solidarity with those arrested. As they marched they applied the war cry known as Lukunga. This, together with the existing informal network of consultations, spread the information so quickly that in two days people from all parts of Upare had assembled at Same (Kimambo 1991:100).
Kimambo's use of the word "people" here is misleading and confusing. In the first instance, adult men were required to pay tax. In the second case, it is not clear, although it is assumed that taxpayers (men) refused. In the last instance men and no women assembled at Same.

The lukunga, the second Pare cultural practice of interest, was defined by our informants as either "a call to arms" or "a war cry." This call is controlled by definite rules, both about the circumstances under which it is sanctioned for use and about the response that is expected from, in fact, mandatory for, those who hear it. More details about how the Pare use this practice will emerge as the narrative continues.

Mzee Fanueli Kaleya remembered the meeting in Usangi when two representatives from Mamba told them,

"We are going to Same now. We want you to join us there." We agreed. So they said, "How can we inform people now?" It was about 7:00 in the evening. They said, "We'll use...(we call it lukunga): "uwi, uwi, uwi, uwi." When you hear this, then another one starts there and another one starts there till Ugweno. Chief Sabuni thought, "what is that?" He didn't know what was going on. Then people started going [to Same], up to morning, from 8:00 [p.m.]. They went to Same right then on foot. They took very little."  

Mzee Fundisha Kitia recalls,

I asked my brother when we will go to Same and he answered, "Tomorrow evening at 6:00 p.m. there will be a lukunga and all people shall gather at Solomoni Charles' place." So next day at 5:00 p.m. the yelling started, "Uwi, vantu vose na Same." (Kipare:All men to Same.) Someone [yelled] and anybody who heard yelled and men gathered from Kighare, Ndanda, Butu, and Mabweni, all at
Solomon's. And we started marching off at 6:00 p.m. We were many and we were shouting, "Vantu vose na Same!" Each man from Usangi had a packed lunch and we carried no sticks and no weapon. By 10:00 a.m. the next day we arrived in Same.59

Mzee Kavugha Fanuel Simeon was Head Teacher at Kifula Primary School in Ugweno when a man came on bicycle, beating the seat of his bicycle like a drum and shouting, "All men to Same."60

An innocent question exposed my ignorance about the mood of the men as they set out for Same. Trying to imagine what it was like to leave on this long journey on a moment's notice, traveling across extremely rugged country in the dark, I asked Mzee Hassani Kita if the men sang as they walked (his entire interview showed an especially ironic view of affairs.) He answered pithily, "You can't sing when you are after a lion."61 There were three other Pare listening to Mzee's story and they reacted to this statement with laughter and approval, displaying admiration for Mzee's choice of words. Later I interpreted this analogy to a lion hunt to mean that the mood of the men was extremely serious. The lukunga, the call to assemble ready for any exigency, had been used. The men were conscious of undertaking a risky expedition in rebellion against the imperial power, and they were anxious about the consequences of their actions.

The men stayed at Same for about two months. As their experiences were described to us, many of the men and events took on epic proportions.62 And because the successful defiance of the imperial government was due in good part to
the brilliant leadership of one small, charismatic man—Paulo Mashambo—he has become a legendary figure to the Pare. Mashambo was a retired Seventh Day Adventist preacher and self-styled "bush lawyer" who was very fond of "mashauri" (Kiswahili: advice, consultation), although he referred to himself as a peasant (Kimambo 1991:101). With thousands of men camped at Same, determined to stay there in defiance of the government until the tax was abolished, the potential for a violent confrontation was in the air. In 1945 World War II was almost over, but the special war powers imposed on the entire territory at the beginning of the war were still in effect. The men were treading a very fine line as they challenged the government at this time, and no one knew this better than Mashambo. Using wit and wisdom, he tweaked the nose of the colonial giant, and prevented anyone from being harmed in the process. The following points only hint at the drama of those days, but they do illustrate the legendary nature of the times.

Unity of Purpose

During visits to different Pare villages and later in Same, Mashambo told the men that only those who wholeheartedly supported the protest should participate. Anyone not fully committed should not get involved. Almost without exception the men who went to Same described an extraordinary unity of purpose. Several other Pare men echoed the sentiments expressed by Mzee Richard Tekina, "We did not know
each other but we had all one goal, to fight against mbiru." During the interviews we heard again and again, that nothing was stolen, "not even a pin." The good-natured sharing of space, of work routines, of food supplies was seen as something of a miracle. Mzee Mrema Kiangi recalled, "Nobody fell sick during the three months." Mzee Fundisha Kitia remembered that as soon as men arrived in Same,

Paulo said that tomorrow you should cut trees and build houses for yourselves and dig pit latrines for your use. One metre latrines were dug and inspected."

The men were called to daily meetings by the blowing of an animal horn. In the meetings different groups offered prayers in turn, and Mashambo and other leaders kept the men focused on their objective, constantly reminding them that their cause was a righteous one. If some men had problems at home, such as pregnant or sick wives or sick children, they were encouraged to go home. Many then returned to Same with food and other supplies.

The logistics involved in supporting the men’s demonstration at Same must have challenged the protestors’ resolve. Mzee Omari Mcharo of Ugweno recalled,

My responsibility was to carry food to Same. Food was contributed by families with men at Same. Women would prepare the food, such as pounding maize, etc., and we would collect it and take it to Same on foot. It took us two days to walk to Same (from Mamba, Ugweno). We used to carry food in rotation. We didn’t use the train as we had no money."
Girls and boys also carried supplies, often to a designated point where men from Same would meet them and take the supplies from there. According to Mama Raheli Salimu, "Food was contributed by all the houses, except the chiefs, whether they had a man at Same or not." Mzee Asseri Yoeli Maeda recalls that when supplies from home ran out, young men staying at Same were sent to buy food in the neighboring areas.

The men at Same were united in purpose and highly disciplined. After all they had been called to war. A line of further inquiry that would fill in interesting contextual information here would be to study the relationship between the men's actions during this time and Pare warrior training. No one we talked to made this connection. In this regard, one incident which was described by many of our informants involved the men treading to death an enormous snake not only without anyone being injured but, even more remarkably, without the men being aware of doing it. When I discussed this incident with Professor Kimambo, he connected it to a practice he described in his first book on the Pare,

a military procedure of testing the number of troops considered enough for one expedition: Nzovu [the Wambaga ruler in South Pare] is said to have slaughtered a big bull, then he had the hide pegged on the ground. The troops were ordered to walk on the hide and their number was considered enough when the hide was worn out into pieces. This practice is later mentioned in different parts of Upare, especially during the various wars and raids made in the nineteenth century (1969:98).
"Our Mouth Will Be Our Weapon" 

Under normal circumstances the lukunga required men to respond with weapons, prepared for any emergency, but in this case, the Pare realized that any sign of a weapon would give the government an excuse for using force, even deadly force, against the protestors. Therefore all weapons were banned at Same. The government brought armed troops to Same but realized the limitations on using them. The British administrators threatened the men, telling them they must disperse or be shot and ordered the askaris (Kiswahili: police) to fire to frighten the men, but the guns were fired into the air. The Secretary General of Tanganyika continued to advise against the use of force during Mbiru and his counsel held (Kimambo 1991:116). Unless the colonials were willing to kill the men, the guns were only for show.

When the Governor of Tanganyika, Edward F. Twining, came to Same from Dar es Salaam to view the situation for himself, the Pare staged an imaginative tableau that communicated solidarity, determination, and peaceful resistance. Thousands of protestors lined up in single file on either side of the railway track on which the Governor's train would arrive, each man holding green leaves, but "not even a stick." In addition to this dramatic scene he orchestrated for the governor, Mashambo was highly imaginative in the way he waged the "war of words" (Kiswahili: vita vya maneno).

What the crowd at Same seems to have loved Paulo for most was his spirit of defiance...
European came to address the crowd in Kiswahili, Paulo would interpret the speech into Chasu. In most cases, if there were orders aimed at breaking the demonstration, he would distort them. Since many in the audience could hear Kiswahili as well, they would follow Mashambo’s version with enthusiasm. For example, if the DC said: "You must now go home," Mashambo’s translation would be, "you must sit down" (Kimambo 1991:103).”

This mischievous playing with language was possible because the colonial officials did not know Chasu (Kipare).

Although none of our informants mentioned the connection, I am interested in the possibility that Mashambo and his Pare audience were acquainted with the secret Pare language called kinaua. Characterizing kinaua as double-talk, William O’Barr describes it as not restricted to the use of any particular language, taking different forms, and communicating messages on two levels. "Kinaua is used by anyone who does not wish...to speak openly." During the time O’Barr did research in Usangi in the late 1960s, he was told about how this kind of double-talk was used by the Pare in the German colonial period. One earlier incident he relates and Mashambo’s manipulation of the situation at Same point to a practice that was familiar both to Mashambo and the Pare men who were listening to him.

The term kinaua appears to have emerged during the German colonial period when double-talk was an important means of helping resist European incursion into Mlimani. It was the practice of the Germans to call the [Pare] to meetings, often at considerable distances from their homes. At these meetings, the officials would announce plans for public work projects and taxation. To gain compliance, the Germans directed the chiefs and headmen to order their people to do as told. The
chief of Ngua, a sector of Mlimani, reached an understanding with his people that they would do the opposite of whatever he told them in the meetings which the Germans called. Thus, standing before his people, the chief would say, "Come, let's work on the road." As he spoke, the people would run away as quickly as possible. The name kingua literally means "the language of Ngua," but it has come to signify any kind of double-talk in which people hear one thing but understand another.

During the colonial period, kingua expanded to include non-verbal forms of communication. The traditional baragumu ram's horn which had served to call the community together came to signal just the opposite. And gestures, an aspect of the culture which Europeans tended to neglect even when they attempted to learn the local language, became an additional base for indicating intended versus the overt meanings (O'Barr 1976C:124-8).

There are two reasons I have expanded on this incident here, although I did not have an opportunity to follow this lead while I was in Pare District. First, it introduces another fascinating aspect of events during Mbiru. One wonders what other interesting stories about this secret language or other forms of resistance that confounded the colonial rulers are alive in the memory of older Pare, stories that demonstrate the ingenuity and determination of strong, proud people. Because it challenges the standard view of "colonized" people, this kind of information illustrates the importance of folk history. We are not going to learn from the colonial record about a secret language that befuddled the representatives of imperial power, exposing their vulnerable position. This point will appear again, that resistance to authority is one function of folklore, and that "the powers that be" may not have as much control as they believe.
The second reason for discussing *kinaua* is because of my interest in Pare discourse patterns. O'Barr observed in the 1960s that the Pare continued to use *kinaua* as a form of political resistance in their dealings with the post-independence bureaucracy in the 1960s. He attended a meeting of a Village Development Committee (VDCs) with district officials, a meeting in which elaborate plans were made for a road building project. After the meeting ended and the officials left the village, no further action was taken by the villagers who themselves had no vehicles or any prospect of getting any, and had no intention of widening the roads for others. During the meeting they made a pretense of compliance to avoid trouble (1976C: 128-9). (See Caplan 1992 for an similar example of a public meeting in which citizens on Mafia Island in Tanzania listened politely to autocratic government administrators, made a pretense of agreement about a development initiative, and afterwards ignored the entire matter.)

When Mwajabu Possi Kachenje, a Pare lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, read this passage about *kinaua*, she said that some Pare know a secret language called *kindema*; Pare women especially use this secret language as indirect communication.

**Massive Support**

Support for the protest extended far beyond the camps at Same and the mountain villages. Financial support for protest
activities was contributed by Pare employed outside the district and from sympathetic neighbors, e.g., the Chagga and the Kamba. According to Mzee Asseri Yoeli Maeda, "Even people from Chagga helped with bananas." Anna Mgaya told us the following.

Normally the Kamba tribe which originated from Kenya was not close to the Pares. However, since the Kambas were also living in Upare, they were subjected to mbiru tax. Kamba men therefore joined the Pare to protest in Same and their wives joined Pare women during the protest at Chief Sabuni's court.

Workers on the train (not necessarily Pare) that ran between Moshi and Same facilitated a flow of essential supplies from rail stations at the foot of the mountains to Same, at no cost, and some informants told of people riding the train free of charge. Pare employed by the government who worked in Pare District found ways to help the cause. For example, some passed insider information from government meetings to the protestors and reported on what government officials were doing. Others used government vehicles in their charge to transport supplies and protestors between Same and the villages. In each village people were organizing food and other necessities which were then transported, often by foot, to Same. The opposition to the tax was far-reaching and dedicated.

Of course, there were Pare who did not join the protest. In certain cases the choice to support the chiefs rather than the protest was easy, for example, if someone had a special
relationship to the chief, although some of those close to the chiefs sided with the protestors. Feelings ran high about the tax and caused divisions in communities and families. Mwalimu Jonathan John recalls the difficult position in which Usangi teachers found themselves.

We teachers of Usangi (NA) Native Authority Primary School were accused by the DC that we had taught people to refuse to pay mbiru. In fact we asked him to deduct the tax from our salaries because we were afraid of paying it openly. One could be beaten or even killed by unknown people. One man who did not support the protest was beaten and left unconscious at the Sereni area.

Although Mzee Ngomoi, who had a salaried position as driver for the chiefs, did many things in support of the protest, he recalled, "I felt that my life was in danger because of driving the chiefs."

"Women's War is Not Good"

My study of the women's participation in Mbiru sought a window into Pare women's political activity in the 1940s. The insights gained would then serve as a reference point against which to juxtapose women's current political activity in order to track social change. To accomplish this objective, this inquiry set out to learn a number of things about Pare women's participation in Mbiru. What exactly did the women do during the protest? Did they hold meetings; if so, what kind of meetings and for what purpose? Did the women make plans, devise strategies, purposefully confront the authorities, knowingly take risks? Who were the women who emerged as
leaders, how were they chosen, what special characteristics did they have? Although we were seeking specific information of this kind, the research team was most interested in what the women would tell us about Mbiru without being led by our questions. What did they remember about Mbiru and what would they choose to tell us? Before undertaking interviews, we constantly reminded ourselves that our best approach was simply to encourage the women to tell their own stories of what they experienced during Mbiru. As we became caught up in the drama of the story, it was not always easy to maintain this standard.

The Mbiru experience was different for men and women. Men either joined the resistance, which culminated for most in the mobilization at Same, actively opposed the protest, or somehow managed to straddle the fence between the warring sides. For most Pare women, Mbiru meant the disruption of life in the villages because of the absence of so many men. For those women who actively opposed the tax, Mbiru involved their own protest actions in the villages, and, in the case of Usangi and Ugweno women, their few intense days of harassment of the chiefs and confrontation with the tribal police. Some of the people we interviewed provided intriguing bits of information about women’s protest activities in villages other than Usangi. We did conduct some interviews in Ugweno, the one other division (Kiswahili:tarafa) in North Pare. In Ugweno we heard first person accounts from women who had
participated in protest activities in Ugweno and Usangi. However, there were neither time nor funds to pursue all the leads.

Usangi: February 20-22, 1945

In the same way that the Mbiru rebellion was the result of certain conditions, both contemporary and historical, of Pare life, the women’s violent outburst must be viewed as an effect with a specific cause or causes. Exactly what led to this extraordinary eruption of high feelings on the part of the women? This section will follow the women’s activities which climaxed in the violence in Usangi between February 20 and 22, 1945. The women’s rich personal testimonies provide important insights into social relations of the period that will be useful when we turn to contemporary life in Usangi.

Binti Ngido of Mshewa, Usangi, was the first Pare woman we interviewed. Almost all of her testimony is included here in order to show the comprehensive nature of many of the stories people told. The information was given with very little leading. After our unannounced arrival at Binti’s house, Aissia explained who we were and what we were doing. She then asked Binti to tell us about Mbiru. Aissia provided encouragement with voice and gesture to keep the narrative moving, at the same time trying not to interfere with its flow. Their dialogue was in Kipare. Among other elements, Binti describes in detail the lukunga that called the women together, the women’s challenge to the chiefs, and the
confrontation with the police. The formulaic nature of the 
lukungu is revealed in the women’s testimony. In this case, 
the call to action is followed by a clearly stated threat for 
anyone who does not respond promptly.

**Aissia**: When did Mbiru start?

**Binti Ngido**: It started when the chief ordered men to pay a 
tax called "vivale." This tax was paid after harvest. The 
Mnjama [Chief Minister] would assess what every family would 
pay according to that year’s harvest. This tax kept on rising 
every year. People were not happy with it. They asked the 
chief to abolish it but he said it was an order from the DC. 
I was a married woman with children. My husband had gone to 
Same to protest. We were therefore supplying food to the men 
at Same.

**Aissia**: What kinds of food?

**Binti Ngido**: The food included bananas, maize, beans, cassava, 
flour, etc. These were taken to Kisangiro (a railroad 
station) by girls and boys. Women had been quietly 
questioning about the inaction of the chiefs regarding the 
men’s protest to Same. Suddenly one morning I heard yells, 
Uwi. Vache vose na kwa Sabuni. Esikafume 
eseshotia nyumba. Vome vetu vakomwa uko Same. 
(All women to Sabuni’s court. Whoever will remain 
behind will have her house burned. Our husbands 
have been murdered at Same.)

We all marched to the chief’s court. Everybody was singing 
and dancing. The leaders asked Sabuni to bring back the men 
or come out and have sex with all the women. We pushed up our 
clothes and bent over our backs (Kipare:kufololotia) and 
invited him to have sex with every woman. We were dancing and 
singing,

Sabuni, kakicha u mme kweri, fuma ushughulikie ava 
vache vose. 
(Sabuni, if you are a real man, come out and have 
sex with all of these women.)

We surrounded the house singing and dancing. At noon women 
from Ugweno joined us. We spent the whole night dancing. 
Some of us from Usangi went home and brought food to our 
colleagues (Kipare:vaghenji) from far away. Dancing continued 
the whole day. At about three in the afternoon police 
(Kiswahili:askaris) came with guns to rescue Chief Sabuni. 
They chased us away by using the butts of their guns. We ran 
to all directions. I remember running through banana 
plantations, up the mountains and coming back to my house. 
Some women got hurt when they ran and were hospitalized. 
However, I have forgotten who they were.

I recall that during the protest Minja [the chief from 
Ugweno] was sick in Usangi Hospital. Some women followed
him to the hospital and found him being nursed by one of his wives who had no child. They sang and danced. The song said, Minja, you are sleeping with a barren woman. Come out and have sex with us. We will bear a lot of children for you.

Some women were yelling, Minja is dead. He will not come out of the hospital alive.

When he heard that askaris had come to rescue Chief Sabuni, he asked them to escort him to Ugweno safely although he had not been cured.

Soon after the women's protest, our men came back from Same and the vivale tax was abolished. Men continued to pay a flat government tax of ten shillings.

Aissia: Who were the women leaders?
Binti Ngido: Miriamu Luka, Nanzala Abraham, Namshali Shedeewa, Nakiete Kaingwa.

Aissia: What kind of women were leaders?
Binti Ngido: The leaders were women who could talk, argue and who could settle problems between fellow women.

Aissia: Was it normal for women to behave the way they did (kufololotia)?
Binti Ngido: No, it was not normal. It's done in very severe cases. In fact I have never seen it again up to today."

Making observations about this substantive testimony will aid in connecting the women's experience to that of the men and provide a foreground for other important information about the women's actions. A main interest is to learn what Binti considered important.

Binti was knowledgeable about the tax and about different protest activities. She played a part in supplying food to the men at Same, her husband included, and with other women was "quietly questioning about the inaction of the chiefs."

People were not happy with the new tax nor with the person to whom they normally looked for leadership, Chief Sabuni.

As with the men, the lukunga ("uwi") called the women to action. The particular lukunga that Binti described has a coercive element. Although the rules that govern the use of
the lukunga include definite obligations for people who hear the call, only one informant mentioned that an explicit threat was part of the lukunga that called the men to action. Mama Perpetua David Msuya recalled her father telling her mother,

"All men are going to Same to protest against the tax." Then mother said, "How can you go when you are related to Chief Sabuni?" My father answered that he would go because he could not afford to have his cattle taken away."¹

A second man in his testimony told about a different kind of related threat used by his brother. Mzee Fundisha Kitia of Usangi told this story,

I decided to pay mbiru but my brother Elirehema told me, "Fundisha, you are my brother, but if you don't want to join hands with other men, then you and I will part. If you get any problems, even if someone in your family dies, I won't come to assist you." I decided to follow his advice and went to Same."²

These testimonies reveal that the rules governing the lukunga emphasized solidarity and group action in crisis situations.

Although only two men mentioned the coercion attached to the lukunga, most of the women told us they could not disregard the call, and that the call included an explicit order such as "all women to the court" and a threat if the women did not respond to the call. Mama Magdalena Fundisha recalls a meeting in which women decided to enforce the element of coercion in the call, "We agreed that those who do not come [in answer to the lukunga] will have their things taken."³ Returning to Binti's story, the last part of the call to action, "Our husbands have been murdered at Same,"
carries the force of symbolic overstatement. The women used other strong symbolic language, for example, as they sang about Chief Minja's death knowing well that he was listening to them, and then taunting the two chiefs with sexual invitations that impugned their manhood.

Binti's story builds to a climax, the scene in which the women first confronted the chiefs and then were chased by the police, causing some of the women to be injured and hospitalized. Her short summary recounts that the men returned from Same, the tax was abolished, and life in Usangi returned to normal. Along the way she tells how the women demonstrators managed to eat. And in answer to follow-up questions, she gave her ideas about leadership and showed that she considered "kufololotia" a very serious matter.

At the end of the interview Aissia asked Binti whether "kufololotia" was normal behavior for the women. Although Aissia knew the word, she knew it as an action. When she transcribed this interview, Aissia translated the Kipare word "kufololotia" into English as "bending over our backs," its literal meaning in Kipare. At this point we did not know how to use the term nor did we comprehend its meaning. Based on information we had about other incidents of women's militancy in Africa, e.g., the Igbo Women's War, Aissia and I next referred to this practice as "a sexual insult." Before long, in our discussions with academics at the University of Dar es Salaam, we were told that "kufololotia" is a curse, and we
began to use that term. As we talked with other people about this cultural practice, we continued to refer to it as a curse, as did those with whom we talked. It was only as I began to do a thorough analysis of this practice in conjunction with folklorists at Ohio State University that it became clear that there were serious problems with categorizing this practice as a curse. My analysis in Chapter 5 will show how the category of "curse" gets in the way of understanding how this cultural practice "empowers" women.

After this confused beginning we began to ask questions about whether "kufololotia" continues to be used. It has been a struggle to gain much information about this practice since many people would not talk about it at all, while others would only make minimal or indirect references to it. The reasons that information about this practice was not easy to get are an important part of the research findings and they will be discussed later.

As stated, this practice will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 5. However, so that the reader does not misinterpret the place of the women's action in the Mbiru story, one point should be made here. It would be a mistake to view the women's extraordinary behavior as deviant, as breaking established rules of behavior. The women's behavior fell within the rules; this type of behavior was sanctioned by society for women's use although only under certain conditions. This argument is supported by Shirley Ardener who
found similar practices used by Bakweri, Balong and Kom women in Cameroon. Ardener says,

[Bakweri women] were prepared to act in a manner not usually expected of them. The women, including those who were highly respected in their communities, participated in behaviour which they would normally consider "shocking." It was clear that their participation did not bring them into disgrace as one might expect, but on the contrary, it reinforced their dignity. ...in some societies behaviour which is normally forbidden may be "licensed" or prescribed for special occasions..., but such behaviour could be regarded as having been specially sanctioned or redefined for the occasion by general public opinion as "permissible" or "non-obscene" (1975:ix).

Ardener compares these actions by African women with similar ones taken by American women during the Second Wave of the women's liberation struggle in the United States which began in the 1960s. She gives as examples disruptive behavior and obscene language. Ardener argues that American women who engaged in militant behavior on these occasions were not just acting haphazardly but were following certain prescribed patterns of civil disobedience. Ardener's argument aids us in placing the Pare women's actions in the appropriate context. Ardener says that this behavior, shocking under normal conditions, reinforced the Bakweri women's dignity because their behavior was sanctioned under the circumstances.

Ardener's point has support in studies on crowd violence by E.P. Thompson (1971) and Natalie Davis (1973). Work by these two historians emphasized cultural elements over socioeconomic ones. Their analyses of the social composition of crowds has changed the perception that rioters were "unruly
mobs who committed random violence without rational goals and motivations" (Desan 1989:52,47-8). Thompson and Davis were interested in "the ritualized and theatrical aspects of crowd action as cultural and communal expression" and in showing "the rational, indigenous nature of crowd activism" (Desan 1989:48,56). They concluded that the rioters in their studies were motivated by shared community notions of justice that the participants believed legitimized their actions. Davis and Thompson were convinced that the rioters in their studies were not simply prey to external determining forces in history, but instead played an active and integral role in making their own history and defining their own cultural identity (Desan 1989:55).

In the incidents Thompson (1971) and Davis (1973) studied, the threat of crowd violence influenced those in authority to take ameliorative action in order to avoid further violence.

Having shown the abundance of valuable information in Binti's story, the next section will sift the other testimonies in order to collate the women's Mbiru experience, focusing on the points most important for this research.

**Talking, Meeting, Planning Strategies; Leadership Emerges**

Mama Tapita Azaeli from Ugweno described women's meetings in which women regularly discussed matters that concerned them, suggesting that they were comparable to men's meetings. "At that time men used to meet to discuss issues concerning them... Also women used to meet to discuss issues concerning them." Mama Mariamu Kisengu'a's testimony implied that the
Ugweno women saw themselves as political actors capable of influencing events. "My husband also went to Same. The women met and discussed action to take in order to bring the men back." According to Mama Perpetua Msuya, Usangi women demanded action from Chief Sabuni.

My father also went to Same. Back home women leaders like Mama Luka Kaasha talked to other women about going to Chief Sabuni to demand the return of their husbands.

Mama Magdalena Fundisha recounts the meeting in which women from many of the sub-villages agreed to add the explicit element of coercion to the lukunga.

We women who were left in Usangi, we met with other women from Ugweno, Butu, Toloha and Ruru. We agreed together that we should go and ask for our husbands, where they are and when are they coming home. We agreed that those who do not come [in answer to the lukunga] will have their things taken.

The women's strategic planning described in testimony from two different areas included women in two sub-villages collecting money in case one of them would be injured. This testimony directly contradicts an image of passive, weak women, helpless without their husbands. These women meant business.

My mother [Namshali Shedehewa] was appointed, like a chairman, in this village here. She held one meeting up there somewhere at a place called Kwanakimbu. She collected women there and they donated some money, they started to make a fund. Each woman, as far as I can remember, she donated ten cents. That money they collected, just because...--suppose when they go to Mbiru, in case if you get injured, that money you can get as assistance.
The second example refers to a meeting of an established women's group. Mama Mwanasharifa Mangare gave the following account.

For us from Kighare, we had a union/society which met up the hill at Mbalwe. Here women met to discuss what could be done because the men had been taken to Same. Then we agreed to contribute ten cents each so that whoever will be hurt, honey could be bought for her to drink.  

As people related their experiences, the women leaders came vividly to life. They were portrayed as being courageous—unafraid of anything or anybody, and as Kiswahili speakers who could speak forcefully in public. We interviewed Mama Helena Ashighiwa, a leader of the women's protest in Ugweno, who was about 90 years old at the time of the interview. In the courtyard near her house, Mama Helena added drama to her personal experience testimony. Part of the time she sat in a chair opposite her audience, which consisted of Aissia, myself, Helena's daughter-in-law holding a baby, and several other children. To demonstrate different scenes, at times she moved around, she picked up items to use as props, and she added sound effects as needed (for the complete text of the interview with Mama Helena, see appendix or Chapter 4; for a full analysis of the interview, see Chapter 4). Aissia asked some follow-up questions.

Aissia: What were your responsibilities as a woman leader?
Mama Helena: Yelling, leading women during the protest, and making sure women responded to yells. In fact I was a church elder even before Mbiru.
Aissia: Did you attend mission schools?
Mama Helena: Yes, I can read and write.
The next day, another leader, Mama Saliha Kinanja, added further details to the scene that Mama Helena had depicted.

I was good at yelling. Therefore I would yell and my friend Helena would announce the purpose of the yell. So I would yell, "Uwi!" and Helena would say, "All women should go to Minja's court." ¹⁰⁴

The Women Meet the DC and the Chiefs ¹⁰⁵

On February 20 District Commissioner Pringle and Chief Kibacha of Same went to Usangi with a single purpose in mind—to meet with Chief Sabuni to identify the troublemakers ¹⁰⁶ (men leaders) and decide what to do with them in order to end the protest. ¹⁰⁷ The women had other ideas about Pringle's visit.

From the time the men had gone to Same almost two months earlier, Pare women had faced increasing hardship and tension. ¹⁰⁸ For the women this translated as an increased workload, much greater responsibility, and a high level of anxiety as the protest dragged on.

After staying for some time without any news or the return of the men, the women started feeling uneasy. ¹⁰⁹

This uneasy feeling was not without cause. The women knew that the men were taking a serious risk in their challenge to the imperial order. The women were receiving reports from Same that armed soldiers were threatening to shoot their husbands. Indeed, their husbands were in a very dangerous situation. There was an additional worry on the horizon. The long rains would begin sometime in March, and the planting
season demanded the labor of all family members to get the crops in the ground on time.

On this particular day, the women heard that the DC would be coming to Usangi and there was an expectation that he would tell them when the men would return. But how did the women know that the DC was coming to Usangi that day? We asked this question of Mama Haika Malaki Mrindoko of Usangi.

We knew because whenever a guest comes, people are asked to contribute food for the visitors. We are normally asked to contribute bananas, beans, eggs, chickens, etc.¹¹⁰

The account of Mzee Justine Ndama who was a court messenger in Usangi adds another perspective.

Some of us who were government servants did not like mbiru. Therefore we secretly reported the arrival of the DC to the women and encouraged them to protest.¹¹¹

The question, to what degree did the women’s actions that day reflect their being "instigated" by the men, is open to interpretation. Colonial officials in Tanganyika were convinced that the women had been instigated to take action by the men. This attitude matched that of British administrators involved in both the Igbo Women’s War in Nigeria (Van Allen 1972) and the Harry Thuku incident in Kenya (Wipper 1989), who could not imagine that the women involved—who were all but invisible to them—acted on their own (see Chapter 5 for more on these incidents). The implication from some of the interviews we conducted with Pare men was that the women’s actions were the direct result of men’s prompting. This
interpretation is probably misleading. Of course, the male protestors were using every means possible to succeed in their cause, and so it follows that they would encourage the women in the villages to put pressure on the chiefs, and there is evidence to that effect. Usangi teacher Gerson Marisa, a prominent leader of underground protest activities, "was helping the women to organize themselves to go and ask for their husbands." Mzee Asseri Yoeli Maeda remembered that men were sent from Same to Usangi "to give the information that women should go to the court to see the DC."

But focusing primarily on what the men did leaves the impression that the women were only secondary actors waiting around to be told what to do. It is probably nearer the truth to see the protest movement as widely based, with men and women united in purpose, working in different locations with varying levels of commitment, performing different tasks, with different sets of leaders, but with both men and women as agents in the political process--interdependent rather than independent or dependent. (The word agent is used here to mean "one that acts or has the power or authority to act." In this regard, one cannot be reminded too often that if the men confronted the colonial authority directly and aggressively, they put themselves in mortal danger. And the women, were they at risk? Since women in groups were collecting money in case any woman was injured, we must assume
that the women were aware of risks involved in taking action, and that they meant to take them.

With the women in Usangi expecting to hear something about the men from the DC, the lukunga called them to the court. "Uwi. All women to Sabuni's. Whoever will not go will":--and here there was some variation--"have her house burned down and her bananas cut"; or, "have her pots broken and her banana trees cut"; or, "pay a fine," etc. With the exception of those who had close ties to the chief, women responded, some admittedly out of fear of the consequences if they did not. The reader should note the serious nature of the consequences the women faced if they ignored the call. Obviously, having one's house burned would have been a disaster. But also, the cutting down of one's banana trees which produced the staple food crop for the Pare, the breaking of the family's pots used for cooking, or even having to pay fines, perhaps of money, poultry, or livestock, would have been major calamities. The women went to the court singing and dancing. Some people estimated the crowd of women between 500 and 600 at the height of the protest. At some point Usangi women were joined by women from Ugweno who had been making frequent visits to their own local court in Msangeni to meet their chief, Chief Minja, and had only the week before faced down DC Pringle.

Some sources told us that Mangi (Kigweno:chief) Minja was not at the meeting where the new tax was adopted, that he had
never voted for the tax, and as a result, he was somewhat out of favor with the Council of Chiefs. Knowing this helps make sense of the following testimonies. Mama Raheli Salimu recalled,

Minja told us [at the court] that mbiru was brought by Sabuni. Therefore he told us that we should go to him.

Mama Esteri Mikaeli told us,

When men were in Same, women went to Chief Minja to ask when their husbands would come back. Chief Minja told the women that they should go to Chief Sabuni because he was the senior chief.

Mama Zubeda Hasani Msami recalled a scene at Minja’s court.

We heard yells that all women should go to Chief Minja’s court. So I left my baby with his sisters and went to Chief Minja’s court. At Msangeni all women who had babies were allowed to go back home to look after them. I therefore returned home. I heard that women spent one day and night singing and dancing. They asked Chief Minja when their husbands would come back and he answered that they would come back soon.

One of the leaders already introduced, Mama Helena Ashighiwa, describes the women’s encounter with the DC in Ugweno.

All women went to Minja’s court and the DC came. Then we asked him, "When are our husbands coming back?" He responded that they will come back soon. We spent the whole night singing and dancing at the court. In the morning the DC wanted to leave but we stopped the car. We threw stones at the car and broke the glass. Chief Minja asked the women to let the DC go as the men would soon come back. The DC was therefore allowed to go. In the following week we heard a yell from Usangi,

"Uwi! Vache vose na kwa Sabuni. Pringoli eza Vusangi kutuwira iti vome veza rini."
(Kipare:Uwi! All women should go to Sabuni’s. Pringle is coming to Usangi to tell us when our husbands are coming back.)
Some informants said that one day when Chief Minja was not there, Ugweno women threatened to use "kufololotia" at the court but were persuaded by the mnjama (chief minister) not to do so. Mama Mariamu Kisengua had heard that the women did perform this act at the court.

The DC and the chiefs must have felt under siege during the time the men were camped in Same, for wherever they went in the district, they faced the possibility of being confronted by angry women, who were shouting, singing and dancing, and throwing stones. Mzee Ngomoi, who drove for the Pare chiefs, gave this testimony to Margaret Mshana.

Ngomoi: The chiefs decided to go to Gonja. When we arrived at Gonja the place was full of women. The women were angry. Some had sticks and wanted to beat the chiefs. They demanded for their husbands and they demanded the chiefs to make them pregnant. They prevented the car from moving, so I had to push them aside. I forced our way out and came back to Same.

Margaret: Therefore women participated in Mbiru with men.

Ngomoi: Women gathered food and sent it to Maore. If they found a chief [in the village] they would dance [a threatening dance] for him. Sometimes they would hit him.

Margaret: So they were ready to hit the chief?

Ngomoi: Yes.

Margaret: Therefore the chiefs feared the women?

Ngomoi: No chief went there [to the villages] after the incidents.

Mzee Kime corroborated this story, "In Gonja, women stoned the DC. They said to the DC, 'What are you doing here? Our husbands are there.'"

There were also some stories about the presence of women at Same while the men were there. Two South Pare women were described by some informants, one as part of one delegation who stayed in Same for a time, and the other, a woman
dressed in black who sang a mysterious sounding song that our informants were not able to interpret. Two informants told us that South Pare women had gone to confront the DC at his headquarters in Same, singing and dancing throughout one night. Although their culturally specific message was undoubtedly lost on Pringle, their anger and disrespect were communicated in clear terms. They demanded their husbands be released; they invited Pringle to come out and impregnate all of them since they presently had no husbands; they dirtied the place, and they focused "kufololotia" at Pringle.

Although there had been a great deal of disruption all around Pare District for the better part of two months, a point of climax was reached on February 20 in Usangi. Mama Haika Mrindoko, whose arm was broken in the fracas on February 22, described the scene in Usangi.

When the DC came to Usangi he found women seated at Sabuni’s court. The women leaders asked the DC when the men were coming back but he didn’t respond. The women were very angry. All women surrounded Chief Sabuni’s court singing and dancing. They said to him, "Our husbands are in Same while you are just sitting there" [my emphasis].

Mama Asia Ismail was not old enough to participate, but she was an observer of some of the Mbiru events.

I was a "grown up girl" when Mbiru was taking place. Girls did not participate in the protest to Usangi but we saw what happened. I recall hearing lukunga. The yell was "Uwi! Kibacha ne Sabuni na vafwe. Vome vetu veko nyika na unyi mwehujiye chwi he nyumba jenyu. Vache vose na kwa Sabuni." (Kipare: Attention! Kibacha and Sabuni should die. Our husbands are in the wilderness and you [the chiefs] are in your houses.
All women should go to Sabuni’s place [my emphasis].

These testimonies reveal the women’s frustration with their circumstances and with their leaders. Their lives had been badly disrupted. How could the chiefs, who were supposed to represent their interests, continue to live normal lives while most people could not? These statements appear to be in the same vein as the women’s invitation to the chief to come out and have sex with all of them. This invitation seemed to be emphasizing certain sentiments to the chief. How dare you have a normal life when our lives are far from normal, and it’s your fault. Instead of showing their usual respect for the chief, they were ridiculing him.

The songs the women sang followed a call and response pattern with impromptu topical lyrics that ridiculed the chief, some mourning his death, some questioning his virility. Some songs were ironic, some humorous. All were full of symbolic messages. In the following example provided by the women dancers, the women sang about Sabuni being dead and flies buzzing around his dead body.

Mainoro (Sabuni) afwa majingo naiki sindaki jirawela. Yee jirawela, ombe Mainoro afwa majingo ahee naiki sindaki jirawela ehee jirawela. Ombe ni kuvwire ai Mainoro afwa majingo hee majingo na iki sindaki jirawela aiee jirawela. (Kipare: Mainoro (Sabuni) died last night and flies are still buzzing. Yes, they are still buzzing. Yes, I tell you, Mainoro died last night. Yes, last night and flies are still buzzing. Yes, they are still buzzing.)
The question of embarrassment about the women's actions surfaced in testimony that described the songs the women sang. We heard statements from several women similar to this.

Women sang and danced. Christians sang Christian songs, Muslims sang Islamic songs, and others sang traditional songs.  

After learning about the nature of what they categorized as traditional songs and the kinds of extraordinary behavior the women engaged in, it is hard for me to imagine that religious songs were sung in this atmosphere, although religious songs have often been used as political weapons (Desan 1989:69). Information obtained by follow-up questions reinforced this doubt since several women told us only traditional songs were sung. However, one should not rule out the possibility that at some point in the proceedings, women sang religious songs, or, some women may have sung some songs and others different ones.  

Professor Amandina Lihamba from the University of Dar es Salaam Department of Theatre Arts, who has done studies on how women communicate, said this about women's dance.

Dance is a specific cultural expression. Women use existing cultural expressions or they adapt old ones into new forms. Women feel their emotions. Often women do not talk about [their problems/ lives], but communicate in indirect ways about them. Sometimes women describe their oppression through dance or songs.  

During the morning the women kept the DC, Chief Sabuni, and Chief Kibacha confined to the court building. Mwalimu Kaleya's description conveyed the intensity of the scene.
There were very many and Sabuni tried to talk with them politely but they didn’t care [laugh]. So Sabuni could not go home for lunch or for anything.134

Mama Mwanasharifa Mangare described one incident.

Then Abeli (Sabuni’s son) brought a thermos flask with tea. He was told, "Yes, now you have brought this flask. Make sure all the children get the tea before your father does." Then he said, "But why don’t you let father drink a little?" His father told him, "Take the tea back." The son was told, "How could he drink the tea when our children are hungry? After all, why should he drink it? He is the one who put our men in the wilderness. Even if you had twenty flasks, they would not be sufficient anyway."135

In our quest for information about these days, Margaret Mshana and I met on two different occasions with four women who had participated in the protest in Usangi (see Chapter 4 for more about these meetings). At our first meeting, the women, together with three younger women they had invited to join them, danced and sang as they remembered doing during Mbiru. During our second session, the four women, Margaret and I took "a battleground tour" around the court area in Usangi while the women reconstructed the events that took place there. Both sessions, which we tape recorded, proved to be great fun as well as producing valuable images of people, places and events.136

We heard an extraordinary story from several sources—that one woman even hit the DC. As we stood near the court, the four women agreed that no one hit the DC, but that Namshali Shedehwa, one of the Usangi leaders, did knock the DC’s lunch out of the hands of the official cook who was
taking it to the guest house where the DC was waiting to eat. The lunch fell into the dirt and was ruined. Chief Sabuni saw this happen and called, "Look for the woman. She must be found." As Margaret and I stood near the guest house with these women, they demonstrated how all the women had raised their kanga (traditional cloth wraps) in order to hide Namshali who quickly ducked down out of sight and escaped punishment for her bold act.\(^{137}\)

Bishop Mshana who watched this scene from a short distance recalled,

...they [the women] got so angry that they started to break up the [guest] house. What I saw is that house was thatched with grass and they were pulling the thatch.\(^{138}\)

Namshali’s son, Abdi Mkindi described the next scene.

So the DC went out. He entered into his car. He wanted to drive it, but my mother told all the women to catch the car so that he couldn’t move. But later on, they found they couldn’t hold the car, so they let him go.\(^{139}\)

One woman who responded to Namshali’s order, recalled,

Then the chief told the DC to start the car and leave. We were holding the car to stop it from leaving. When he started the car, we fell down and other women fell on me and I got hurt. We went to the hospital and got medicine. At the hospital the dresser was laughing at us that we were fools to think we could stop a car from leaving by holding it.\(^{140}\)

The DC faced more obstacles as he attempted to leave the village. Some people had put logs on the road and smeared cow dung on the logs so that the car would slide off the road. Stones thrown at the car broke some windows and the DC
suffered minor cuts on his face. One person told us he had heard that women lay down in the road to block the way although he did not witness this himself. 141 Somehow the car and the DC made it to Same.

Chief Kibacha was not so fortunate. He tried to leave the village, too, but angry women prevented him from reaching his car and chased him into the bush. As he made his way back to Same on foot, children added to his humiliation by setting the bush on fire behind him. 142

Unfortunately for him, Chief Minja of Ugweno also happened to be in Usangi that day, at the hospital where he was being treated for diabetes. Women from Ugweno "found the car which had taken the chief to the hospital and threw sand at it," 143 and "they threw stones on the [hospital] windows and made a lot of noise to bother the chief." 144 We already heard Binti Ngido's description of the women's challenge to the ailing chief to leave his barren wife and come out and have sex with women who "will bear a lot of children for you." 145

The Inspector of Police who accompanied the DC to Usangi and back to Same reported the situation to his superiors.

On leaving Usangi with Political (DC) today 20/2/45 car was mobbed and stoned by women. We got away but Chief Kibacha and...[a] Sub-Inspector of Police were cut off. Owing to lack of news from them it appears that they and Chief Sabuni are in danger and must be released. Have arranged with Moshi to send 20 men tonight with [the Inspector of Police]. Will proceed to Usangi to relieve the Chiefs (quoted in Kimambo 1991:105-6).
Kimambo comments on this report, "Actually, the incident seems to have been much more harmless than that" (1991:106). Perhaps knowing in hindsight that no one was killed during the entire Mbiru rebellion, Kimambo will not be faulted for this throw-away remark. However, some skepticism remains about how harmless the women’s challenge to the authorities was because of another cultural practice that people told us about. Aissia Ngadaya reported a conversation with Mzee Tuvana from Ugweno.

Mzee Tuvana told about a Pare tradition that if men are away [from home], it is very dangerous for other men to go there. If one gets hurt or even killed, there is no case, that is, you cannot prosecute a woman. Other men would ask, "What were you doing with our wives?" Therefore if anything would have happened to Sabuni [in the absence of men], it would not have been possible to prosecute anybody.  

C.K. Omari, Professor of Sociology at the University of Dar es Salaam and a Pare himself, supported Tuvana’s statement, but added that to the chiefs, "these women are a threat, not physically," but because of their ability to use "kufololotia." He said,

The curse is the most feared. So men must behave so they don’t reach to that state, because if you reach that state, whatever will happen to you is more serious than if you fought with spears and arrows.  

And the women did direct "kufololotia" at Chief Sabuni during those days of defiance. There was inconclusive testimony on the question of whether women performed a similar act for Chief Minja or not. However, several people told us that,
when Mbiru was over, a cleansing ceremony was held at Minja’s court.

Mama Kisengua: Later Chief Minja called all the people to a ceremony. This included school children. He slaughtered cows and everybody was given meat. Some people interpreted this ceremony as a way of cleansing his court against the women’s curse.

Aissia: Did the chief announce the purpose of the ceremony?
Mama Kisengua: No. He probably told the elders.
Aissia: Why do you think the chief was cleaning his court?
Mama Kisengua: The chief, like everybody else, knew that the women’s actions meant death to the chief. Therefore every sensible Mpare/Mgweno should have cleaned his compound/court.

Margaret: There is a story that after Mbiru, the chief slaughtered a cow to cleanse his court. Is this true?
Mzee Ndoile: Normally at the end of abnormal happenings he would slaughter a cow for prayers and he would invite people to eat.

Mzee Makuku from Mamba, Ugweno, stated,

After our return to Ugweno, court leaders slaughtered a black bull to cleanse the court, as the women had brought a curse to it.

Kimambo identifies black as a symbol of purification used by the Pare in rituals that emphasized peace and harmony (1969:89). Although we asked many people about it, no one told us that any similar ritual was held in Usangi at the end of Mbiru.

The events mentioned so far all happened in that first day but the women were not yet finished. After the DC left Usangi, they continued to hold Chief Sabuni hostage at the court until the police arrived in the night to rescue the chief and take him home.

Chief Minja of Ugweno...was so afraid that he too asked to be taken home to Ugweno (Kimambo 1991: 106).
The women were busy dancing in the court. One of the women recalled,

We knew nothing inside the court. We were singing... Then we went outside under a tree and sat... Around the Msembea area I could hear, "Hu-ru-ru." I told my colleagues, "Stand up, the cars have arrived. You will die if you sit there." ...We went up and down the hills. Then we heard the soldiers’ marching feet, "Paa!" You know how men are. "Uwi! Uwi!" Some [women] went out through windows. Some fell down... [Namshali] said, "It is ordered that tomorrow we should all go to Sabuni's place." The dance was incredible. Next morning it was announced, "Anyone with a baby should go to breakfast and come after breastfeeding. Any woman who will refuse to come back will have her house burned." I went home, breast-fed my child, and fed my cow. Then we went down.151

The intensity of the women’s harassment of Sabuni may have even increased at his house. Bishop Mshana, who was a school teacher living near Sabuni’s compound, recalled,

It was dangerous to be near. The women, they were serious. Even the chief’s children couldn’t play around at all because as I say, it was dangerous. Those women didn’t come there to play.152

One woman who was there described the exchange between the women and Chief Sabuni and his family.

When it was sunset we arrived at [Sabuni’s] place. Yulia, Sabuni’s wife, took a cooking pot and threw it at the banana grove. A sound, "Poo," was heard. [The pot broke—a bad omen.] She asked, "Why are you here?" We said to her, "The pot you broke won’t harm us. The bad luck will come back to you." Sabuni said, "You know, old Naheja is my age mate. How dare you shameless children follow me around." He was told, "You should impregnate all the women here to prove you are a man." Abeli said, "This is his own house, built by him. You attacked him at the court. What are you looking for here?" He was answered, "He never worked in sisal plantations to cut sisal. It is through our husbands’ money that this house was constructed."
Show us where you helped cut the sisal." He said, "Aa, I have nothing to say." The women entered the house with their bamboo sticks (mijungu) and drums. Some of them sat outside. I climbed up the hill. What sounds from drums and dancing sticks from inside the house! A large group of women remained at Sabuni's house until they were dispersed by the police on February 22, the third day of the protest action. With songs, dances, gestures, and verbal insults, they had communicated clearly their lack of respect for the symbol of authority—Chief Sabuni.

Sometime on February 22, the police arrived to free Sabuni. Despite all the domestic responsibilities the women had such as feeding and caring for their children, they had managed to keep the pressure on Chief Sabuni for more than forty-eight hours. The following testimony of North Pare women is part of the colonial record. On 22/2/45 the DC came again together with the Police Officer and two other Europeans whom we do not know. Thirty native soldiers came with them. They surrounded us on the northern side. The DC said to us, "I give you two minutes...to think and if you are not prepared to go you will see something happen." A whistle was sounded and the soldiers started chasing us and beating us on our buttocks with their [gun butts]. Some of us had babies [on our backs] while we were being chased. Sixty-four women got injured; three women were admitted in hospital (Kimambo 1991:106). There is little doubt that the show of force—guns being fired into the air and the police charge using gun butts or sticks to prod the women—was terrifying to the women involved and to others watching. Women told us about their confusion. Some even got lost on their way home. One woman, arriving at her
neighbors' house, said, "Mama, all women are dead. I am the only one left." Halifa Njarita of Usangi shared his memory of the incident.

At that time women had gone to Chief Sabuni to ask him when their husbands would come back. Ugweno women also came. My mother also went with a baby on her back. When police came, she hid behind banana trees. Then police saw her and told her to come out as they would not shoot her. She came back home and told us, "I met the DC. He is a good man. He didn't kill me." I cried when I saw my mother.

If there was one woman in addition to the leaders who attained notoriety during Mbiru, it was Mama Haika Mrindoko, whose arm was broken in the altercation with the police. Almost every person we talked with suggested that we talk with her.

I was accidentally hit by a gun. In fact the policeman who hit me was very apologetic. I was sent to the hospital by fellow women and spent twenty days there. Several other women were treated in the hospital and discharged. These were the ones who fell while running away from the police. At the hospital people brought me food and came to visit me all the time. In fact the time I spent in hospital was so enjoyable that I put on weight. Back home women were bringing grass for my cattle. I had a shamba (Kiswahili: farm) of rice and they helped to harvest it for me.

Mama Helena Ashighiwa recalled interesting encounters with the DC and the police.

A man called Andrea of Usangi told us that Pringle would come the following day with police. He told us not to be afraid. He further said, "The police are carrying flat pieces of sticks (Kiswahili: mabua) to frighten you. Don't run away until the DC tells you when your husbands will come back." Then the DC came with the police. He asked me, "Unatoka wapi?" (Kiswahili: Where do you come from?) I answered that I came from Ugweno. He gave orders
to the askaris to chase us away. They used the sticks to hit us on the buttocks. Women ran away crying. In the process some fell and hurt themselves. I didn’t run. I remained standing up. Then one policeman came to me and asked, "Unafanya nini?" (Kiswahili: What are you doing?) And I responded, "Nimechoka." (Kiswahili: I’m tired.) Then I left and found some of the Ugweno women on the way.158

Other women were also remembered for their determination, for example, this testimony given by Mama Perpetua Msuya about Mama Miriamu Luka.

Women ran away, including my mother, but some women, for example, Mama Luka Kaasha, resisted by holding onto banana trees.159

The aftereffects of the injuries the women suffered served as constant reminders of their confrontation with the police. Haika Mrindoko says her once-broken arm "hurts at times, particularly before the rains."160 Nakazaeli Tenga recalls, "Miriam Luka had a finger broken during Mbiru which was crooked until she died."161 This was confirmed by Miriamu’s daughters who said their mother’s ribs were also bruised.162

Pare communities also suffered injury from the upheaval. The government closed the NA School (Native Authority) in Usangi and some students lost a year of schooling. A number of those who received government salaries, i.e., teachers and civil servants, were "sacked" or transferred. Kimambo notes two direct consequences of the women’s violent actions in Usangi.

First, it stopped the pattern of negotiation which had been started by the leaders of the demonstration at Same. The second result was that the government took a more serious view of the
demonstration than it had hitherto done. Only 500 women were able to shake the whole security system. What would happen if the thousands of men at Same were to become violent? (1991:107).

The number of police was increased immediately and on February 24 two companies of the King’s African Rifles were dispatched from Moshi to Same.

Peter Kisumo commented on this development.

Peter Kisumo: The British government thought there were some people in the forest who masterminded the women and they regarded it as a plot against the queen. They brought in the King’s African Rifles. They went into the Kindoroko Forest to search whether there were people hiding there who were masterminding the trouble.

Margaret Mshana: (Remembering from her childhood) Now I get it, why there were askaris in Kindoroko.

Peter Kisumo: All the forests, trying to find who was the big brain masterminding all this trouble.  

Obviously it was not easy for the British administrators to concede that a large number of Pare were protesting the conditions of colonial rule. Rather, they imagined a conspiracy by outsiders who were plotting against the Crown.

As the police and the army moved into the district to restore order, the men at Same were initiating a new plan of action. Before February ended their delegates had hired an Asian lawyer from Tanga to represent their position. When his advocacy did not produce the desired results, in September they hired a British law firm in Moshi, concluding that they "should get an advocate who is European, who knows the government and their tricks."  

As previously mentioned, eight men involved in the protest were exiled to different remote regions of the Territory between April and June. For
some reason Mashambo was not among them. Some thought the British feared his power. Kimambo believes he was untouched because his leadership was non-violent (1991:116). Although Pringle was replaced in July, 1945, it took the new DC more than a year to comprehend fully that the Pare were not going to accept this tax. As he tried to hold onto the failed policy during his first year in office, the new DC found himself and his wife in the middle of a near riot in Bombo, South Pare. The government's intransigence set off another Mashambo-led demonstration at Same, although this one involved only about 300 men. This new protest, although small in comparison to the previous one, demonstrated that people continued to oppose the tax. Before long, the colonial government decided to abandon the mbiru tax. By 1947 peace had been in large part restored and the Pare were again paying a flat tax (Kimambo 1991:115).¹⁶⁵

Looking Back at Events

As a result of Mbiru, a dramatic change occurred in the Pare political equation. According to Mzee Kaleya, "The chiefs were not happy after Mbiru. They had lost power."¹⁶⁶ Through their successful challenge to the British imperial government and the Council of Pare Chiefs, the Pare people realized increased political power. "This episode was the beginning of the Pare protest movement which Nyerere's TANU later incorporated in the sweep to independence" (J.O'Barr
1975:24). The awareness of their new clout empowered those leaders who had emerged during the protest.

...what was learned by the various Pare leaders about organization and mobilization continued to be used in the years that followed. It is not accidental that the political organization known as the "Wapare Union" was born before the end of 1947 (Kimambo 1971:27).

This statement does not apply equally to the men and women who were acknowledged as leaders during the protest. Men who emerged into leadership roles during Mbiru continued to influence political life, with implications beyond their own district. In 1948, partly as a response of Mbiru, a new system of Pare Advisory Councils was introduced in which council members who advised the chiefs were chosen in public elections. An all-male, more representative council was elected from two groups: the young educated men and the male elders (Kimambo 1991: 119-120). No women were chosen.

Although the women leaders of the tax protest are still remembered by some Pare as heroines, their opportunity to increase their political power in public life was quite limited. There is no evidence that the influence of these women reached beyond their own villages, except possibly indirectly, that is, through certain men.167 This point returns to a major theme of this study, that the change that was occurring did not affect women and men equally or in the same ways. The fact that different levels of influence resulted for the men and women who served as leaders of the protest continues the theme of growing gender imbalance. The
experiences beyond the home villages that many Pare men were having had equipped them to operate effectively in matters outside the district. In this respect, women were behind the times; they were not ready to be, nor was society ready for them to be, full participants in the new power structures that would carry the territory into the post-independence era.

There is no doubt that Mbiru acts as a major historical marker for the Pare. Mzee Elieho K. Shishira told me,

People dated things in relation to Mbiru, World War I and II. The group at Same was a big gathering, the biggest they had ever attended.¹⁶⁸

Many Pare remember Mbiru in personal terms. The protest had affected their lives in very real ways. Many of the testimonies revealed just what that meant.

The father of Naetweeli Mbati who was a Mlao (Sub-chief) in Usangi was away from the village during the protest. Because his wife took part in the protest with other women, Chief Sabuni and another local official boycotted Naetweeli's wedding and forbade their daughters, Naetweeli's closest friends, from serving as her attendants.¹⁶⁹

It is customary for Pare mothers to choose the names for the newborn (W.O'Barr 1973:50). Names given to babies born during Mbiru connected the births to the troubled times. Babies born to Mama Mariamu Kisengua and Mama Adija Hamisi during Mbiru were called "Nampingu" (Kipare: Handcuffs). As Mama Mariamu told us, "It was war and people were handcuffed."¹⁷⁰ "Masumbuko" (Kipare: Problems) was the name
given to the baby born to Mama Saliha Kinanja, "because of what his father and I experienced." Some people even carry the name, "Mbiru."

The women's testimonies bear witness to other hardships of those days. When they heard the lukunga, many women put their babies on their backs as they answered the call. Women had to arrange to nurse their babies, feed their children, find others to care for their children, and get food for themselves and other women protestors. Some women were able to leave their children with old women (Kipare: valala), who were not obligated to answer the call to action. Those women who had special worries at home, such as pregnant daughters or small or sick children, were excused from the obligation to participate fully. Some Pare who were children at the time of Mbiru have vivid impressions of taking food to their mothers who were protesting at the court. Others were in school when the askaris chased the women and they remember climbing out classroom windows to see what was happening to their mothers. Some heard gun shots for the first time in their lives.

This new account of the Mbiru story does more than just add new facts and offer new perspectives. It helps us understand how normative patterns of discourse at several levels, and notions about politics that do not recognize women as political actors, have restricted talk about and misrepresented the particulars of the women's participation in this event. To understand fully what Mbiru meant to the Pare
people, the women’s stories and stories about the women, HER-story, must be added to the historical record. Some would say these stories are about trivial things, while "real history" is about "important" events that have little to do with everyday life.

The women’s history movement has many different elements: the need to make the invisible visible, the desire to provide role models and empower aspirations, the possibility that by setting a number of life histories side by side, we will be enabled to recognize common patterns of creativity that have not been acknowledged or fostered. The process starts with the insistence that there have been great achievements by women. Inevitably, it moves on to a rethinking of the concept of achievement (Bateson 1990:5).

There are several competing discourses that affect what people know about such events as Mbiru. Each time a new discourse is introduced, the old ones are never the same again. The colonial discourse about an incident like Mbiru describes unrest, rebellion and "spontaneous" uprisings. The African male historian’s discourse adds to the record by describing the meetings, plans and strategies of those men who were resisting foreign domination. This discourse about women’s political activity adds another dimension to and demands a place in the Mbiru story.

Everyone involved in the Mbiru incident used the resources at hand to support his/her position. People opposed to the tax were very creative. Godwin Mbati said that people could not accept the tax, "especially educated people."172 In this statement, education was a rationale for resisting the
tax. Several participants made references to Christianity in support of their positions in the protest. Mama Upendo Mgaya said that some Christians were questioning,

Why should we pay mbiru to a man? As Christians we should give tribute (thanksgiving after harvest) to God only. People told their chiefs that paying mbiru to human beings was unchristian.¹⁷³

Mashambo quoted the Bible and told people not to be afraid, "The people of Israel were troubled for a long time but God heard their cries."¹⁷⁴ Mzee Kavugha Simeon recalled that the DC used a biblical passage to support his demand that the Pare pay the tax, "Do you remember the Bible, render to God and render to Caesar. The Wapare are refusing though some are Christians."¹⁷⁵ The chiefs' driver, Mzee Ngomoi described another Bible-related, in this case, subversive activity.

We used to communicate secretly by using the old and new testaments. One would read John, chapter 12, 20th verse, or read Joshua, chapter 12, verses 13-30. The messages would be put in an envelope and sent to the addressee. On receiving the letter he would read the passage and understand the message.¹⁷⁶

Mzee Ngomoi also described an ingenious strategy used by some protestors, "Zefania Maneno collected 30,000 or 40,000 shillings to pay tax for people at Moshi" (Kilimanjaro).¹⁷⁷ Although the tax rate in Kilimanjaro was slightly higher than in Pare District, people chose this action as a way to defy the government and yet avoid prosecution for nonpayment.

The men protesting the tax used every means available to them. Iliffe states that some young Pare men opposed the mbiru tax because it was "unknown" to them and quotes one
young man as saying this tax was "reminiscent of the uncivilized and barbarous state of the community" (1979:495). Those men who could write in English composed letters and petitions and others hand-carried them to their destinations. Pare protestors hired European trained lawyers to represent them within the colonial legal system. But these men, educated in new ways, did not overlook the power of ideology about what they considered "tradition" when they argued that they could not break a rule that forbid counting one's possessions. They used this Pare convention and every "modern" means at their disposal as weapons in their political fight.

During Mbiru women protestors also used their resources to support their position. They met in their established groups to discuss what to do. There has been a good deal written about autonomous women-only groups in Africa which have a long history of collective activity.

Traditionally, [African] women came together to promote their common economic, political, and social interests... [T]he persistence, variety, and number of these associations illustrate the reality of female bonding (Wipper 1984:69).

In group meetings, Pare women decided to coerce women to participate in the protest against the newly introduced tax; they were not content to leave the decision whether to participate up to individual women. Women leaders were chosen in part because they could speak for the women, not only in the vernacular but in a "modern" language, Kiswahili.
Ultimately, the women used "kufololotia," a powerful cultural resource. The analysis of "kufololotia," in Chapter 5 reveals this cultural practice to be a complex communicative device which accommodates a sequence of messages. The cursing act itself, called "women's ultimate weapon" by several Pare, is used only when the series of messages has been ignored. It is not too early to wonder whether Pare women are still using this weapon and how its use might have changed with the changing times. If it is no longer used by Pare women, what other resources do contemporary Pare women have to take its place?

Conclusion

By placing these women's practices within the larger context of the resources in general used by the Pare during Mbiru, we can see their importance. As we have seen, Mbiru was an event involving an important point of contact between an indigenous culture and a colonial culture. A large part of what we know about this event is contained in a historical record inscribed in the colonial mode of writing. Most of what we know about the Pare men's involvement in Mbiru is their involvement according to colonial means of jurisdiction and legal practice. Although the men's protest—a show of force and a series of negotiating sessions with the seated government at government headquarters—was not considered legitimate by the colonial officials in this case, these particular means of protest were recognizable to them. In
fact, the whole discourse of what this event was has been written in the Western style of historical documentation, based in part on written records.

The women’s practices were not really within the colonial mode of discourse. In order to understand this better, both why the women’s involvement was not discussed in the earlier histories and what is it that happened, we have to move to an ethnographic understanding of this culture and its practices. Chapters 4 and 5 continue the data analysis. In Chapter 4, four interviews provide more information about the women’s political activities during Mbiru and Pare women’s culture. Chapter 5 seeks to broaden the understanding of "kufololotia" and the other cultural practices used as weapons by the Pare women during Mbiru and still used by some Pare women in certain situations.

Notes

1. It appears that "the concept of history from below entered the common parlance of historians" after the publication of an article, "History from Below," by Edward Thompson in 1966.

   Thompson...identified not only the general problem of reconstructing the experience of a body of ‘ordinary’ people. He also grasped the necessity of trying to understand people in the past, as far as the modern historian is able, in the light of their own experience and their own reactions to that experience (Sharpe 1991:25).

   "Folk history" is similar to people’s history but has a special interest in cultural settings, cultural expression and cultural identity. Any connotations of marginality or low
socio-economic status previously associated with the term "folk" have been abandoned.

2. Most of the data in hand was collected from North Pare people. It follows that the version of Mbiru events we heard is skewed in the direction of their experience. However, many of the people with whom we talked were knowledgeable about Mbiru events and actors in South Pare as well.

5. Mama Haika Malaki Mrindoko, interview in Usangi, 9/19/90.
10. Peter Kisumo, from Usangi, interview in Moshi where he is living, 1/7/91.
11. Mama Fatuma Ngido, interview in Usangi, 9/16/90.
14. Mzee Aza Mturi, interview in Usangi, 9/18/90. It was difficult to get a clear idea about the value of one shilling at this time. For his work with the Moshi Trading Company, Mzee Joseph Mgonza received accommodations, enough posho (a mixture of maize flour and beans) to live on plus fifteen shillings per month (interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90). As the driver for the chiefs, Mzee Ngomoi was paid from ten to
fifteen shillings per night, about which he said, "It was a lot of money" (interview in Same, 1/31/91).


16. A very large percentage of our informants mentioned this point, that during Mbiru when they asked the chiefs to abolish the tax, they would pass the responsibility for the tax to the British.

17. Mzee Mrema Kiangi, interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.

18. It is interesting to note that prior to the introduction of mbiru, the "Chagga, Haya and Ganda all rejected [an experiment with a graduated tax system] for fear of partiality by the chiefs who would make the assessment" (Iliffe 1979:494).


20. The hierarchy of chief and advisers included:

   Mfumwa -- Chief
   Mnjama -- Chief Minister
   Mlao   -- Sub-chief
   Mchili -- Headman

   (Mzee Mohamad Makadi, interview in Mwanga, 9/17/90; also Kimambo 1991:31).

21. Although Kimambo gives January 4 as the day the mobilization began, two logbooks kept by Usangi residents give January 8 (Mzee Mavura) and January 9 (Mwalimu Kaleya) as the day the men left for Same.
22. Davidson states that by the end of World War II (1945) it was "recognized even by convinced imperialists, [that] all the colonial systems were deep in trouble" due to "a condition of poverty and social upheaval". Although Davidson believes that before 1947 African nationalism was not yet a recognizable force (1983:83-85), the Mbiru uprising provides evidence of its beginnings.

23. Mama Naetweeli Mbati, Usangi.

24. Interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90.

25. Using the term "education" in this context is not without problems. Certainly the Pare were "educated" prior to the colonial episode. During my year of research in Tanzania I asked many questions about the "old" educational system. There is no doubt that the introduction of mission schools and Western-style "education" led to enormous social and cultural change. One of my main interests is understanding the consequences for women of leaving one system for another. For now I will follow Dr. Kimambo's lead and allow the word "education" to stand for the "new" education.

26. Interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90.


29. The government paid three-fourths of mission teachers' salaries while the missions paid the remaining one-fourth. Mwalimu Fanueli Kaleya, interview in Usangi, 2/6/91.

30. According to Mzee Manyari Mareale Omari Liana and Mzee Yusufu Mavura of Usangi, "people who could read and write wrote a letter to King George of Britain complaining that the Governor of Tanganyika and the local chiefs of Upare were charging the local people a tax called mbiru, and people were totally against it. The letter was posted in Nairobi by the late Mzee Abraham Filipo." Interview with Liana and Mavura in Usangi, 9/28/90.

31. When Eliewaha Mshana, now Bishop Mshana, arrived in Usangi as a new teacher in January 1945, he was surprised to see that his colleagues, Mwalimu Gerson Marisa and Mwalimu Fanueli Kaleya, were reading newspapers from Kenya and were well informed about Kenyan politics. Interview in Same, 1/30/91.

32. Mzee Aza Mturi, interview in Usangi, 9/18/90.

33. Different people wrote letters to the Territory newspaper, Mambo Leo (Swa: Daily News). For instance, Mzee Kavugha Fanuel Simeon, a Lutheran teacher in Ugweno, wrote a letter to the newspaper in this period which said, among other things, "the government has been cheated thinking that chiefs represent the people". At one meeting with the DC, Simeon feared he would lose his job because of that letter, but that did not occur. Simeon interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90.
34. "All the teachers were against the tax." Mwalimu Fanueli Kaleya, interview in Usangi, 1/6/91.

35. Mwalimu Fanueli Kaleya, interview in Usangi, 9/16/90.

36. Interview in Usangi, 9/18/90.

37. Almost every Mbiru participant interviewed mentioned that the mbiru tax rate kept rising.

38. Interview in Usangi, 9/27/90.

39. Interview in Moshi, 1/7/91. Mzee Ali Ndoile who was one of the collectors of the mbiru tax felt that people "hated" him because of this act. Interview in Ugweno, 1/15/91.

40. Interview in Usangi, 2/6/91.

41. In his history of Tanganyika, Iliffe discusses this phenomenon of the colonial period this way.

   In each period change occurred in a dialectical manner, with old and new long co-existing in contradiction and ambiguity. Colonial society incorporated much of Tanganyika’s pre-colonial experience, while nationalism was, in one aspect, a means by which Tanganyikans internalised many of colonial society’s values and incorporated many of its institutions (1979:4).

42. Interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90.

43. Interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90.

44. Interview in Usangi, 1/3/91.

45. Interview in Ugweno, 10/6/90.

46. Interview in Usangi, 10/11/90.

47. Interview in Usangi, 9/18/90.

48. Interview in Usangi, 2/3/91.

49. Mwalimu Fanueli Kaleya, interview in Usangi, 9/15/90.
50. Mzee Tekina is from Usangi, interview in Same where he is now living, 1/30/91.
51. Mama Asia Ismail, from Ugweno, interview in Mwanga where she is now living, 9/17/90.
52. Margaret Mshana, my notes, Moshi, 5/18/91.
53. Aissia Ngadaya, my notes, Moshi, 5/18/91.
54. Aissia Ngadaya, my notes, Usangi, 9/28/90.
55. Mwajabu Possi Kachenje, interview in Columbus, 10/9/93.
56. The current tax system in Tanzania is differentiated. People are assessed a variety of taxes based on a number of variables. Therefore one cannot conclude that the Pare would never accept a stratified tax system.
57. Although there is no way to judge the varying levels of resistance in different parts of the district empirically, several factors are worth mentioning that might explain why people in South Pare initiated the mobilization of men to Same. First, as previously stated, tax collection in South Pare during the German period had meant a time of terror. And a second point, the concept of "mbiru" held by Pare in the south may have differed from that held by their northern neighbors: "...in South Pare mbiru...contribution seemed to be more voluntary, and therefore more gift-like (Kimambo 1991:33). Additionally, Mwalimu Fanueli Kaleya told us "Mamba (South Pare) people are very political." (Interview in Usangi, 1/6/91). This was confirmed by Mwalimu Ibrahim Mbia from TTC (Teachers Training College) in Usangi who grew up in Mamba.
And certainly no less significant, the man who ascended to the top leadership position among the protestors at Same, Paulo Mashambo, was from Mamba. Mbia says,

Pare people, especially in my area, were reluctant to pay. Mashambo decided to organize his own area. He started the move to Same.

Mbia interview in Usangi, 10/11/90.

58. Interview in Usangi, 9/16/90.

59. Interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.

60. Interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90.

61. Interview in Ugweno, 1/18/91.

62. I will define "epic" here as poetic and ornamental in style, and "dealing with the adventures of extraordinary people" (Oinas 1972:99). Actually the men at Same could be viewed as ordinary men who transformed themselves into heroes under extraordinary circumstances.

63. Mwalimu Ibrahim Mbia, interview in Usangi, 10/11/90.

64. Many Tanzanians had been sent to Asia to fight the Japanese as part of the East African Expeditionary Forces. Two Usangi residents, Godwin Mbati and Onesmo Sabuni, talked of their experiences as Africans (black men) fighting "yellow men" in Burma. It would be a great loss if the oral histories of men like these are not collected in order to analyze the implications for rising African nationalism as Africans from different parts of the continent met for the first time and began to compare their experiences as colonial subjects fighting for "freedom."
65. Although Mashambo was clearly the paramount leader, there were leaders from every village at Same and those leaders of the protest who remained in the villages were in constant communication with the men at Same.

Paulo claims that at Same he was assisted by two persons: Tuvako, a Lutheran preacher from Mbaga, and Luka Kasha (Kaasha) of Usangi, who was a retired Lutheran mission preacher (Kimambo 1991:103).

Luka Kaasha’s wife, Miriamu, was one of the two main women leaders in the Usangi incident.

67. Mzee Richard Tekina, originally from Usangi, interview in Same, 1/30/91.
68. Interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.
69. Interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.
70. Mama Saliha Kinanja, interview in Ugweno, 10/6/90.
71. Interview in Ugweno, 10/3/90.
72. Interview in Ugweno, 10/1/90.
73. Interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.
It would be interesting to compare this record of the Meru with information collected from Pare male elders who went through the prescribed warrior training program.

75. A similar practice from Meru tradition is described by Fadiman who found evidence that "this tradition can be found among Bantu peoples from East Africa to the Congo" (1982:51,163/FN3).

76. Attributed to Paulo Mashambo, Mwalimu Ibrahim Mbia, interview in Usangi, 10/11/90.

77. Mzee Manyari Mareale Omari Liana, interview in Usangi, 2/11/91.

78. "People (the Pare) here are very good in talk, not good at fighting." Mzee Godwin Mbati, interview in Usangi, 10/10/90.

79. Mzee Asseri Yoeli Maeda confirmed this scene, describing Paulo’s game and the fun they all had fooling "Bwana Shauri," the DC. He added,

So there was a lot of confusion until later we were told [by the DC] to go away as we were only making trouble.

Interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.

80. O’Barr uses Mlimani as a fictitious name for the Pare village he is describing. Since he did most of his research on the Pare in Usangi, this village could be Usangi.

81. Interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.

82. Anna Mgaya, originally from Usangi, interview in Dar es Salaam, 12/6/90.

84. Mzee Ali Kinayashi Ngomoi said that one messenger "who was always with the chief" reported to protest leaders about plans the chiefs and colonial administrators were making. Ngomoi, driver for the chiefs, carried people, supplies and messages in support of the protestors. Interview in Same, 1/31/91.

85. Interview in Usangi, 10/7/90.

86. Interview in Same, 1/31/91.

87. According to Mwalimu Kavugha Fanuel Simeon, after the women's violent actions in Usangi, "the British PC (Provincial Commissioner) based in Tanga was telling people, 'Don't send the women to me because women's war is not good.'" Interview in Usangi, 10/4/90.

88. Mama Fatuma Ngido is known locally as "Binti Ngido."

89. Chief Minja of Ugweno was in Usangi Hospital because it was the closest hospital. There was no hospital in Ugweno.

90. Interview in Usangi, 9/16/90.

91. Interview in Moshi, 2/11/91.

92. Interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.

93. Interview in Usangi, 1/3/91.

94. Aissia's reactions to these events may say something about the difference in socialization between these older women and younger, more educated women. She was shocked that the women used such sharp language with the chiefs, calling them "Sabuni" and "Minja" rather than by some respectful term.

95. Interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90. There is not enough evidence to make a valid comparison here, but this Pare
tradition of women’s meetings and men’s meeting sounds similar to what Kamene Okonjo calls the "dual-sex political system" of the Igbo in Nigeria, under which Igbo women had ultimate responsibility for, and authority over, women’s activities in the community (1976).

96. Interview in Ugweno, 10/6/90.
97. Interview in Moshi, 2/11/91.
98. Interview in Usangi, 1/3/91.
100. Mama Mwanasharifa Mangare, one of the women dancers, interview in Usangi, 1/10/91. Margaret Mshana educated me about some of the ways honey is used as an all purpose remedy by the Pare.

   When children are coughing, use honey. When someone is cold, take honey. Women who are breast-feeding increase their milk supply and their strength if they take honey. Also pregnant women. I remember my mother having a tin of honey. When someone is hurt, give them milk and honey. A drink of milk and honey is served warm. This makes you sweat. If people see you sweating, they know everything is okay.

Interview in Usangi, 5/27/91.

101. Many people told us about two main women leaders from Usangi, Mama Miriamu Luka and Mama Namshali Shedeewa, both deceased, and we interviewed two of Luka’s daughters and a son of Shedeewa’s about their mothers. In addition, we were able to talk with both Mama Helena Ashighiwa and Mama Saliha Kinanja in Ugweno about their leadership responsibilities during the protest. These particular interviews were some of
the most memorable. Three of these interviews, with the exception of Mama Saliha, are presented and analyzed in some detail in Chapter 4. Another leader from Ugweno was Mama Mikali Andrea, the wife of the first African Lutheran minister in Ugweno who was an extremely influential man during his lifetime. The names of Asinati Maritini from Mwero Kifula in Ugweno, and Nanzala Abraham and Nakiete Kaingwa from Usangi were also mentioned although we did not learn much about these women.

102. A study by Karen Sacks of women activists during a union drive at Duke Medical Center in the 1970’s provides insights into how women network and mobilize based on skills learned in family settings. The women leaders dubbed by Sacks as "centerwomen" were not visible in leadership roles until consensus was reached on an issue. At this point these women took charge, mobilizing and organizing whatever action was called for. There are similarities with the way the Pare women organized around already established kin and neighborhood networks (1989).

103. Interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.

104. Interview in Ugweno, 10/6/90.

105. Reconstructing exactly what happened in Usangi during these two or three chaotic days is difficult, in part because people did not always describe their experiences in chronological order. It appears that each story reveals what
was most significant to the teller. This makes the time sequence hard to follow.

106. Mzee Aza Mturi, interview in Usangi, 9/18/90.

107. In the following months, between April and June 1945, eight "troublemakers" were sent into internal exile (Kimambo 1991:110). Some school teachers met a similar fate, being arbitrarily transferred to schools far away from Pare District.

108. It is interesting that the clearest, most sympathetic statement about the women's situation came unsolicited from a man, Chief Minja's son, Hassani, who said, "Women suffered more because they were responsible for everything at home."
Interview in Ugweno, 1/15/91.

109. Mama Haika Malaki Mrindoko, interview in Usangi, 9/19/90.

110. Interview in Usangi, 9/19/90.

111. Interview in Usangi, 9/18/90.

112. Mzee Fundisha Kitia, interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.

113. Interview in Usangi, 1/9/91.


116. Interview in Ugweno, 10/1/90.

117. Interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90.

118. Interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.
119. Interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90; for the full interview text, see Chapter 4 or Appendix.

120. Mzee Mrema Kiangi, interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.

121. Interview in Ugweno, 10/6/90.

122. Interview in Same, 1/31/91.

123. Interview in Lushoto, 10/13/90.


125. Mzee Mrema Kiangi, interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.

126. The incident of South Pare women confronting the DC at Same was described by Mzee Kiangi who was at Same with the men, interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90; and Mama Upendo Mgaya who was living in Same during the men’s protest there, interview in Usangi, 9/24/90.

127. Interview in Usangi, 9/19/90. Bishop Mshana, who witnessed this scene from a short distance, remembered seeing the women seated except for their leaders who were standing and actively talking to the chiefs and DC. Interview in Same, 1/30/91.

128. In Kipare, the female *stages of life* are differentiated thus:

- **vujana** - babyhood
- **vubora** - puberty
- **vwai** - newly married
- **vuche** - married with children, to age 60
- **vulala** - elderly
According to Aissia Ngadaya, only "vai" (newly married women) and "vache" (married women with children) would answer the lukunga in this case. Professor Omari believed that only married women with a child (vache) would go; "Status is directly related to life cycle" (Omari interview, Dar es Salaam, 10/29/90).

129. Interview in Mwanga, 9/17/90.

130. These words were provided by Jamesina Mgaya who consulted with one of the women who had danced for us at her home.

131. Mama Ruti Fanueli, interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.

132. There is a problem with the categories that people used to describe the songs the women sang. I am interpreting "traditional" songs to mean Pare songs, but that does not help much because the categories represent two different levels which in fact overlap. "Pare" is a larger category than Christian and Muslim which are subsets; a Pare may be either Christian or Muslim or neither of these. Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the word traditional carries a value judgment suggesting that someone views something as old, out-of-date, and static. Further inquiry could learn a good deal more about the songs the women sang and how different people talk about the songs.

133. Interview, Dar es Salaam, 5/7/91 (for more on this point, see Mvula’s article [1986] on Chewa women’s pounding songs in Malawi).

134. Interview in Usangi,
135. One of the women dancers, interview in Usangi, 2/14/91.
136. Because of the nature of the recordings of these interviews, that they were done as we moved, in many instances, it is not possible to distinguish exactly who said what.
137. One of the women dancers, Usangi, 2/14/91.
138. Interview in Same, 1/30/91.
139. Interview in Usangi, 2/3/91 (for full interview text, see Appendix; for a full analysis of the Mkindi interview, see Chapter 4).
140. Interview with the women dancers, Usangi, 1/10/91.
141. Describing what he heard about the scene in Usangi, Mzee Peter Gerson said, "Some women lay on the road saying, 'Today you will not pass here. We want you to impregnate all of us.'" Interview in South Pare, 1/91.
142. There seemed to be an especially high level of antagonism among the women against Chief Kibacha Singo of Same. This was not explained to us per se, but Mzee Ngomoi, the driver for the chiefs, said, "Nobody from Same joined Mbiru. Their chief stopped them from joining the protest." (Interview in Same, 1/31/91.) Another factor may have been that Chief Kibacha played a dominant role in the Pare Council of Chiefs for many years, serving often as Council President. The presidency was supposed to rotate each year but Kibacha was reelected by the other chiefs often, perhaps because of his command of Kiswahili. By the 1940's the Pare had begun to associate
unpopular policies and regulations with Kibacha (Kimambo 1991:83-4).

143. Mama Ruti Fanueli, interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.
144. Mzee Justine Ndama, interview in Usangi, 9/18/90.
145. An interesting insight into the complexities of data collection concerned this testimony. Although a large number of informants from Usangi told almost the same story about the confrontation between Chief Minja and Ugweno women, not a single Ugweno woman told us about this sexually explicit challenge to their own chief.

146. Aissia Ngadaya’s report of a conversation with Mwalimu Solomon Tuvana in Ugweno, 10/6/90. A similar tradition of Iraqw women having the sanction to defend themselves and their vital interests which led to the killing of at least one man was reported in the Tanzanian Daily News.

In a well-remembered incident of the late nineteenth century, women collectively killed a man by the name of Mayega for "illegally" witnessing what transpired in a women’s initiation session. Knowledge about this process was strictly reserved for initiated women. Mayega’s killing was found to be proper (Lawi 1990).

147. Interview in Dar es Salaam, 11/20/90.
148. Interview in Ugweno, 10/6/90.
149. Interview in Ugweno, 1/15/91.
150. Interview in Ugweno, 10/3/90. Corroborated by Mzee Ramadhani Sembua, interview in Ugweno, 10/7/90; Mzee Hassani Kita, interview in Ugweno, 1/18/91; and Mzee Ali Ndoile, interview in Ugweno, 1/15/91.
151. One of the women dancers, interview in Usangi, 2/14/91 (See Chapter 4 for full text).

152. Interview in Same, 1/30/91.

153. Interview in Usangi, 2/14/91 (for a full analysis of this material from the second interview with the women dancers, see Chapter 4; a complete text of the second meeting with the dancers can be found in the Appendix).

154. Kimambo cites this communication, "Women of North Pare, Usangi and Ugweno to Chief Secretary, 20 April 1945, TNA (Tanzanian National Archives)," without stating whether this communication was a written or oral report from the women to the government (FN, 1991:117).


156. Halifa Njaritta, interview in Usangi, 10/16/90.

157. Interview in Usangi, 9/19/90.

158. Interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90. Here was more evidence for the DC that the rebellion was widespread and perhaps expanding in scope, as he found women from Ugweno violently protesting in Usangi.

159. Interview in Moshi, 2/11/91.

160. Interview in Usangi, 9/19/90.

161. Interview in Dar es Salaam, 5/6/91.

162. Mama Trufaina Luka Kaasha and Mama Monica Luka Kaasha, interview in Moshi, 1/6/91.

163. Interview in Moshi, 1/7/91.

164. Mzee Aza Mturi, interview in Usangi, 9/18/90.
165. Although some of these dates do not agree exactly with Mzee Kaleya's and Mzee Mavura's logbooks, the sequence is the same.

166. Interview in Usangi, 1/18/91.

167. Wipper notes a similar phenomenon with Kikuyu women leaders. Whereas some of the male leaders were co-opted into the colonial structure (if only at low levels) and provided formal and public positions, African women's previous involvement in political life was ignored and they were denied access to the colonial power structure (1989:326).

168. Interview in Dar es Salaam, 11/7/90.

169. Interview in Usangi, 9/28/90.

170. Interview in Ugweno, 10/6/90.

171. Interview in Ugweno, 10/6/90.

172. Interview in Usangi, 10/10/90.

173. Interview in Usangi, 9/24/90.


175. Simeon interview in Ugweno, 10/4/91.

176. Interview in Same, 1/31/91.

177. Interview at Same, 1/31/91.
In order to do an ethnographic examination of this event, the research team conducted lengthy interviews that covered Mbiru in general. As part of this inquiry I wanted to find out what the Pare really say about this event. Since there was no way to witness discussions about Mbiru that might have occurred naturally, we were constructing an artificial interview situation in which people would talk about it. I was aware that I was learning many things from the interviews. Of course, I was learning what people remembered about the Mbiru protest itself. Also, I was learning about two kinds of social relationships, those between people talking about the event in the present, and those between people who talked about the event and others who had participated in the event, some of whom were deceased.

Many of the people we interviewed were aware they were contributing to history, and they regarded the interviews seriously. As they told their stories, they appeared to enjoy having a part in, and some control over, the ways this history was told. This process was very complex.
The interviews in this chapter provide insights into rules of discourse concerning things about which people did or did not talk. The research team was generating an interest in this history as well as giving people an opportunity to talk about it. The Kaasha sisters (daughters of Mama Miriamu Luka) are a good example. During our interview with them, they began to take a new interest in their mother’s part as a leader of the protest and in what the women did. In contrast, Abdi Mkindi (son of Mama Namshali Shedehwa) mentioned that after his mother’s death he had begun to wonder why his mother had been chosen as leader. The fact that he had previously reflected on this matter was interesting in itself. Also, because he had thought about his mother in this way and asked others about her, he was prepared to answer my questions about his mother’s leadership qualities. Since the Kaasha sisters had not previously gone through a similar reflective process, the interview gave them that opportunity. These interviews reveal some of the ways in which interest in the protest has been awakened and continues to be awakened, not only by our inquiry, but in Abdi’s case, by his mother’s death. In these two interviews with children of Mbiru women leaders, we saw some interesting cases of how Mbiru events resurfaced.

In two other interviews, members of the research team observed as women who had participated in Mbiru relived their experiences. Mama Helena Ashighiwa dramatized her Mbiru experiences, performing the sequence of events, as she
recalled them, for a fascinated audience. On another day, four women Mbiru participants showed Margaret and me where they had been sitting/standing/dancing in the court area in Usangi when different things happened, and they told us what they had seen from where they were situated. The tour around the court brought Margaret and me closest to the actual Mbiru events.

Currently there are many models for doing ethnographic work and for doing a collaborative project with the people that one is studying. My project attempted to be collaborative, first of all, with Aissia and Margaret—both of whom had their own personal reasons for being involved—and also by seriously attending to the interests of the people I was studying in order to present the story that they wanted to have told.

This chapter presents material from four of the interviews conducted by the research team, two with women participants in Mbiru, and two with children of women from Usangi who served as protest leaders (both now deceased). These four interviews revealed an abundance of vivid memories about the protest and something about the individual women as well.

A considerable amount of the testimony from these four interviews has already been introduced as part of the narrative of Mbiru in Chapter 3. Here I will describe the construction of each text, provide contextual information
about the particularities of the interview and the interviewee/s, and analyze the interview in some detail.

When Aissia and I entered the first period of fieldwork, we developed an interview routine, mostly on Aissia's initiative, that we continued to use when we worked together. Generally we arrived at a homestead unannounced. As we approached, Aissia would call "Hodi" to announce our arrival. Someone in the compound would then respond, "Karibu" (Kiswahili:Welcome). As we moved into the compound, Aissia took the lead. She would greet people, using the very respectful "Shikamoo" to address any elders present. For example, she would greet an elderly woman, "Shikamoo, (Kiswahili:Greetings) Koko" (Kipare:Grandmother). As she proceeded with the greeting ritual, Aissia would often take a person's hand, sometimes holding onto it, as she introduced herself and described our purpose. She would tell the person/s that I had read about Mbiru in the United States, that I had come to Pare District to learn more about it, and that I was especially interested in what the women did during the protest.

Often a woman would be in her "jiko" (Kiswahili:kitchen). Most compounds had two buildings, one for living and sleeping and the second, a combination kitchen, storage area, and cattle shed, the different areas separated by partitions. Aissia would size up the situation and decide how to proceed. For example, if the woman we wanted to interview was cooking—
this happened on several occasions--Aissia would pull up a small short-legged stool for herself next to the woman and motion for me to do the same. Soon the interview was underway, in the case of Pare women, in the Kipare language. Aissia usually sat close to the informant, listening intently and taking notes in a small spiral notebook. She reacted to the testimony with encouraging verbal utterances, mostly different kinds of exclamations, and sometimes a hand-on-hand gesture similar to a "high-five."

After we had conducted several interviews in which Aissia kept me up-to-date with what she was learning, we decided that she should handle the interview by herself with me observing, and that she should involve me only if there was something of special interest. When the interview was completed, we requested permission to take photographs. Then I would take pictures with two cameras, first, with a 35mm for the research record, and next, with a Polaroid, so that we could give a picture or two to the informants on the spot. We then went through a departing ritual which included giving money to the informant in a gracious manner that followed a local convention. Aissia would palm folded paper money and pass it to the informant as unobtrusively as possible during a parting handshake. Passing money in this secretive way made it possible for the informants to keep the money for their own use, if they chose. We also gave each woman a headscarf which I presented as "zawadi kidogo kutoka America" (Kiswahili:a
small gift from the United States). The same evening Aissia translated her interview notes into English, noting any key words in Kipare or Kiswahili. What she produced constituted the interview text. Variations occurred when the interviews were recorded, in which case a transcription of the tape was made first and then translated into English, a process that took more time than the one already mentioned. During interviews I conducted in English, I either took notes which became a text or recorded the interview, in which case the transcription of the tape became the text.

Mama Helena Ashighiwa

The first interview which I will describe was with Helena Ashighiwa, a leader of the Ugweno women who has already appeared as a major player in the Mbiru story. The staff at the Kifula Lutheran Church gave Aissia and me directions to Mama Helena’s compound. We arrived unannounced and proceeded through the routine described above. Aissia’s introductory notes in the text below reveal the circumstances. Notes in parentheses are Aissia’s comments. My notes, written at the time of the interview, are in brackets, marked ND. Because this text is fairly short, it is presented here in its entirety.

Ashighiwa, Mama Helena #38
(10/5/90. She is about 90. At her home at Fumbuan’gombe, Kifula. She has 10 children, 6 sons and 4 daughters. She was a woman leader during the Mbiru protest. She went to both Ugweno and Usangi. Kipare. AN, ND. Currently she is living with her blind, paralyzed husband, over 100 years old, her son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. One teenage
grandchild is severely handicapped, another an albino and 2 have eye problems [ND: i.e., cross-eyed]. The family's poverty is severe.)

[ND. In shade outside jiko--kitchen building. Daughter-in-law and young children listening. A marching band is practicing at a school across the valley. Helena and AN dancing. Helena got up several times to demonstrate a point, went and got a ruler to show how police beat women on buttocks with flat sticks. According to custom, we visited her blind, paralyzed husband before we left.]

Mama Helena: Mbiru started when men went to Same during the war. When they stayed there for a long time we decided to follow them. I was the woman leader. I would yell, "Uwi! Vache vose na kwa Minja. Bwana shauri eneza."

(Kipare: Uwi! All women should go to Minja's The DC is coming.)

AN: Who told you that the DC was coming?

Mama Helena: Msangeni women [the village where Chief Minja's court is located]. All women went to Minja's court and the DC came. Then we asked him, "Vome vetu veza rini" (Kipare: When are our husbands coming back)? He responded that they will come back soon. We spent the whole night singing and dancing at the court. We sang traditional songs (not Christian or Muslim). In the morning the DC wanted to leave but we stopped the car. We threw stones at the car and broke the glass. Chief Minja asked the women to let the DC go as the men would soon come back. The DC was therefore allowed to go. In the following week we heard a yell from Usangi,

"Uwi. Vache vose na kwa Sabuni. Pringle eza Vusangi kutuwiria iti vome vetu veza rini."

(Kipare: Uwi! All women should go to Sabuni's. Pringle is coming to Usangi to tell us when our husbands are coming back.)

Women (including myself) went to Usangi. At Usangi we found Usangi women already there. We spent the whole night singing traditional songs and dancing. Some women were dancing with sticks turned upside down. This is very bad. It means death to the person to whom it is directed.

A man called Andrea of Usangi told us that Pringle would come the following day with police. He told us not to be afraid. He further said the police are carrying flat pieces of sticks (mapau) to frighten you. Don't run away until the DC tells you when your husbands will come back.

Then the DC came with the police. He asked me, "Unatoka wapi" (Kiswahili: Where do you come from)? I answered that I came from Ugweno. He gave orders to the askaris to chase us away. They used the sticks to hit us on the buttocks. Women ran away crying. Some fell in the process hurting themselves. I didn't run. I remained there standing up. Then one
policeman came to me and asked, "Unafanya nini" (Kiswahili: What are you doing)? and I responded, "Nimechoka" (Kiswahili: I am tired). Then I left and found some of Ugweno women on the way. That was the end of Mbiru as far as women were concerned. Later men returned from Same and Mbiru ended.

AN: Were women instigated? (Kipare: Vache vetetumwa kuandamana, literally, women -- were they asked -- to make a procession)?

Mama Helena: No. We wanted our husbands back. We were not sure of their security and there was too much work for women to do.

AN: Do you talk to your children and grandchildren about Mbiru?

Mama Helena: No. They don’t ask. They are not interested.

AN: What were your responsibilities as a woman leader?

Mama Helena: Yelling, leading women during the protest and making sure women responded to yells. In fact I was a church elder even before Mbiru and I was one of the first Christians of Kifula. I was baptized at Shighatini before Kifula church was built.

AN: Did you attend mission schools?

Mama Helena: Yes. I can read and write.

The interview with Mama Helena made an especially indelible impression on me, immediately, and since then, whenever I recall it. It was obvious why this particular woman had been chosen as a leader forty-five years earlier. At age ninety, Mama Helena expressed self-assurance, a keen intellect, and a physical grace and vitality. In contrast to most of the interviews we conducted, which resembled conversations, Mama Helena put on a show for us. The poverty of her surroundings (see Aissia’s introduction) fell away as she staged a lively performance for an appreciative audience.

Mama Helena first arranged chairs in a shaded area and directed her audience to sit there. She then placed a chair for herself "center stage," in an open area facing us. During her performance, Mama Helena did several things to bring life to the events she was describing. She moved around "the
stage" to dramatize the action. She used props to illustrate what was happening, such as a foot-long ruler--not just a stick, but "a flat stick"--to show how the police had chased the women with mabua. At one point she saw that Aissia was swaying to the rhythms of the dance she was recreating, and she came forward, took Aissia by the hand, and led her back to the "stage area," where the two of them danced in conjunction with their vocal accompaniment, a simulated drum beat. The audience sat entranced. Even the children watched with interest. The three adults, Aissia (when she was not on stage), Mama Helena's daughter-in-law, and I, laughed and gave other signs of approval.

The contrast between the vitality of Mama Helena's performance, the resiliency of this fine woman, and the difficult circumstances in which she lived provides a haunting memory. When we gave Mama Helena the money and the headscarf, she took my hand and said, "God is good to me that someone from so far away has come to visit me in my home." When we left, Mama Helena accompanied us a very long way down the road, perhaps more than a mile. The Pare have a custom in which they walk with departing guests, the distance depending on the degree of satisfaction they attach to the visit. Mama Helena's long walk with us was a very loud, non-verbal statement that our visit had given her pleasure.

In most interviews with women participants in Mbiru, the first subject the women mentioned was their concern for their
babies and young children and the arrangements which they had been required to make for their children while they participated in the protest. Mama Helena did not mention such a concern. In 1945 she was forty-five years old. As a mother of ten children, we can assume that by 1945 she had older children able to care for their younger siblings, and she did not have the same worry that other mothers had.

The first lines of Mama Helena’s testimony are loaded with information. "Mbiru started when men went to Same during the war." The use of the word "war" coincides with the perceptions of others who regarded the protest as "war" (see Chapter 3). If this situation was war, what was expected of the women? Were they living under "wartime conditions"? "When they had stayed there for a long time we decided to follow them." The men had gone to Same the first week in January. By this time, the situation for the women in the villages—the absence of the men, extra work for the women, the continuing tensions and uncertainties of the period—had been going on for about a month and a half, "a long time." It was time for the women to "follow" the men. Since Mama Helena then described Ugweno women going to Chief Minja’s court, it appears that the women "followed" the men insofar as they moved to the offensive, to more active political action, as the men had done. There is no indication that the women intended to follow the men to Same. This suggests a complementarity of men’s protest activities and women’s
protest activities, with men and women playing out designated roles. The stories (see Chapter 3) of women's protests in every village support this idea of complementary male and female roles and women's involvement in the "war" (also see Mzee Kiangi's testimony in Chapter 5 on this point).

As the leader, Mama Helena initiated the lukunaa and called the women to mobilize. When the women encountered the DC at the court, their question was, "When are our husbands coming back?" They did not talk about the tax, they talked about their husbands. Other women gave similar testimony, that when they went to the court, they asked when their husbands would return. This action of the women supports the view of Kimambo and Jean O'Barr (see Chapter 5) that the women were asking for a return to normalcy. I will continue to consider this point. However, the women's next actions demonstrated that, although they had no standing as taxpayers, they were fully committed to aggressive action. When the DC gave the women another vague answer about their husbands returning "soon," the women reacted. They danced and sang all night and attempted to prevent the DC from leaving in the morning. It is not revealed whether the DC intended to stay in Ugweno overnight, as the district officer sometimes did, or if he was forced to stay there because of the women's actions. When in the morning Chief Minja asked the women to allow the DC to leave, the women relented, but not before they "stopped the car" and threw stones which broke the car's windows. The
exact way in which the women stopped the car is not stated. The fact that the women were willing to back off when Chief Minja asked them to do so reveals that they continued to hold respect for their chief. The suggestion was made in Chapter 3 that Chief Minja was not as committed to this new tax as were the other Pare chiefs. Perhaps he had been able to communicate his somewhat ambivalent position to his people.

This interview revealed Aissia's commitment to letting the narrative flow with little interference from questions. However, at the time of this interview Aissia and I had been involved in data collection for three weeks and we were interested in getting certain specific information. One question concerned what kind of songs the women sang during their protest. During Mama Helena's narrative, Aissia managed to elicit the information that, according to this leader, the women had sung traditional (Pare) songs, not Christian or Muslim ones.

The scene in Mama Helena's narrative shifts to Usangi where she and other Ugweno women joined Usangi women who were already protesting. The women's expectation, "Pringle is coming to Usangi to tell us when our husbands are coming back" provides an insight into the women's state of mind. This statement reveals the tension that existed between what the DC and the chiefs had in mind--to identify the male troublemakers and make plans to exile them--and what the women were expecting. The next action resembled what had occurred in
Ugweno the previous week. Women spent the whole night singing and dancing. These two episodes indicate that these protest actions followed a pattern. Another element is added to the protest in Usangi, that of the women turning their dancing sticks upside down, and Mama Helena states what she thinks this action means, "This is very bad. It means death to the person to whom it is directed." There appears to be a curse attached to this action (see the next interview in which Abdi Mkindi offers a possible explanation for this Pare practice). Mama Helena does not mention "kufololotia." It is hard for me to believe that Mama Helena was unaware that women directed "kufololotia" to Chief Sabuni. It appears that rules of discourse prevented Mama Helena from mentioning it to us in this setting.

Mama Helena's mention of a man called Andrea of Usangi is intriguing. One of Chief Sabuni's court clerks had that name. Mama Helena described "a man called Andrea," who not only has important information—the DC was coming the next day, the police would have flat sticks which they would use to frighten the women—but also he appeared to have authority. He told this leader what to expect, and advised her not to run but to keep the pressure on the government until the women's husbands return home. There is no way of knowing from this testimony whether or not this Andrea was the court clerk. However, the testimonies of a number of other Pare disclosed that many
government employees were aiding the protest and advising the protestors in covert ways.

Next, Mama Helena described her exchange of words with the DC. He had been harassed by Ugweno women at Minja’s court the week before and now he met the Ugweno women again, this time at a location miles across the mountains. By this time the DC had information about the widespread nature of the protest; wherever he or the chiefs traveled in the district, they were confronted by women who were throwing stones, beating the official cars with sticks, and yelling insults and challenges. In addition to the women, at Same the DC faced the sharp intellect of Mashambo and the non-violent, but obviously determined, protest of thousands of men. Did he really think that he could defuse this rebellion by sending a few male leaders into exile? Did he still believe that he was going to prevail in this dispute? One wonders whether any of the chiefs were trying to present the DC with a more realistic view of what was happening in the district. Perhaps the rules of discourse governing the existing political hierarchy prevented the chiefs from stating their concerns. Perhaps they did state their concerns and Pringle did not listen. Perhaps Pringle’s threat to sack the chiefs, if they did not stand with the government, was enough to convince them to keep their misgivings to themselves.

In any case, the DC gave the order to the police to chase the women away. When the police attacked the women, Mama
Helena stood her ground. "I didn’t run. I remained there, standing up." This example of determination and courage indicated that she took her leadership role very seriously. But when a policeman asked Mama Helena what she was doing, her response revealed that, although she intended to continue defying the government, because of the direction events were taking, she had run out of options. She did not answer the policeman’s question, but rather admitted, "I am tired."

Aissia’s follow-up questions point to some of the information we were seeking. She asked if women were prompted to action by others and Mama Helena replied, "We wanted our husbands back. We weren’t sure of their security." People were going back and forth between the mountain villages and Same, carrying supplies and news. Undoubtedly, the women knew that the British had troops at Same who were being used to threaten and frighten the men. There was no guarantee that the colonial troops would refrain from shooting. The women had reason to be concerned about their husbands’ safety. Mama Helena also mentioned that the women were burdened with "too much work." Aissia asked if Mama Helena talked about Mbiru with her children and grandchildren and she answered that they did not ask, they were not interested. Aissia then asked about the responsibilities of women leaders. Mama Helena mentioned two, leading the women during the protest and being responsible for discipline. The discipline imposed on the women by their leaders in mentioned in more detail in two of
the following interviews, those with Abdi Mkindi and the women dancers. Mama Helena added that she was one of the first Christians in her area, that she held the position of elder in the church, "even before Mbiru," and we learn that she could read and write. The choice of Mama Helena as leader suggests that, as with the men, the mantle of female leadership was passing to those who were mission-educated, who could read and write. We will see later in this chapter that two other women leaders, Mama Namshali Shedehwa and Mama Miriamu Luka, were literate, speakers of the "modern" language—Kiswahili, and unafraid to speak in public.

Mama Namshali Shedehwa: Interview with her son, Abdi Mkindi

My neighbors in Usangi, Godwin and Naetweeli Mbati, made arrangements for Abdi Mkindi, Mama Namshali Shedehwa's son, to come to my house for an interview. Neither Aissia nor Margaret was available for this interview, and because Abdi spoke English, I went ahead. There was no problem with our conducting the interview in English, with one exception. As Abdi was trying to describe the special qualities his mother possessed that qualified her for leadership, and to tell about certain positions she held, he began to struggle to find English words. At that point I suggested that he use Kiswahili and he did. The main portion of the text, which is very long, can be found in the Appendix. In this case, the transcription of the tape constitutes the text.
Mkindi, Mwalimu Abdi Athumani #64  TAPED #18
2/3/91
At ND's house in Usangi
ND
53 years old
Mostly in English, a little Kiswahili. Abdi teaches primary
school: mathematics, Kiswahili and political education in
Usangi. He is the third born child of Namshali Shedehwa, one
of the two main woman leaders in Usangi during Mbiru. He and
an older brother are the only surviving children of Namshali
who died in 1980 at the age of 60, making her 25 in 1945.
Abdi was 8 years old at the time of Mbiru.

Abdi remembered some things about his own experiences
during Mbiru and he recalled other things that people,
including his mother, had told him about the protest.
Namshali had four children altogether, although her two girls
died when they were young. Abdi and an older brother survive.
Abdi, a primary school teacher of mathematics, Kiswahili, and
political education in Usangi, is nearing retirement. This
interview provided a large amount of specific information
about Mama Namshali Shedehwa and her participation in Mbiru.

According to Abdi, his mother was twenty-five years old
in 1945. It was not clear how many children she had at that
time, at least the two boys, Abdi, eight years old and his
older brother. The first information that Abdi chose to
provide concerned the women's group of which his mother was
chair at the time of Mbiru.

Abdi; First of all, what I can remember. My mother was
appointed, like a chairman, in this village here. She held
one meeting up there somewhere at a place called Kwanakimbu.
She collected women there and they donated some money, they
started to make a fund. Each woman, as far as I can remember,
she donated 10 cents. That money, they collected just
because,... suppose when they go to Mbiru, in case if you get
injured, that money you can get as assistance. Now, they
collected that money.
Abdi's testimony was one of two we obtained that described a women's group in which money was collected to purchase honey in case one of the women was injured, the other testimony being from Mama Mwanasharifa Mangare, one of the dancers. Abdi's recollections added to the small amount we learned about the meetings of these groups. Although this testimony did not mention exactly what plans the women were considering or the decision-making process that preceded their activities, it did provide significant information. The women knew there were risks involved with the action they were planning, and they were prepared to take those risks.

The next section of Abdi's testimony provided more insights about the workings of the women's group, in this case revealing two aspects of group behavior, i.e., discipline of members, and the role of older women members.

ND: Do you remember seeing anything yourself? I mean, you were eight years old. Do you remember seeing the women meet? Do you remember the time when your mother was away and you knew something was going on? Do you have any special eight year old memories?
Abdi: Yes. I never attended any meeting. But as far as I remember, my mother, when she was going to attend these meetings, we were left at home with our grandmother. She was the one who is to find food for us, and some women went out, when they went to the meeting, they had some children on their back. Now they stayed there with no food. When it becomes time like this, my mother was, as the chairman, she had to be asked her permission for those women to go home to feed their children and then come back. You can't move from that position without the permission. And they had two, we can say by-laws they had kept. Now when you said that all women had to attend the meeting, if you don't go out to attend that meeting, your banana leaves have to be cut or your house can be burned. So that frightened the people. All women had to go out, whether you like it or not. Now when those,...so suppose you had five or six children, you can't go with all of them. Some had to be left. If you had bigger children, they
had to look after those children. Or if you had an old woman who can’t walk, so she had to take care of those children. But all mothers had to attend the meeting.

As the leader chosen by the women, Mama Namshali was granted a certain amount of authority. Abdi mentioned two by-laws that his mother enforced. First, women could not leave a meeting whenever they wanted to; they had to get permission from the chair. This point is supported in a later text in this chapter, in which one of the women dancers states that she had to get Namshali’s permission before she could leave the scene of protest action. This testimony portrayed the women’s groups as strictly disciplined, not loosely organized with each woman doing as she chose. This discipline made the group of women formidable. Were they in a wartime mode? The second rule was that attendance at meetings—at least some meetings—was mandatory. This testimony implied that if a woman was a member of this group, she had obligations that could not be taken lightly.

This testimony also revealed that, although old women were not required to go to court, they too had duties to fulfill. They were expected to take care of young children, an action which enabled the younger women to take part in activities away from home. There were also expectations that older children would assume responsibilities for tasks normally performed by their mothers. This testimony showed a clearly defined organizational structure and a disciplined
membership, elements that gave a women's group a considerable amount of power.

Abdi's testimony included a description of the women's confrontation with the DC and the chiefs in Usangi. He related instances in which his mother acted as leader of the women. When the DC tried to leave Usangi in his car, "my mother told all women to catch the car so that he couldn't move," and after the police had rescued Chief Sabuni and taken him home, "my mother, as far as I was told, collected the other women and told them to go to Chief Sabuni's house." According to this testimony, Mama Namshali was directing the action. Like a number of people, Abdi had heard that his mother hit the DC, although he never asked her directly about this incident. Based on other testimony, I believe that Mama Namshali did not hit the DC, that it is more likely, as the women dancers told us, that Mama Namshali knocked the DC's food into the dirt (see Chapter 3). Since our search has not been primarily for facts, it is enough to say that a number of people interviewed thought that Mama Namshali hit the DC. Based on this and her other courageous acts, she is a kind of folk hero/heroine for some Pare.

Abdi's testimony appeared to confuse what happened to Chief Kibacha with what happened to the DC, but this mix-up is not important for this analysis. His testimony about being in school when the police arrived resembled the remembrances of several others. He recalled seeing "trucks loaded with
police." He says the children were worried about their mothers, and asked the women running by for information. Other informants recalled climbing out open windows to go in search of their mothers, some described seeing trucks full of police, others heard gunshots for the first time. During this confusion, teachers could not prevent their students from leaving their classrooms.

ND: Do you remember seeing anything around the court? With your own eyes? Because it's interesting. Everybody saw something different.
Abdi: I didn't attend the meeting in the court myself but I was in the classroom. We saw trucks loaded with policemen who came and they passed there on their way to the chief's house. We were in the class at that time. But after a very few minutes we saw women coming running. Now, because they were our mothers, we had to ask them what has happened. They told us that the policemen have come and they want to kill us. So everyone is trying to escape so that she might not be injured. Now I remember one woman, I asked her about my mother. She said I can't tell where she is but I think she's still there. (laughs) So she said my mother is still there. So by that time we went home to see if our mothers were back. But, as far as I remember, my mother didn't turn up that day until the next morning. That's when I saw my mother.
ND: Do you remember worrying that she wasn't home?
Abdi: Yes. She wasn't at home. I was very much worried but when she came very early in the morning, I asked her why she didn't come until the following day. She said we were there because we were the leaders so we have to see that everything is safe there.
ND: So she felt she had responsibilities.
Abdi: She had other responsibilities there.

This was not the only testimony that described some women being away from their homes all night after they were chased by the police. The glimpse of how the women were organized (above) aids in understanding how some women were able to engage in protest activities freely, even for the entire night. The protestors knew that their children were being
adequately cared for by other women or older siblings. This was war and everyone was doing her/his part. At the end of this section, Abdi recalled that his mother took her responsibilities as leader very seriously. It was her duty as leader to see that all the women were safe before she herself could return home.

So far, we have learned a good deal about Mama Namshali. She was young, twenty-five years old; as leader of the women’s group, she enforced discipline; she led the women’s political activity and told the women what to do next; and she took her position as leader very seriously, staying out all night to assure the safety of the women in her group. When I asked questions about why his mother had been chosen as leader, Abdi said that he had wondered about that himself.

ND: Well, we are trying to find out why some women were chosen as leaders. Now your mother was pretty young, 25 years old. Abdi: Yes.
ND: Why do you think she was chosen as leader?
Abdi: I asked this question after the death of my mother, that, how did you come to appoint my mother to become the leader of this place. She said, first, she knew how to read and write. By that time there were very few women who knew how to read and write. So she knew this. That was the first point. Another one -- she was tough.
ND: What’s the word in Kipare or Kiswahili for "tough"? Or how would they describe her in Kipare or Kiswahili?
Abdi: In Kiswahili "alikuwa imara, hodari" [Kiswahili: she was strong, firm, resolute, brave].
ND: Uh, huh, she had courage.
Abdi: And "ana jasiri" [Kiswahili: she was audacious, daring, bold]. She was very courageous. So that’s why they appointed her. She couldn’t fear white people. By that time to face a white person was very difficult.
ND: We’ve heard some funny stories. (both laugh)
Abdi: It wasn’t very easy to face a white person. And to collect people, it needs some technique. So she had those techniques. And people could hear her.
ND: She had a strong voice?
Abdi: Yes.
ND: She wasn’t afraid of anything?
Abdi: No. And then she was very fluent in talking to people. Yes. That’s why they appointed her.
ND: Are there other stories about your mother, about her being tough? Tell me some other things about her, things you remember, times when she was tough, when she acted like you say. Anything you remember that makes you proud of her.
Abdi: She was very tough. Even before she died, how can I tell it in English?
ND: I’ll tell you what. I’m working with Margaret Mshana.
Abdi: Yes.
ND: You know her, she said she knew you. Just pretend to tell the story to her, use Kipare or Kiswahili, and I’ll record it, and she can translate it. Tell it in Kiswahili and I can follow.
Abdi: Yeye kwa bahati nzuri, hata kabla ya kifo chake, amewahi kushika nafasi mbili. Amewahi kuwa balozi, sio balozi wa nchi za nje. Balozi is cell. Amewahi kuwa "asessa" katika mahakama kuu na amewahi kuwa "asessa" katika primary court. Na, kwa sababu maisha yake....
[TRANSLATION By good luck, before she died, she was fortunate to hold two important posts. She was a leader, not a national leader, but a (balozi) ten-house cell leader. She was also an assessor in the high court and an assessor in the primary court. Because her life...]
(SWITCH TO ENGLISH) For a long time she has been living at Tanga. Still she was respected as one of the best women in that area where she was living. She was respected for many decisions and suggestions when some women wanted to, if they have any trouble or anything, they have to come to see her for any advice.
(SWITCH TO KISWAHILI) Kwa hiyo alikuwa ni mama mmoja, jasiri na hodari na mwene mawazo. Haya ndio machache naeweza nikakumbuka. Na alikuwa mama mmoja mkarimu sana....
[TRANSLATION Therefore she was a daring, brave, and thoughtful woman. These are the few things I can recall. She was very generous.]
(SWITCH TO ENGLISH) Now when you visited her house, you must not go out without getting something from her. Let’s say, a cup of tea, or food or something like that. So she was very generous. Now she always talked...she didn’t fear a person, even if you, suppose you do something wrong to her, she wouldn’t be afraid to tell you what you have done to her. She must always be frank. And very fluent to tell you what you have done to her. Yes. I think those are the major points which made her probably to be appointed as the leader during the Mbiru.

This passage disclosed that Abdi had thought about how young his mother was to be chosen leader of the women, but
that he had concluded that she was chosen because "she knew how to read and write." Later in the interview Abdi said she had gone to school for two years, "she could write well, she could make simple mathematics." Another point was that she was "tough." When I asked for equivalent words in Kiswahili, Abdi said, "alikuwa imara, hodari; ana jasiri." These Kiswahili words are closely related but have distinctive meanings. "Imara" means stalwart, strong-willed, solid, resolute--materially and morally; it also means courageous and brave. "Hodari" is similar, meaning courageous, effective, and implying strength of character. "Jasiri" adds a new element; it means bold, daring, audacious, fearless, risk-taking. Abdi used these words in an increasing scale of strength, intensity, and degree, the implication being that the first two words had not said enough, and that he added the last to complete what he wanted to say about his mother's character.

Abdi illustrated this idea of her fearlessness by saying that she was not afraid of white people. He added that she had organizational ability--"she had those techniques"--"to collect people it needs some technique." Also, "she was very fluent in talking to people." From the context in which he made this last statement, I would suggest that he was trying to convey the idea of his mother being outspoken, candid, and forthright. Next, Abdi described official positions she held in her community and stated that many women came to her for
advice when they had problems. Mama Namshali apparently was respected for the assistance and advice she gave others. Last, this son of Mama Namshali described his mother’s well-known hospitality, and he again mentioned that she was frank and direct in dealing with people.

In the next section, Abdi described Mama Namshali’s relationship with her husband. Abdi said that his father respected and supported his mother, and that she was a highly respected woman in the community. Abdi made that last point when the subject of "kufololotia" came up.

ND: Did she work in the shamba like most women?
Abdi: She had many shambas. She was a very hard-working woman.
ND: What about your father, did he go to Same during Mbiru?
Abdi: Yes, he was there.
ND: What did he think of your mother doing what she did?
Abdi: Ah, my father wasn’t against what my mother was doing. She inspired him and he had nothing to talk about her. Because you know that act [apparently he means "kufololotia"] was not liked by many people.
ND: Some people thought it was too serious?
Abdi: Yes, they were very serious about it. So, anyone who was seen was against it. Nobody could hinder her from doing whatever she wants to do. So my father was not against it. He inspired even my mother to do what she was appointed by people to do.
ND: So he encouraged her.
Abdi: Yes, he encouraged her.
ND: And he wasn’t ashamed?
Abdi: No. And you’ve given me another point. My mother was not a shameful woman. No, she wasn’t.

In the above section, Abdi described his mother as a hard-working woman with "many shambas." Then he said that his father went to Same. When I asked, "What did he think of your mother doing what she did," I was referring to her protest activities in general. It appears that Abdi thought I was
asking what his father thought about the women performing "kufololotia." And, in defense of his mother, he said she "was not a shameful woman." This confusion which was soon overcome, led a little later to his making further comments about "kufololotia." After one of those points, when I turned the recorder off because it seemed to me the interview had ended, the conversation picked up again on the subject of "kufololotia."

**Abdi:** I do it to threaten you.
**ND:** Well, that's it, it's a threat. It's not really done much.
**Abdi:** Yes. Suppose if you wanted to take my shamba or something else, and if I wanted to threaten you so that you don't take it. Then I tell you that I will do this.
**ND:** But it's only a woman.
**Abdi:** But now, for the time being, women never do it.
**ND:** They don't do it?
**Abdi:** No, unless if that woman is not... (and he made a gesture that I thought I understood).
**ND:** If she's unbalanced.
**Abdi:** Yes.
**ND:** But a normal woman wouldn't do it anymore.
**Abdi:** No, they don't do it.
**ND:** There have been Christian women we have interviewed who say that it was not done during Mbiru. They are embarrassed to say that women did the female curse at Mbiru. And so, in the Muslim community, it's not acceptable to do anymore?
**Abdi:** No, no, no. It's really very bad, very, very, very bad.
**ND:** But in 1945...
**Abdi:** I think it was done.
**ND:** We have people who tell us they did it.
**Abdi:** They did it, by that time, it was not a threat, not only a threat, but because their husbands all have gone to Same, and the women just remained here. So they thought that the chief had died. They didn't mean...--they knew he was there--......but they said this chief is now dead.
**ND:** He wasn't acting like their leader.
**Abdi:** Yes. And when they do that thing it means that they want him to die. That's what they did because they were really very angry about their husbands being outside of their houses. So they tried to do everything which was unusual.
**ND:** Yes, that's the point, isn't it? They wanted everyone to know that they were very serious.
**Abdi:** Yes, serious.
When I was doing the fieldwork, I was thinking of "kufololotia" as a curse. When we talked with people about this practice in English, all of them referred to it as a curse. The analysis of this practice in Chapter 5 shows that it is more accurate to view it as a threat or a series of threats that women use to force a change of behavior in oppressive situations. Abdi made the point that this practice is a threat that can be used as a defense in certain situations. Abdi was somewhat uncomfortable with this subject. He said that in the Muslim community this practice is considered "very bad, very, very, very bad."

When Abdi shifted the scene to 1945, he provided an important insight for understanding the women's confrontation with Chief Sabuni.

**Abdi:** They did it [they performed "kufololotia"], by that time, it was not a threat, not only a threat, but because their husbands all have gone to Same, and the women just remained here. So they thought that the chief had died. They didn't mean... --they knew he was there--......but they said this chief is now dead.

This is a major point for the analysis of "kufololotia" in Chapter 5, that when the women talked and sang about the chief being dead, they were announcing that his authority over them had ended. Abdi said, "They didn't mean (that he was actually dead)--they knew he was there," but he, as chief, was ritually dead.

One more important subject emerged in this interview, that of Pare nationalism/unity. Prior to the British consolidation of the Pare Mountains into a single political
unit in 1928, the people who lived in the area identified themselves primarily with their clans. Beginning in 1928, people in Pare District had more contacts with each other and the idea of a "Pare people" emerged. Many Pare interviewed by Jean O'Barr in the late 1960s credited the British with starting the trend by which the people of the Pare Mountains worked together as a single unit (1971). During the time that thousands of men were camped at Same, they were united in opposition to the tax and they lived together as a single community. This experience strengthened the idea of a common identity, a brotherhood. It would appear that these protestors went to Same as men from different clans and different villages, and at least some of these returned home with a new consciousness of being "Pare."

Abdi: Now, it's a bit interesting. People there (at Same), though they assembled many people from many different parts of Upare... You know that the good ones, the bad ones, were there. But even if you dropped just a shilling, it would be collected and it will be announced until it goes to the person who had lost it. That was very interesting. So no theft was there.

ND: Why do you think that happened?
Abdi: Well, I think it is due to the leadership of Mzee Paulo Mashambo. Yes. I think it was that man. Because they were there for one thing. They didn't want anything to interrupt their side. And that man was very good in prayer. He was a Christian. He prayed all the time. But if somebody did something bad here then something will happen to him. So they feared. And that's what I heard about Mashambo. They lived there very, very peacefully.

During this interview Abdi provided information about his mother, the women's group she led, and Pare beliefs and practices. He discussed the Pare belief about counting one's cattle and children (see Appendix). He was the only informant
who offered any explanation about the women turning their dancing sticks upside down (see Appendix). He remembered that boys who played local "net games" sometimes turned their sticks upside down to give themselves what might be seen as a psychological advantage over an opponent. This action was supposed to bring bad luck to the opponent. In both these cases, he added that different people believed different things about these practices and their effects.

*Mama Miriamu Luka: Interview with two of her daughters, Trufaina Luka Kaasha and Monica Luka Kaasha*

Margaret Mshana and I interviewed Trufaina Luka Kaasha and Monica Luka Kaasha, two of Mama Miriamu Luka's daughters, at their home in Moshi. The interview was taped, and the interview text is the transcription of the tape. Although Monica and Trufaina both understood English, they were not comfortable having the interview in English. Margaret therefore served as translator. I was able to follow in part their conversation in Kiswahili. On some occasions, when I asked questions in English, expecting Margaret to translate, the women replied directly in English. I concluded that they had little problem understanding when Margaret and I talked in English. The text, the majority of which can be found in the Appendix, is a mixture of Kiswahili and English. In the sections where speakers used Kiswahili, an English translation follows. In some places, it is impossible to hear what was said on the tape, either because of someone speaking too low,
loud background noises, or voices overlapping each other so that no one voice is distinguishable. Because of the conversational nature of the interview, some thoughts were never finished; these are marked "..." Sometimes one woman would finish another's sentence. In the places where it is impossible to distinguish who said what, the words are incorporated into the text, perhaps sometimes assigned to the wrong speaker.

Kaasha. Mama Trufaina Luka #59 TAPED
Kaasha. Mama Monica Luka
(1/6/91.
Kiswahili/English.
In their home on Kenyatta Street in Moshi.
MM, ND.)

When we arrived for the visit, which Margaret had arranged, Margaret introduced us. Bottles of cold soda were brought, and the four of us sat around a table, sipped the soda, and talked about Mbiru and Mama Miriamu (Margaret called her Mama Miriam). Since this interview took place in January, the hottest time of the year, the drinks were very welcome. They also added an element of sociability to our meeting.

The dynamics of this interview were very interesting. The three Pare women, about the same age (c. 60 years old), had grown up in Usangi together and had multiple connections. After attending mission schools, they had all taken jobs in the "wage sector" outside Usangi. In recent times the three of them had been living in Moshi and had contact with each other. At the time of this interview, Margaret had been working with me on the data collection for about two weeks.
During that period, she had learned many new things about Mbiru and had been working to connect what she was learning with things she herself recalled. Margaret's father, Gerson Marisa, a leader of the protest, had died when she was twenty years old, and, in a very real sense, Margaret was rediscovering her father. As she entered each interview, she carried with her a personal interest in this project and an enthusiasm for the Pare history she was learning. This interview reveals what an important contribution Margaret's involvement on a personal level made to the research.

The interview started at a slow pace (see Appendix). As we began, Monica and Trufaina appeared to be struggling to understand the purpose of our meeting and what it was we expected from them. Our approach, which privileged the informants' telling of their own stories, required Margaret to set the stage and then wait for the testimony to flow of its own accord. Monica and Trufaina were, of course, aware that their mother had been a leader of women's activities during Mbiru. However, our inquiry that treated the women's involvement as equal in importance to the men's appeared to be a new idea to them. They mentioned that they considered their mother as just an ordinary woman. They said they had consulted a brother about Mbiru before the interview—"he cannot remember how things went"—and suggested that we contact Peter Kisumo, an important public man, who could tell us what they thought we wanted to know. At this point, it
appears that they doubted that they had anything of value to
tell us. Perhaps, like many women around the world, they
considered history and politics as mostly men’s business.

Before long, there was a shift in the climate of the
interview, although Trufaina and Monica continued to say they
did not know much. The three women began to discuss Mama
Miriamu’s special qualities and activities, and Margaret
described some of the things she had been learning about
Mbiru. In the segment below, Trufaina talked about Mama
Miriamu’s leadership roles at church, and Monica recalled that
their mother was known as courageous, no, more than that, she
was fearless. According to Trufaina, this fearlessness had
made Mama Miriamu a strong mother and perhaps led to her being
beaten up during Mbiru. This subject led them to discuss Mama
Miriamu’s role as spokesperson for the women because she was
"outspoken," "vocal," and "brave."

Trufaina: I know mother was involved in church affairs. For
example, she was active in church and had certain leadership
qualities that have not been documented anywhere. I have
never read anything concerning those issues. It’s something
that I have missed... and there’s the book about Mbiru.
Monica: To me, mother was like any other woman around at that
time. I did not see anything unique in her throughout my life
at home because I was not around during all those happenings.
Had I been around at home, those days... What I know is that
she was a courageous woman who feared nothing in her life.
She was never threatened by anybody or even thought about
things like... "because someone told me this..." or stop doing
what she wanted to do because of fear.
Trufaina: As I knew her or the way she brought us up, she
never hesitated to reprimand a child, fearing that the child’s
father or any other person would question about it. She did
what she was supposed to do regardless of who said what. So
I can recall about Mbiru, although I was in Moshi by then...
What I know is that mother was beaten up.
Monica: I was in Moshi when I was informed that Mother was beaten up as a result of leading other women. They went to Chief Sabuni’s. She led the women to Chief Sabuni’s to inquire as to why their husbands were at Same during Mbiru. Mother was the leader when they were going to Sabuni’s place. Then policemen were called. That’s when Mother was beaten up. And Mother wanted to explain the story, but I never wanted to know more about it. She was beaten up at Sabuni’s, at Chief Sabuni’s, where they were chased away.

MM: By policemen, yes.

Monica: She was described as the leader. They were being chased toward Chief Sabuni’s place. Mother was the leader then.

Trufaina: No, but I think, Margaret, you were there at that time when they gathered... When women gather at one place... the women who met after their husbands had gone to Same because of Mbiru... And wherever there is a group of people, outspoken and vocal leaders have to be chosen. Just as my sister has said, Mother was one of the brave spokeswomen. She could talk. That is why I am saying Mother was able to talk on behalf of other women, for their husbands who were against Mbiru in Same. So they united and said they wanted to know about Mbiru.

(After a slight digression)

Monica: Mother was the spokeswoman on behalf of other women. She was leading, that is, she would speak before any other woman. You could not speak in chorus. It would be chaotic. What I can say is that I cannot exactly say what points were made by those women. What issues were raised by those women, I do not know. But Mother raised the points before anybody else. Mother was good at talking, but as to the points raised at that time of Mbiru, and since I have not read the book on Mbiru, I cannot say anything meaningful. But it is written that Mama Miriamu and Biti Kangero (Namshali Shedehwa) led the crowd.

MM: Nothing is written on that.

Trufaina: But, ee, I remember one thing about mother, and I used to hear people saying that mother used to lead prayers. She would pray and pray. People would be quiet and pray for a very long time. She would pray, pray for everybody. That’s what I remember. I remember that she led others in prayers.

Monica: Morning prayers, in meetings. Now when they... before starting any work, they used to pray.

MM: I don’t know, I don’t know... I just know that Mother was saying Miriam was also praying. They were saying that she was an amazing and strong person who was never moved by anything when she was praying. I wonder if she was praying in the presence of policemen.

(after Margaret’s story)

Monica: ...when the policemen were demanding that they should disperse, the women refused. Mother said to them, "Do not run
away!" So she was beaten up. That's what she used to talk about.

In Chapter 3 we learned that the men at Same were using prayer as part of their daily routine. This last testimony reveals that Mama Miriamu was also leading prayers during the women’s protest activities.

As the discussion continued among the three women (I was not involved at this point), they began to recall other things they knew about the Mbiru period, for example, about the food that was prepared and transported to Same. A process was taking place in the interview, in which the articulation of certain remembrances led to the recall of other things. Some remarks revealed that Monica and Trufaina were becoming more interested in the Mbiru story and their mother’s part in it, and they began to ask questions of Margaret who they realized had more information about these subjects.

Trufaina: (to Margaret) So, it seems you know more than I do regarding Mother.
(after Margaret’s response)
Monica: But I do not know how this story escaped my mind. So there are people, mostly Mother... I used to hear mother saying that they led others. (can’t hear) Which year was this?

Earlier, Monica said (see above), "That’s when Mother was beaten up. And Mother wanted to explain the story, but I never wanted to know more about it." This statement echoes the comments by many Mbiru participants, both male and female, that their children were not interested in hearing about what happened during Mbiru. One woman from South Pare told us that her grandfather had tried to tell her about Mbiru--he had gone
with the men to Same--but she had not been interested. After his death, she had felt deep regrets that she had not listened to his stories.

Next, Margaret told a story about her father being taken to the court in Same at Christmas time in 1944 to face charges relating to his protest activities (see Appendix). Margaret had been piecing together this story with the help of Mzee Kaleya, a neighbor and teaching colleague of her father. Margaret remembered that her family thought her father might be absent on Christmas Day and described the family’s celebration of his dramatic return on Christmas Eve. This first part of the interview appears to be an example of how people construct and reconstruct their history. Throughout the research year in Tanzania there was evidence that this inquiry into Mbiru was leading the Pare to discuss anew this chapter of their collective history. Margaret was in the unique position of both learning and teaching about Mbiru, of collecting and disseminating this information, and she was enjoying her role.

After the first stage of the interview in which three friends discussed a subject of interest to them, Trufaina asked about my part in the work, and another shift in the interview process occurred. After Margaret briefly described my work, I mentioned that women’s history is often overlooked even though it is important. Margaret immediately picked up the theme and expanded on it. (She and I had been discussing
this issue.) Margaret had known Bibi Titi, the most prominent women's leader in the nationalist movement in Tanzania, and she expressed her regret that Bibi Titi's vital contribution has been all but forgotten by Tanzanians. Margaret's point about Bibi Titi appeared to put the women's participation in Mbiru in a new light, as a major contribution, and as important history.

**ND:** You know, men leaders are remembered in oral testimony, in oral histories or are written about in history books. But oftentimes women leaders are not, so we are searching for women leaders like your mother.

**MM:** (In Kiswahili to the Kaashas) She says the books we read talk more about men. They document what different men have done. But there are not books written about women and history, even for those women who have done exciting things. Nobody says anything about them. They want to know more about women's development, how it started. But it is essential to go back to past history to find out when and how things started. We read more about men's history. Take the case of Nkrumah's era. I am sure there were women in politics at that time but nobody has written about that. For example, we hear so many people talking about Nyerere, but not much about Bibi Titi who was hand in hand with Nyerere. She is completely forgotten. Bibi Titi is still alive but completely forgotten. The present generation does not know anything about Bibi Titi.

**ND:** Right.

**MM:** They (people) do not know her. She was at the forefront. **Trufaina:** She was the first woman to fight for independence. She was the first.

**MM:** She would courageously stand in front of people and give speeches. And so Bibi Titi is forgotten. That is why when I meet someone like this who wants to know about the history of women, I tell everything I know and ask others to provide information also.

**Monica:** Yes, I have heard that.

**MM:** But people say you, Mwalimu Monica, you were here in Moshi when Mbiru started. But historically, Mbiru appears to be a men's issue. But it was not just men's. Mbiru was a concern of both men and women, and women played more of a role because they were taking care of the house, children and everything, and worked hard to send food to the husbands. I know that because the food was transported through our home. And women did not simply send food. They would pound maize (corn) and mix it with beans. They... the foods would be wrapped and carried to Same.
Trufaina: They would fry the corn, pound it, and the flour was put in calabashes. A thin porridge was made as the main dish for people since they could not cook. They could not cook makande (corn and beans) because it would take them a long time. Flour was sieved and put in calabashes. Flour would be stored somewhere else while milk was always stored in calabashes. They would prepare porridge and drink it. That was their food.

It was not hard for these women to imagine all the work that went in to supplying the food for the men at Same, or to realize how essential this effort was to the protestors' cause.

I felt that we were still not getting enough vital information about their mother, and I asked Monica and Trufaina to help us understand better why their mother was chosen as leader. After having skirted around the issue of their mother's special qualifications for leadership, Monica and Trufaina now began to provide the kind of insights I was seeking.

ND: So if they can describe the kind of woman their mother was, even if they don't know anything about her relationship to Mbiru, but if we can... can they describe their mother? What kind of leadership did she have, what kind of things did she do that made her a woman leader?

Trufaina: (She began to answer without waiting for Margaret to translate,) What mom did mostly was leading others in places like different households. For example, Mzee Luka's at Mfinanga's (Mfinanga is the lineage), Mother was a woman leader. Whenever there was a funeral, or a wedding, mother would lead others. She would lead others in celebrations and other necessary events. In church she was also at the forefront, a church leader, a church elder. She was a church elder for a long time. She had to go to school at her old age. She went to school with Daniel, her son.

MM: Really!

Trufaina: Yes, she went to school with him because Father wanted her to be able to read and write letters on her own. He did not like the idea of other people reading letters he sent to her. She enrolled in adult classes like the current
adult education classes so that she would be able to read and write.

Monica: That means she was not literate when she got married and went to school with her son. So they went to school together.

MM: (talking to me) You get it?

ND: No, tell me.

MM: Their mother got married. She could neither read nor write, but then after the first boy—her first child is a boy—the boy grew until he went to school. So when the boy was going to school, he went to school with his mother. So the mother attended classes until she could read and write. And this is exceptional, is exceptional.

ND: Wonderful!

MM: Because the husband was a teacher, he insisted. He said, "I can't stay with a woman who can't read or write, because she has to write and read her own letters." And so she went to school with her son. This is really exceptional during those years.

Monica: My brother was born in 1910. Therefore it was in the 20s. Add ten more years.

MM: About more than 20. About 30, 1930. So it's very early. I mean those years, for a woman to leave the house and go to school...

ND: With her child...

MM: With her child.

That Mama Miriamu went to school along with her son illustrates this woman's determination and fearlessness in breaking social conventions she found restrictive. The incentive for Miriamu to go to school came from her husband who wanted a literate wife who could read for herself the letters he wrote to her.

At this point in the interview, I introduced the idea that women leaders, "wise women," often serve as mediators in their communities, for example, resolving disputes. One daughter (the speaker cannot be identified) said their mother also was involved in such work. The discussion of this point seemed to open the way for Monica and Trufaina to remember more things for which their mother was known. First, they
described Mama Miriamu's challenge to conventional attitudes about gender roles.

**ND:** Well, one of the other things that women leaders often do is they are problem solvers for their communities, for the places they live. If a husband and wife are fighting, maybe this woman leader acts as a judge and helps solve the problem. Did your mother do that? You know, I think of them as "wise women."

**MM:** Yeah, she recalled about her mother. She saw her mother as an intelligent and respectable woman. She would make reconciliations between married couples. Mother was famous for that.

**Monica:** Several times, several times, when people fought.

**Trufaina:** And at that time sons were not allowed to do household chores like cooking, cutting grass for cows or pounding. But Mother, having had boys first, she decided that all children would do all the household chores regardless of gender. They would help in cooking, cutting grass, etc. She did not have jobs exclusively for boys and girls. Consequently, she was reported to the mission and was reprimanded for making her sons cut grass.

**MM:** Are you recording?

**ND:** Yes.

**MM:** OK. It's really something.

**ND:** OK, what?

**MM:** Because, you know according to the Pare tradition, the boys are not allowed to do women's work. Who divides this women's work, God knows. And so,...but because now her mother had the first child as a boy, she didn't divide the work. So the boy, or later on, she had more boys, the boys were doing the same work like the girls. They were cooking, they were cutting grass, and they were doing this.

**ND:** She was a revolutionary.

**MM:** Yeah. And then it came at a point where she was called even at the church committees and was [reprimanded] because she was making the boys to work, to do women's work.

Here is another example of Mama Miriamu's challenge to local norms of behavior. Because her oldest children were boys and she needed help, she broke what others considered the usual rules about a sex-based division of labor. In this instance, she was required to defend her actions before church committees. Having heard about Miriamu's fearlessness, I imagine that this meeting with church committees was no
problem for her. She was a leader in her church and a hard-working, respectable woman who saw that her children took their mission education seriously. After this exchange, Margaret recalled how her mother also broke conventional rules about the division of work between girls and boys.

Trufaina and Monica provided further interesting insights about this strong woman. First, they described her opposition to a practice that involved infanticide, another example of Miriamu’s unconventionality and fearlessness. Next the daughters described a scene in which Miriamu cried for help when her husband beat her. Because women were expected to remain quiet and accept the beating, those people who came in response to her cry compared her behavior to that of men. Margaret immediately recognized this bit of testimony as important to our inquiry. The daughters described their mother as a hard worker and a tough disciplinarian toward her children where school work was concerned.

**MM:** I think this is something that is important. Their father beat their mother, and so the mother cried very loud and when the people came, they said, well, now I know that I have really borne a man. She was really a man.

**Monica:** She was a hard worker. She took care of us when Dad was busy during Mbiru. So, Mother was working with her hands to feed us all and also to pay school fees. We had to go to school.

**Trufaina:** Every evening we would show her what we did in school. She would be able to tell whether we were doing well or not. (laughter)

**Monica:** If you did not perform well, you had to explain why, even though she did not know much. She would ask why you got an "X" and whether you were fooling around at school. She was very supportive.
In the next part of the interview (see Appendix), we learned that Mama Miriamu gave birth to twelve children, eight of whom are still alive, four girls and four boys. When I asked, "Are you daughters tough like your mother," they responded immediately in English, "Yes, why not?" and we all laughed together, although the two women added that they were not the best ones to judge whether they were like their mother. In the following section, they spoke further about the legacy this outstanding woman had left them.

**MM:** What she is asking is whether you as your mother’s daughters emulated what she did.

**Monica:** Nearly all of us are courageous, can talk in front of crowds, and help and guide others.

**MM:** Yeah, it’s obvious that anybody who knew our mothers and who knows us now, they could tell. They’re the ones now to tell that, "OK, she is just like the mother." But otherwise themselves they feel they are OK, they are tough, and they don’t fear, and they’re good in talking, and they’re not afraid of talking in anything. And mwalimu is giving her own example. She said, "for example, for myself, I see myself with my mother. If my mother would have had my education, she would have been more active than me because..."

**ND:** Even more?

**MM:** Even more.

**ND:** But you think that your mother, if she had education, she would have done something very special? She was a very special woman.

**Trufaina and Monica:** ENGLISH Yes, of course, yes.

**MM:** This is how I know this mama. She was very special. There are cases where I recall when I was seeing her in the church. She, you know, was dressing like a European. You’d never see her in a kanga. You never see her in...

**ND:** That was progress to her.

**MM:** Very, not to her only, for the whole community. She was exceptional. And I remember as a young girl, I was admiring and sometimes I was telling my mother, why don’t you do like Koko? And my mother would say, oh, no, no, no. What Miriam does, no one else can do. (Laughter) And she was really up to the standards. This is how I remember her. Up to date.

This description (above) included more impressions of Mama Miriamu. Margaret ended this part by describing Miriamu
as "up to the standards, up to date," a trend-setter, who chose to wear western-style clothes rather than kanga for church. Margaret recalled that her mother had remarked, "What Miriam does, no one else can do." Miriamu Luka, who died in 1978, was forty years old in 1945 when she led the women's protest in Usangi.

This interview was an interesting experience in itself. We learned many things about Mama Miriamu, and we witnessed three women discussing their history and women's role in it. Although it started slowly, the interview gained momentum the more the three women talked. We learned that Mama Miriamu could be strong-minded and unconventional. Her toughness made it difficult for her husband to beat her, made it possible for her to become literate (which led to more opportunities), and at least once got her into trouble with fellow church members who had ideas different from hers about work roles for boys and girls. Besides being literate, she was good at speaking in public, not afraid of anyone, and open to new ideas. Although these two daughters started out describing her as an ordinary mother, the more they talked, the more they acknowledged her special talents, many of which they admitted they also had.

The interaction between the three women added another interesting dimension to the interview. Margaret had already begun to process the Mbiru information she was handling. By now she had recognized the women's critical role in Mbiru,
which previously she had not thought about per se. It appears that Trufaina and Monica had been conditioned to disregard women's role as political actors. This is not surprising when one knows the emphasis the Tanzanian government has placed on the activities of new institutions, most of which are based on colonial models. Since the new institutions are led and dominated at all levels by men, women's role in public life is given little attention. I will return to this point again.

The Women Dancers

On two occasions Margaret Mshana and I met with four Usangi women who had participated in Mbiru protest activities. At our first meeting, the women danced, "as during Mbiru," and described some of their protest experiences. During our second meeting, the six of us toured the area around the court so that the women could describe their confrontation with the DC and chiefs and point out where different incidents took place. The text which I analyze below is from the second meeting. On both days we turned on the tape-recorder. Because a group of people were talking while they moved around, the tapes have been especially difficult to transcribe. This text, basically a transcription of the tape, contains the original Kipare with an English translation added. The complete Kipare/English test can be found in the Appendix. The Kipare part was originally transcribed by a Kipare speaker at the University of Dar es Salaam and subsequently reviewed by Mwajabu Possi Kachenje who is both a
Pare and a linguist. Mwajabu also translated the Kipare text into English. The text below is the complete English translation. Because it is impossible to identify with any precision which of the women was speaking, the women’s testimony is labeled simply Women. Actually, one woman, Mwanasharifa Mangare, tended to act as a spokesperson for the women in describing the Mbiru happenings. Masking a very sharp wit behind a straight face, Mwanasharifa told colorful stories which brought hearty laughter from the other women. She added an occasional deep chuckle to her recitation of the women’s Mbiru adventures. A large part of the testimony was hers, but I am not sure just where her testimony stopped or was broken by the testimony of the other women. Because of the problems involved with identifying the speakers, most of the testimony of the four women appears as all one block.

Dancers (2nd session) #72B TAPED #17
2/14/91
Kipare
MM, ND

[ND: Four dancers, MM, ND. Margaret’s sister-in-law and Mama Naetweeli Mbati were present only at Margaret’s family home where we met the women. The six of us—the four dancers, MM, ND—walked to the court buildings for a tour after having soda at Margaret’s. The women were Mwanaidi Mashashi (aged 77), Mwanasharifa Mangare (75), Halima Salimu (60), Mwajuma Isumaili (73).]

(MM: "Kevata nyatu sa nguto," a leading song which started at Margaret’s home. It is sung when one starts to talk or explain something. It is giving a message in a poetic way. We started walking from Margaret’s home to the hospital to see where Mbiru activities took place at the court in Usangi. The women talked as we walked around the court area.)

Mwanasharifa: When the car was started, all the women held it like this. I fell down this way. After I had fallen down and
rose up, my headscarf was gone. Then the owner of the car felt sorry for us and drove away. The car was driven to the court.

**MM:** Now, where was the court?

**Women:** The court was just there; therefore the chief was here with the white man. Then they were put into the car and sent to the court.

**MM:** So were they taken from here in a car?

**Women:** Yes, there again! Did we have to follow them? Ahaa, we followed them to that place. Then we said to each other, "Now this is the music we should dance to." Then people went into the court with our dancing sticks and drums. But it was late. They were dancing.

**Mwanasharifa:** Then Abeli (Sabuni's son) brought a thermos flask with tea. He was told, "Yes, now you have brought this flask. Make sure all the children get the tea before your father does." Then he said, "But why don't you let father drink a little?" His father told him, "Take the tea back." The son was told, "How could he drink the tea when our children are hungry? After all, why should he drink it? He is the one who put our men in the wilderness. Even if you had twenty flasks, they would not be sufficient anyway."

**MM:** Then, after the car had left here, was it driven to the court? Ahaa, then the women followed it.

**Women:** Then Pringle left us there. Evidently there was a telephone call to Same saying that cars and policemen should be brought here because the chief was in danger of being killed.

**MM:** So, when the car left the court, after Sabuni had arrived there...

**Women:** They spoke their English gibberish, then the others left.

**MM:** Pringle never got out of the car again.

**Women:** No, they went. After they had passed Mbakwe and Shighatini, people started a fire. Then they left, but as they were leaving, evidently phone calls had already been made that police should be ready and come because the chief was in trouble.

**MM:** Now, did Minja sleep there?

**Women:** He went. He went with his wife known as Majabu, who is said to be currently living in Same. She did not have a child. We insulted her and said, "You, barren woman, are you the one living with this man? It would be better for those women who are fertile to live with him rather than you."

At that time phone calls were already made for the police to come. We knew nothing inside the court. We were singing, "The chief died yesterday and flies are all over him."

Then we went outside under a tree and sat with my late sister-in-law and Tenamburi who held Namghanga (her baby). Around the Msembea area I could hear, "Hu-ru-ru." I told my colleagues, "Stand up, the cars have arrived. You will die if
you sit there." Tenamburi said, "Where do I go? I have already wet my pants."

We went up and down the hills. Then we heard the soldiers’ marching feet, "Paa!" You know how men are. "Uwi! Uwi!" Some went out through windows. Some fell down. Then we asked, "What happened, guys?" Namshali said, "Where were you?" We replied, "We were here." She said, "Are you here?" We replied, "Yes." We asked them, "How is it going?" Mariamu (Namshali) said, "It is ordered that tomorrow we should all go to Sabuni’s place." The dance was incredible. I did not dance.

Next morning it was announced, "Anyone with a baby should go to breakfast and come after breast-feeding. Any woman who will refuse to come back will have her house burned." I went home, breast-fed my child, and fed my cow. Then we went down. Yulia, Sabuni’s wife, took a cooking pot and threw it at the banana grove. A sound, "Poo," was heard. She asked, "Why are you here?" We said to her, "The pot you broke won’t harm us. The bad luck will come back to you."

Sabuni said, "You know, old Naheja is my age mate. How dare you shameless children follow me around." He was told, "You should impregnate all the women here to prove you are a man." Abeli said, "This is his own house, built by him. You attacked him at the court. What are you looking for here?"

He was answered, "He never worked in sisal plantations to cut sisal. It is through our husbands’ money that this house was constructed. Show us where you helped cut the sisal." He said, "Aa, I have nothing to say."

The women entered the house with their bamboo sticks (mijungu) and drums. Some of them sat outside. I climbed up the hill. Wow! What sounds from the drums and dancing sticks from inside the house!

Soon my sister-in-law, by the name Majabu, came and said to me, "I have asked permission from Mariamu (Namshali) so I can go home because I have a baby, Rabia." (I can not remember whether it was Rabia or Mwanahawa.) She said to me, "Go also and tell her you are sick, you have pains on one side, in the ribs and you need medication at the hospital." I said, "I am not going to ask for permission. I will just tell her I am leaving."

She said, "You know you might get fined." I said, "It will be OK."

When we were down at Andrea’s place, we were almost bitten by dogs. Then we arrived at Solomon’s place and arrived home where I breast-fed my child, ate, and slept. In the morning I refused to leave my place. Mwanasha said to me, "Let’s go for medication." On our way, Mronga said to us, "I wish you were injured. You wanted to kill the old man. I wish you had all been killed."

"Well, let’s go," I said. When we were passing Solomon’s place, we heard the lukunga, "Uwi! We are being killed at Sabuni’s place! We are being killed!" People were moving
across the river with sounds, "pa-ta-la-pa-ta-la." We went uphill and stood at the top and looked down. "Uwi! We have been killed at Sabuni's place."

We then went down and asked, "Where is mother, my mother-in-law?" They said, "She is nowhere to be found, but she has already gone through Mbale, through that forest to Kengia market." We searched for her in vain. When we arrived home her husband said, "I went through Mbale and arrived at the market place."

After two days the men arrived. Nothing else was said. Two days and that was enough.

(ND: The next part is about the incident near the court in which Namshali/Mariamu [not Miriamu Luka] knocked the DC's lunch out of the cook's hands as he was carrying it to the guest house.)

MM: When she knocked the food down...

Women: We hid her. She is short. She was hidden and was never seen. The chief was looking for her so that she could be arrested. She was hidden. Sabuni looked for her in vain. He said, "I know that woman; she's from Kighare." We told him, "We cannot see her. We do not know her." He said, "Wait, I will see her." He never saw her.

MM: How did you hide her?

W: She was around us, moving around in the group. Even when the chief was talking about her, she was still around. But if you do not know someone in such a big crowd, you will never get her. The chief started his car, and fire was set in Mbakwe.

MM: Chief Kibacha and the DC each had his own car?

W: Yeah, and his own people.

MM: So Kibacha never came here at the court?

W: No, no, even Minja never came here, not at all.

MM: Ahaa, Kibacha then went with his people, that's where fire was set.

W: Yes.

MM: So the DC was not there when the fire was set?

W: No, no.

MM: Were there women lying on the road?

W: What, on the road? Which road?

MM: We were told that when the DC was driving this direction, there were women lying on the road.

W: We did not see them because we were already at the court. We had one job to do--dancing.

MM: So, did the car pass through this way up to here? Ahaa, then it went downhill on this same road.

W: This road.

MM: Before coming to eat, where were they?

W: They were at the court.

MM: Where were the women?

W: We were there.

MM: So after that, did they come to eat?
They came to eat because there were people responsible for cooking.

Mwanasharifa took the lead in describing the activities in the court area in February 1945. She remembered that when she and other women tried to hold the DC’s car, she fell down and lost her headscarf. The four women acted out the drama she was describing. One woman related that they "said to each other, 'Now this is the music we should dance to.'" This statement suggests that even the music was planned, rather than being spontaneously started by some woman. The women entered the court with their bamboo dancing sticks and drums. They had left their homes in a procession, dancing and singing as they went. One wonders if the women took their dancing sticks and drums with them on every visit to the court, or if the fact that they had their sticks and drums with them on this occasion signalled a change in their negotiating strategy.

The following scene at the court in which the chief’s son tried to deliver a flask of tea to his father, was incorporated into the Mbiru narrative (see Chapter 3). The chief was unable to leave the building because of the women’s takeover. The women expressed defiance, placing the blame for the predicament in which the chief found himself back on him, since, "He is the one who put our men in the wilderness." Chief Sabuni then told his son to "take the tea back," and Abeli withdrew. Several times the women mentioned telephone calls being made to Same to request help to the beleaguered
officials. When Margaret made her initial report of this meeting, she described messages, without mentioning telephones. Perhaps she thought, or knew, that there were not yet telephones in Usangi. The women talked about hearing someone speak English which was incomprehensible to them. Mwajabu translated this term as "gibberish."

When Margaret asked about Chief Minja who was in the hospital just near the court, the women said that Minja's wife was with him. They admitted, "We insulted her." The women taunted Majabu by reminding her that she was barren (considered by the Pare as a truly unfortunate condition for a married woman) and challenged the sick chief to come out and take on all these lively, fertile women.

Because the women were busy inside the court ("We knew nothing inside the court.") , singing, "The chief died yesterday and flies are all over him," they were not immediately aware of the approach of the police. One woman described the scene from the place where she was sitting outside the court. One woman who was really scared had a special problem.

Woman: Then we went outside under a tree and sat with my late sister-in-law and Tenamburi who held Namghanga (her baby). Around the Msembea area I could hear, "Hu-ru-ru." I told my colleagues, "Stand up, the cars have arrived. You will die if you sit there." Tenamburi (the woman with a baby) said, "Where do I go? I have already wet my pants."

The women hurried away, "up and down the hills," to get away from the arriving police. One woman said, "Then we heard the soldiers' marching feet, 'Paa!'" and she adds, "You know
how men are," a very interesting remark that will be left for
interpretation by Pare women. The women hurried to escape
from the court, some going out windows, some falling down.
Someone asked the women, "What happened, guys?"

The next section relates an exchange between the women
and Namshali (also called Mariam or Mariamu). It appears that
more than one woman is involved as speaker here.

Women:
Namshali said, "Where were you?"
We replied, "We were here."
She said, "Are you here?"
We replied, "Yes." We asked them, "How is it going?"
Mariamu said, "It is ordered that tomorrow we should all go to
Sabuni's place."
The dance was incredible.
(another woman?) I did not dance.
Next morning it was announced, "Anyone with a baby should go
to breakfast and come after breast-feeding. Any woman who
will refuse to come back will have her house burned." I went
home, breastfed my child, and fed my cow. Then we went down.

This last section of testimony provides more evidence of the
level of discipline required of members of the women's group.
Namshali appeared to be communicating with the women as a
commander-in-charge. She was quoted as giving two sets of
orders: "It is ordered that tomorrow we should all go to
Sabuni's place"; and the next morning, "Anyone with a baby
should go to breakfast and come after breast-feeding. Any
woman who will refuse to come back will have her house
burned." The woman who provided this testimony furnished a
glimpse of what the orders meant to the women. She went home,
breastfed her child, fed her cow, and then returned to the
women's protest. She complied with the orders.
The next testimony described a scene in which the women were trying to get to Chief Sabuni's compound, which is centrally located in Usangi. It would not take very long (no more than an hour) to walk to Sabuni's from any place in Usangi, and yet the women said their trip took all day. Margaret noted that the women thought they were bewitched. They referred to heads of goats and sheep being buried in their way. In any case, they persevered and arrived at Sabuni's home. The following description of the confrontation between the women and Chief Sabuni's family is full of interesting vignettes.

Women:
When it was sunset we arrived at the place. Yulia, Sabuni's wife, took a cooking pot and threw it at the banana grove. A sound, "Poo," was heard. She asked, "Why are you here?"
We said to her, "The pot you broke won't harm us. The bad luck will come back to you."

The women arrived at sunset. In this incident, Sabuni's wife Yulia threw a cooking pot at the women, and asked, "Why are you here?" The pot broke. The pot breaking was described to us as a bad omen; some people mentioned there was a curse attached to this action. In an attempt to counteract the action, the women "said back to her, 'The pot you broke won't harm us. The bad luck will come back to you.'"

Women:
Sabuni said, "You know, old Naheja is my age mate. How dare you shameless children follow me around?"
He was told, "You should impregnate all the women here to prove your manhood."
In this exchange, Chief Sabuni was quoted as expressing anger at the way he is being mistreated. There would have been a high degree of equality between Chief Sabuni and Naheja, members of the same generation, in Pare society. For example, women of Naheja’s age would have been able to speak in fairly straightforward terms to the chief. In contrast, strict rules about respect for, and deference to, older people would govern interactions between someone Chief Sabuni’s age—especially a chief—and younger people, especially women, under normal circumstances. The women responded to the chief’s outrage with a taunt that challenged his manhood.

Women:
Abeli said, "This is his own house, built by him. You attacked him at the court. What are you looking for here?"
He was answered, "He never worked in sisal plantations to cut sisal. It is through our husbands’ money that this house was constructed. Show us where you helped cut the sisal."
He said, "Aa, I have nothing to say."

Abeli came to his father’s defence here, confronting the women who, in his opinion, were acting so badly. The rebellious women were not playing their normal respectful roles in the chief-people relationship. This passage reveals that the women were challenging Sabuni’s rights to his house. Their previous actions had signaled that the women no longer considered Sabuni to be chief. In this view, this house which the people had built for their chief no longer belonged to this man.

Women:
The women entered the house with their bamboo sticks (mijungu) and drums. Some of them sat outside. I climbed up the hill,
Wow! What sounds from drums and dancing sticks from inside the house!

This scene in which the women entered Sabuni’s house with their dancing sticks and drums is described by one woman who observed it from the place she sat outside the house. She was obviously impressed with the noise and the activity.

The following provides additional testimony about group discipline.

**Women:**
Soon my sister-in-law, by the name Majabu, came and said to me, "I have asked permission from Mariamu (Namshali) so I can go home because I have a baby, Rabia." I can not remember whether it was Rabia or Mwanahawa. She said to me, "Go also and tell her you are sick, you have pains on one side, in the ribs and you need medication at the hospital." I said, "I am not going to ask for permission. I will just tell her I am leaving." She said, "You know you might get fined." I said, "It will be OK."

This testimony reveals that there might have been a limit to the obligation some women felt to their groups’ activities. Perhaps their enthusiasm had begun to fade after two days of intense involvement. A woman had asked permission to go home and suggested to Mwanasharifa that she use an excuse open to her—she had been injured when the women held the DC’s car and would benefit from a visit to the hospital. Mwanasharifa’s answer was that she did not need to ask Namshali for permission. She would just leave. The suggestion that she might be fined did not bother her, at this point.

As some of the women went to the hospital, they met women who were running away from the police. The next incident in which Namshali knocked the DC’s food into the dirt, is part of
the narrative in Chapter 3. The last section of this interview provides bits and pieces of information, some of it confusing, as Margaret shared some things she has learned and asked the women more questions.

If Margaret and I had asked these four women for their testimony in a regular interview setting, for example, sitting on chairs in someone's house or yard, the exchange might have been constrained by rules of formal interaction. The format we chose, strolling around the court area where the women had challenged government officials, brought forth some intimate (and some hilarious) remembrances of Mbiru events. On the two occasions we met with these women, Margaret and I—two women from the "important" world outside the village—honored these women (and valorized all Mbiru women) by giving our full attention to their Mbiru stories. Perhaps it was a small amount of consolation when the Pare have generally ignored or forgotten the women's courageous acts.

As we were finishing up the interview at the court, a woman who was walking past paused to look and listen. Margaret knew the woman and greeted her from a short distance where the six of us were standing. When the woman heard what we were doing—perhaps she had already guessed—she appeared quite interested. Margaret was surprised at this, and said something like, "But you are not old enough to remember that time." The woman laughingly disagreed. She told Margaret that she had been a small child during Mbiru, and that,
because her mother was busy with protest activities, she had used the occasion to stop breastfeeding her daughter. To this woman, Mbiru was an important part of her family’s folklore.

**Conclusion**

These four examples only hint at the variety of interviews the research team conducted and the wealth of material different interviewees contributed. As already stated, the process by which the Pare were constructing and reconstructing this chapter of their history was very complex. It would take another research project to understand that process better and what it meant to the Pare involved. After reading these interview texts, the reader can see the kinds of things the research team was learning about Mbiru events, especially about the interesting women who participated, some of them as leaders. As I have been analyzing the Kaasha and Mkindi interviews, I have been struck at the indications about how these children of Mbiru leaders have been socialized about women’s role in politics and history. After his mother’s death, Abdi Mkindi had sought to understand his mother’s role in the protest, had questioned others about her, and had arrived at some conclusions about why she had been chosen by the other women as leader. The connection between his mother and Mbiru was a subject in which he became interested, but not during the time his mother was alive. When our interview concluded, Abdi asked me please to send him a copy of anything that I wrote about Mbiru. It appeared that he was especially
interested because of his mother's place in this historical event.

I tend to think that the Kaasha sisters' lack of interest in Mbiru and their mother's role in the protest would be a more typical attitude of the Pare, both women and men, of their social class. Because Trufaina and Monica were educated in mission schools and left the village to take jobs in the wage sector, their world is outside the village. The perception by some Pare that much of what happens in the village is not "important" and is not "interesting," in the strictest sense of those terms, will be discussed again in Chapter 5.

The two interviews with women who had actually participated in Mbiru, i.e., Mama Helena and the four women dancers, reveal something about the ways in which Pare women were "tough" during their protest activities. Because patterns of discourse privilege knowledge about urban, job-related activities over knowledge about rural life, many young Pare are not aware of the history about these heroic women, a history that might increase their pride about their Pare identity. Perhaps this is especially true of girls and young women who, if they have not heard about women's part in Mbiru, are not in a position to claim this legacy of heroic women.

It is interesting to note that three of these four interviews did not mention the use during Mbiru of women's ultimate weapon, "kufololotia." Only Abdi Mkindi discussed
the subject, and then perhaps only because he thought I was referring to it. Mama Helena mentioned the dancing sticks being turned upside down, but not "kufololotia." The subject of "kufololotia" never came up in the interview with the Kaashas, perhaps in part because Margaret was never very comfortable dealing with it. Actually the women dancers told us in the first interview with them that women had performed "kufololotia" during the protest, and then added that after things died down, they were somewhat embarrassed they had done it. As stated earlier, a few women told us they would be embarrassed to tell their children and grandchildren about many of the women's actions during Mbiru. More research that explores the context of the women's actions could help us understand better just what it was the women were doing. Were they taking the offensive, going to war, using their deadliest weapons? Here is more evidence that rules of discourse continue to make it difficult for people to tell the story of the women's heroism. This leads naturally to the continuation of the ethnographic inquiry in Chapter 5, in which I analyze "kufololotia" and other related cultural practices as performed in two time periods, during Mbiru and in recent times. This analysis provides a fuller context within which to view these practices so that we can understand better how the ability to use these practices serves to enable or empower women. Conversely, if women no longer have access to these
particular cultural resources, the consequences of that loss must be weighed.

Notes
2. Mwajabu says the Kipare word, yetoni, does not have an equivalent in English. In her opinion, the sense of the word is captured best by using either "guys," "fellows," or "chaps."
3. I am grateful to Mwajabu Possi Kachenje for her insight on this point.
CHAPTER V

THE PARE WOMEN’S THREATENING/CURSING SEQUENCE

During the tax protest called Mbiru in the mid-1940s, Pare women used a threatening/cursing sequence as part of their protest activity. This cultural practice and its use in a tax protest merit close examination. In order to understand women’s place in Pare society in current times, it is important to learn how Pare women have adapted this practice as they continue to use it. Not only am I interested in how the form and function of this practice have changed, but also in what ways it might have come into conflict with colonial or colonial-based practices. The following examples from Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, and Uganda reveal that when contemporary African women protest oppressive situations, some of them continue to use similar indigenous practices. These examples raise many questions about the complexity of women’s protest in Africa and the perception of these activities by those in the West. In the first instance, a newspaper account in Columbus, Ohio shows that these activities are baffling to outsiders.
A news report with a Nairobi dateline appeared in *The Columbus Dispatch* on March 4, 1992. The headline had been "tabloidized" to read, "Police Back Off as Women Strip."

Riot police fired tear gas yesterday to disperse hundreds of demonstrators demanding freedom for political prisoners, but baton-wielding security forces backed off when several women disrobed in protest. The protestors had earlier threatened to strip—a strong taboo for women of middle age or over in most African societies—if authorities tried to break up their demonstration in a downtown park. They had gathered to support two dozen women fasting to protest the detention of their sons.¹

Wangari Maathai, a woman who has achieved international stature through her mobilization of Kenyan women in tree-planting schemes, was identified as one of the participants. Maathai runs an organization out of an office in her country's capital city, travels extensively to participate in international conferences, and interacts on equal terms with other environmental activists from around the world. How is one to interpret an event in which a woman like Maathai, who has taken a leading role in contemporary public life, participates in a protest action in which women threaten to disrobe in public?

At a conference in Lusaka, Zambia in 1991, women participants described a cultural practice in which Zambian women "bared their breasts" as a protest action. During my stay there, a newspaper report described women trade unionists threatening this action because they believed their employers were not negotiating with them in good faith.
In 1990 an article in the Tanzanian *Daily News* described a series of protests by Iraqw women in response to recent events, i.e., the lack of strong police action after the gang rape of a village girl, the government’s release of an AIDS-infected soldier whose presence threatened local women and girls, and increasing tax rates. In the case of the rape, the Iraqw women protested by abruptly abandoning the village en masse and moving into the bush. Men were therefore forced to assume all the women’s daily responsibilities. In addition, men had to provide security for the women and undertake serious negotiations with them about their return. The women remained in the bush until their grievances were addressed in full, in this instance, for twenty days and ten nights (Lawi 1990).²

In a 1991 interview, a woman professor at the University of Dar es Salaam told me the following,

> In Uganda in 1989, women from the northern part of the country who were tired of the war walked naked. This has shock value. It's an attention-getter. In spite of social changes, the female curse is taken seriously.³

These stories are intriguing. Not long ago, according to Van Allen, many believed (Van Allen did not) that African women had been "liberated" by Western influence,

through the weakening of kinship bonds and the provision of "free choice" in Christian monogamous marriage, the suppression of [certain] cultural practices, the opening of schools, the introduction of modern medicine and hygiene, and of [women’s right to vote] (1972:165).
These stories of African women converting older protest rituals to contemporary usage contradict the suggestion that new institutions and practices are adequately serving women's needs.

Throughout the research period, our research team had been looking for a way to connect the political activity of Pare women in current times with the equivalent activity during Mbiru. In the first nine months of fieldwork in Tanzania, Aissia, Margaret, and I asked a great number of people questions about "kufololotia" and any kind of contemporary political activity in which women might engage. Among our goals was to learn whether women were still using "kufololotia," which we recognized as a powerful device available for Pare women’s use as late as the 1940s. In response to our inquiry, we heard a handful of stories about individual women who threatened to perform "kufololotia" in order to achieve certain objectives. We also heard one story about a woman actually using it. However, we did not hear any stories about groups of women threatening to perform it or actually doing it, as they had during Mbiru. It appeared that this practice was not much in current usage.

Women's organized activity during the time we were in Usangi seemed to consist of the following elements: an office of Umoja Wa Wanawake Wa Tanzania (UWT, Kiswahili: United Women of Tanzania), the national women’s organization, a number of neighborhood mutual aid associations, women’s church groups,
and a women potters' association. The highly respected chair of UWT in Usangi worked industriously as an advocate for local women and was available if women had special problems. This activity appeared to serve individual women in regard to incidental everyday affairs. The mutual aid associations in the neighborhoods fulfilled certain self-help aims. For example, on one hillside, women had formed two separate groups to serve different important functions. In the first, members had collected money which they deposited in a savings account at the local post office. This money was available to members and their families in case of medical emergencies. Members of the second group had used money they collected to purchase an array of containers and utensils. These items owned by the group were used by members when it was necessary to prepare large quantities of food on special occasions such as weddings, funerals, confirmations, first communions, special Muslim occasions like Idd and Maulid, and national holidays.

These two mutual aid associations resembled the groups that were active during Mbiru, groups in which women planned protest action and collected money in case any member was injured. At least some local churches had women's organizations that were involved with domestic-oriented activities and service to the churches. There was an Association of Women Potters at the local branch of SIDO (Small-scale Industries Development Organization) organized around the subsistence production of pottery by women members.
It appeared that these contemporary women’s groups served no overt political function. We heard nothing about Usangi women’s protest actions that resembled what women did during Mbiru.

While conducting interviews about Mbiru and contemporary Pare social organization in Dar es Salaam, to our amazement we heard that a number of women in Usangi had "threatened to curse" as a form of protest within the last few years. This lead opened the way for us to collect stories about several different incidents in which large groups of women, as many as 100 in two cases, protested in this way. Once we knew that such protests had occurred, the little we knew made it possible for us to ask better, more precise questions which led to people filling in a more complete picture.

The recent protests in Usangi were over two issues. One, a newly introduced development tax for all adult citizens, taxed Tanzanian women directly for the first time, and women in Usangi, as well as women throughout the country (Bujra 1990; Lawi 1990), protested this new demand on their meager resources. The second reason for protest was the infringement, real or imagined, on women potters’ rights to collect clay soil necessary for their pot making. Selling the pottery they make is one of the few opportunities Usangi women have for earning cash.

But why had we not heard stories about these protests before? Obviously, the fact that we didn’t hear about these
protests was significant, but what were we to conclude when we learned that there had been protests and yet no one had mentioned them to us? Did these stories lack "tellability" because of stated or unstated rules about what can be said, to whom, and under what circumstances (Shuman 1986:Chapter 2)? We had learned that some people were reluctant to talk openly about the women's militant actions during Mbiru. Did the unwillingness of people to talk about the recent protests provide more evidence of rules of discourse that restricted how people talked about the subject of women's political activism or was there more going on here? What does the absence of a story mean? Is it possible to gain a better understanding of Pare society by looking at the social structures, processes and practices that kept these stories from us? Probing this point revealed a great deal about the relationship between these women and their access to political power, the cultural and social context within which they live their lives, and more.

When we began to learn more about the recent protests, we discovered that some of our best contacts knew about these events. Some of the reasons they gave for not telling us were: "I didn't think it was important," "I wasn't interested," "I didn't know you'd be interested," "I heard, but I didn't follow it up." What is the significance of the excuses they gave us? After all, we had been asking people specifically for information about this kind of activity.
What village matters are considered important or interesting or worth following up, and what does this tell us about the participation of men and women in village life?

It appears that some people were constrained by certain restrictions about what one tells, to whom, and under what circumstances? Can any pattern be discerned about the particular ways in which rules of discourse limited communications in this case? Was the constraint on communications related to the women's challenge to established authority or to the form of women's activism, e.g., their extraordinary behavior which included threatening and/or enacting a curse? Or is it possible that stories about the recent protests were not tellable to the three of us within the interview format we were using?

Other questions arose about communications systems in the village when we learned that some women who lived in Usangi at the time these recent protests occurred—in fact, some lived very near the scenes of the protests—had never heard anything about the protests. Can the fact that these women did not hear this village news be related to norms of behavior that limit women's activities and their communications with other women? Are women in some ways restricted to family (clan) life? Is the space close to home seen as women's proper place, as in Western cultures? What are the consequences for individual women in particular and village life in general if there are severe limits on what women know and can do? Are
these restrictions on women's activities important evidence that established patterns of control over women's behavior persist at a time when men have moved away from similar restrictions and are involved in a wider range of activities and opportunities compared to earlier patterns?

This inquiry about the protest actions during Mbiru learned that men and women had different cultural resources available to them. By the 1940s some Pare men had begun to adopt methods of protest which had been introduced by Europeans while Pare women tended to use indigenous forms. Men were beginning to have access to resources, new to them, resources associated with colonial rule, resources that were not available to women. At the same time women had access to resources like "kufololotia" that have never been available to men. While this use of indigenous forms of protest like "kufololotia" as late as the 1980s is not conclusive evidence that women in Usangi do not have equal access to newly adopted foreign practices, the women's use of "kufololotia" does raise a major question. Are the newer adopted institutions (government, party, educational institutions, religious bodies) controlled by men, friendly to men, and not equally "user-friendly" to women?

Is it possible that channels by which these stories of protest might have been communicated to others have been in some way shut down? Formal education, Christianity and Islam belong to what the Pare consider as the progressive sector of
society. Some of the people who knew about these protests and did not tell us are educated Christians or Muslims. In their view, was it improper or inappropriate for them to talk about the recent actions of these women? Some of those who did not tell us about the recent protests had talked freely about the women’s actions during Mbiru. It appears that some of those who knew about the protests believed that Christians with Western-style education—the three of us who were doing the interviews fit this profile—would not be interested in these stories, would not think it was important, or would be embarrassed to hear them. Could this begin to explain why stories about these recent protests were not in wider circulation?

Is "kufololotia" no longer considered an appropriate practice by some people? By whom? For what reasons? What does it mean to Pare society that some women continue to use this practice and other Pares, both women and men, appear to disapprove of its use? Is there any evidence that Pare women are finding ways to recreate the power of this practice in new forms?

It appears that the fact that we had not heard these stories uncovers a communication problem, with two interrelated, overlapping components. The two key components are (1) channels through which communications pass or do not pass, and (2) subjects which are designated as appropriate or inappropriate for communication. We are left asking, in what
way are communication channels open or closed to certain kinds of (appropriate? important? interesting?) information? This discussion opens the way for a detailed analysis of this threatening/cursing sequence, its form, the conditions under which it is used, and rules of discourse which govern how this practice is discussed or not discussed.

"Kufololotia" and Related Practices

Earlier, I described some of the obstacles the research team faced when we inquired about "kufololotia." An additional factor was that even Aissia and Margaret appeared to experience some uneasiness in dealing with this subject. Because I believed it was important for this research on women's power to learn how this cultural practice worked and I was not constrained by typical Pare sensibilities on this issue, I persisted in inquiring about it and observing in what terms people talked about this practice and how they responded to discussions of the subject. After I started to understand a little about this practice and could discuss the subject somewhat knowledgeably, a few women were willing to educate me further. At this time I have enough information to do at least a preliminary analysis. I will use the informants' own descriptions and explanations as much as possible. Most of the information in this section came from a single informant whom I will call Mama Adija (not her real name). Mama Adija's mother is from Usangi Village and her father from Kisangara in Usangi Division. Although her testimony is the only extended
explanation of this practice I obtained, I consider it legitimate because of how well it is supported by statements from others and references in the literature.

As already stated, using the category "curse" for analyzing this practice creates certain problems. "Kufololotia" is primarily behavioral (although speech may accompany the action), whereas the English word "curse" is commonly understood to refer to verbal utterances. I will begin by reviewing discussions of curses in folklore research. As the analysis proceeds, we will try to understand in what ways "kufololotia" might be considered as a curse. The reader will soon learn that this practice is both more and less than a curse. Before the analysis is concluded, it will become clear why we continue to search for a more appropriate term.

An English language dictionary provides a number of definitions of "curse," as a noun: an appeal or prayer for evil or injury to befall someone or something: the evil or injury that comes from or as if from an invocation; something that brings or causes evil; a profane oath or foul language; as a verb: to invoke evil, calamity, or injury upon; to swear at; to bring evil upon. Although curses are not a frequent subject for study, some useful information is found in the literature on folklore and culture. Abrahams puts curses in the same category as spells and taunts and sees these cultural expressions as attempting "to influence social, natural, and supernatural phenomena through the bare power of the embodied
and spoken word" (1976:201). Based on Abrahams' statement, Danet and Bogoch place curses in a genre of verbal control. These same authors state that one common feature of curses is the "invocation of harm" directed to some person or group (1992:134). This statement helps make a critical distinction between two aspects of curses, i.e., the act of threatening to curse and the act of cursing. As we will see, many times the threat of the "invocation of harm" is so effective in accomplishing what the practitioner of this practice desires, that the "invocation of harm" is not put into play. This distinction is a major point in understanding in what ways and for what reasons these practices are used.

In her study of "customary" law among the Chagga, Moore found that "rituals of malediction" were one means, along with "trial-like palavers," by which the Chagga made wrongdoers accountable.

During rituals of malediction misfortune could be legitimately and publicly wished on a wrongdoer where other strategies to make him (or her) acknowledge a debt or a wrong were impractical or unavailing. The theory was that a person...would have to come forward to beg that the threat of misfortune be removed. Another ritual could remove the curse. Negotiations would ensue (Moore 1986:43).

Some Chagga, when they experienced incidents of sickness, death or other kinds of trouble--misfortunes that no one could escape for long--would begin to speculate on who might have caused it and what means had been employed, and then look for a way to counteract the directed evil (Moore 1986:44).
In a Chagga dispute the ante could be raised, the domain of disputation changed, and this-worldly issues complicated when hostilities over material matters or questions of worldly power were translated into the realm of actual or suspected mystical harm. Misfortune and mortal danger could easily be invoked with spoken words or manipulations of magical objects or substances (Moore 1986:45).

A person involved in a dispute "not only might use such measures, but was considered likely to" (Moore 1986:45). Additionally, the performance of a curse that was not retracted might have a long-term, psychological effect since people took into account that the disaster did not necessarily follow immediately when invocations of harm were invoked. It was believed that the dead as well as the living could be angry. In fact, the unretracted curse of a dead person was considered especially dangerous, because of the question of whether it could ever be undone (Moore 1986:45-7,49-50).

Perhaps this last point explains the remark by one middle-aged Pare woman who said that the curse by a woman older than she was would be stronger than a curse by someone her age. Is the curse of an old woman more dangerous because the opportunity to settle accounts may be limited? Moore noted an urgency to settle and reconcile before the person performing the curse died (1986:264).

Some examples of curses that are "rituals of malediction" used by the Limba in Sierra Leone are provided by Finnegan (1970). In these examples, the speaker is directing evil to an unknown thief who has stolen a chicken from the speaker.
If he does not confess, let him spend the whole night weeping [from pain].
If it (the thief) is a man, let him always walk on a dangerous road, and when danger comes let him think about the hen he has stolen and confess (1970:459).

The speaker here is not threatening but actually cursing. A wrong has been done. Although the identity of the wrongdoer is unknown, the curse is directed specifically at the one who committed the theft.

Curses that Danet and Bogoch found in Anglo-Saxon legal documents created between 600 A.D. and 1066 A.D. are of a different sort and serve a different purpose. They are used as a warning against anyone who might interfere with wills after a person dies. In this case, the curse is a contingent one; if the terms of the will are broken, the curse is supposed to activate automatically and punish the violator.

And whosoever detracts from my testament (a will), may God deprive him of the kingdom of heaven.
If anyone do so [alter the will], may God destroy him both soul and body, both here and in the future (1992:141).

These few examples hint at the varied structure and purpose of cultural practices that are categorized as curses.

The Pare have a number of curses among their cultural practices. The Kipare word "lute" (loo' tay), which literally means "saliva," is at the center of the practice of cursing. The Pare have typically used the act of spitting as a blessing or a curse (Mshana 1989:10). "Lute luvivi" signifies a curse (bad saliva/blessing), and "lute lwedi" a blessing, (good saliva/blessing). It is interesting that even theologians
have found it difficult to distinguish between these two kinds of communications, blessing and cursing, wondering, for example, "When is 'taking a solemn oath' an affirmation of awesome responsibility and when is it instead blasphemous swearing" (Stahl 1977A:57)?

Among the Pare curses, the female curse is believed to be the most serious. This curse is only used by a woman with full adult status (Kipare:mche/vache, or mlala/valala). It is through her role as "mother" that a woman gains the authority to perform this curse, and we will see shortly how the symbolism involved centers on that role. Women generally would use this practice only against those who are younger than they are, and not ever against their own husbands. Mama Adija said that women generally do not curse other women, except occasionally in a situation in which an old woman might curse a younger woman or girl who had abused her or stolen from her.* In addition to age and gender, other factors that could impact on the practice of curses are things like: membership in a cultural organization, the possession of certain kinds of information, or the possession of certain kinds of material objects (Moore 1986).

This practice has at least three variations; I do not know whether the three types described below are local

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* The reader should note Mama Adija's statement that women generally do not curse other women, which implies that generally women curse men. I will return to this point shortly.
variations or are widely situated, and whether there are additional variations. I have only begun to learn about the possible ways these three variations might be combined. Even though what I learned about this practice is limited, one thing is clearly indicated that has a bearing on this research. This practice is used in a variety of ways by Pare women as a form of resistance against oppressive situations.

In the first type, "kufololotia," a woman bends over, exposing her genitalia in the direction of the person being targeted, although "the exposure by itself is not a curse." Girls are taught very early not to expose that part of their bodies and Pare women are generally very conservative about covering their bodies from the waist down. This kind of exposure becomes a curse "when it's done by someone older with an intention." Mama Adija described "kufololotia" this way.

When they say "kufololotia," if I translate in Kiswahili, it means you bend. Kufololotia is bending over and especially with no clothes on. A woman says, "Do you know that I'm your mother? Do you see that? This is life and this is death." Actually they say, "If I didn't put my legs apart, you wouldn't have passed here. If I had closed my legs, you would have died. So it's here that you got your life. This is the way of all your success." The way they put it, the language is very blunt.

Mama Adija, who had participated in initiation, added this insight,

During initiation, this woman—was it my mother—telling the importance of women, she just said, if all women had crossed their legs like that, nobody would have come. Women hold everybody's life. Crossing their legs for sex, closing legs during
labor pains until the time my child suffocates and dies.

In the second variation a woman takes off her clothes, throws them aside, and "walks naked." Mama Adija described this version,

Normally they do it and throw away the clothes. They dramatically take off their clothes and throw them out [i.e., aside]. This is to show, "If I’m not your mother, if I didn’t suffer all this time, and go with only a piece of kanga to get you to go to school, and this is all you’re doing. I’m taking off my clothes."

In discussing this version, Mzee Fanueli Kavugha Simeon of Ugweno, who has written about Pare customs, said, "Women would threaten children, 'If you don’t behave, I’ll take my clothes off and walk before you.'" Abdi Mvungi, Pare Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Dar es Salaam, said that "kufololotia" is used as a threat when kids get too big for their mothers to handle easily. Describing the scene in which the women in Usangi performed the curse during Mbiru, Peter Kisumo (former MP) said,

They did a lot of bad things. They used their weapon. You know the Pare women and men believe that if you do something unfair to a lady, if she decides to take away her clothes and you see her private parts, you will die. And she’ll tell you, I’m doing that to you because "enough is enough."

In the third version, a woman puts a piece of kanga (the cloth wrap in common use by East African women) on the floor/ground and "jumps over the kanga." This rendition of the curse was described by Mama Adija.

Sometimes they put a piece of kanga there and they say, "I’ll jump over that piece of cloth." And in
most cases, if you are familiar with the Pare tradition, most of all kids are being carried on that cloth. That piece of cloth shows like, "I have taken all this time, all my precious time, and all that energy to carry you on my back, and here you’re doing all those things. I’m going to jump over it."

This version resembles a Chagga curse described by Moore. If a Chagga women threw her cloth down on her "kihamba" (Kichagga: plot of ground), it was believed that this ritualized act would bring misfortune to anyone who wrongfully used the land after that, i.e., against the wishes of the person performing the act (1986:299). Van Allen describes a curse sworn by Igbo women in Nigeria "on the pestles" normally used for pounding yams, a curse that carries a message similar to the mothers’ curses mentioned above.

"It is I who gave birth to you. It is I who cooks for you to eat. This is the pestle I use to pound yams and coco yams for you to eat. May you soon die" (1972:175, FN43, Van Allen cites Harris for the words of this curse)!

The way the three Pare variations are worded is very stylized, in the first case, "If I didn’t put my legs apart," "If I had closed my legs," and in the second, "If I’m not your mother," "if I didn’t suffer." (The pattern of example 3 is different.) The first two variations are contingent in two directions. They imply consequences based, first, on whether the speaker (the mother) had fulfilled certain obligations, "If what I say is not the truth, then there is no curse, but if I have done all these things..." The second contingency is determined by the actions of the person being addressed, "The
The curse will follow, if the requested change in behavior does not occur." This same stylized phrasing is found in curses described in a manuscript by a German Lutheran missionary who worked in the Pare Mountains, first in Shighatini, North Pare, and then in Mbagga, South Pare between 1912 and 1918. All the curses described by Rev. Dannholz do not follow the same pattern, but most do.

Dannholz's manuscript raises the usual questions about colonial discourse, about the author's viewpoint and the legitimacy of the information he records, but he does provide some historical depth on the subject of Pare curses. For example, Dannholz describes a scene in which Chikira, an old father, curses his son because the boy did not fulfill certain important obligations to his dying father.

My son, if you are not my son, then let this cattle 'calve, like Mposhoko, a shrub that continuously sprouts. But if you are my son after all, then you shall never ever drink milk of these animals" (Dannholz 1989:46).

In this case, in which the father was extremely angry about the son's behavior, the contingency refers to the father having carried out his duties to the son in good faith. In another scene Chikira pronounces a very long, very specific curse just before he dies, in which he uses the same stylized phrasing as one part,

You my son, if you are not my son, then let the curse turn on me! But if in fact you are my son, then may the curse stick and grip and hold you tight (Dannholz 1989:54)!
The element of contingency is related to the receiver of the message in this case, rather than the speaker, as in the three examples of the female curse above. Here, the father is alluding to the context in which he is speaking, that is, his son did not perform certain obligations to his father. The father states that if this person (the inference is that this person is not acting like a son) is his son, the curse is invoked. In both this case and the case of the three female curses described above, the responsibility for the situation (the invocation of the curse) is placed squarely with the receiver of the message. Some of the curses described by Dannholz have a slightly different kind of contingency element, a type of disclaimer, that is, in case the person cursing only has limited or inaccurate information, the curse is not to take effect.

Dannholz's narrative includes a scene in which both the curse and the blessing play a role. In the company of many witnesses, two men friends verbalize a social contract, "a blood-bond," that lists a large number of circumstances and what is expected of each partner to the agreement under each set of circumstances. Throughout the spoken contract, curses and blessings are mentioned that are contingent on the men fulfilling (a blessing follows) or failing to fulfill (a curse follows) their obligations as stated (1989:99). Does this example provide a model for understanding the circumstances under which the women cursed Chief Sabuni in Usangi, that a
social contract existed between the women and the chief, and when one party did not fulfill certain obligations, the curse was a viable option, even a natural consequence?

Returning to the Pare women's cursing sequence, there appears to be considerable variation in how much is said or not said, and in the specific actions. For example, a woman might both discard her clothes and jump over a kanga. Margaret Mshana said that although the female curse could be verbal, "it is more serious if they do it." As with all folklore, this cultural expression carries with it both continuity with the past and the potential for the creation of variation in the present performance, and different people might understand its form and function differently.

The three versions given of this Pare practice follow a similar pattern. In referring to the established mother/child relationship, the mother reminds the child about the contribution she has made to her/him and emphasizes the point that she—the mother—has faithfully fulfilled her obligations. The symbolism of motherhood is the central theme even when the established relationship is different from that of mother and child. Women are the givers of life. Their importance to the family, to the lineage, and to the community should be acknowledged, and women should be respected. Those who do not show respect for women and what they contribute should change their behavior or there will be consequences. As Mama Adija points out, women not only are the givers of
life, but they have the power to withhold life. The power of the cursing sequence is related to women's central role in the birth process. This dual power to give life or withhold it is indicated in how two Pare women portrayed the curse. One person thought that when a mother threatened to curse, she said, "I'll take my clothes off and show you where you came from." Another said she thought the curse was saying, "You are not belonging to me anymore."\textsuperscript{13}

It is in large part the mother's responsibility to direct and control children's behavior. These examples demonstrate that the threat of severe action is used as a social control mechanism to compel children to behave properly. In these scenarios the action involves a mother who is bothered by a child's behavior. She states a complaint and makes a threat, although the threat is implied rather than directly stated. The words said carry weight beyond mere words because of their reference to an understood context, the relationship that exists between mother and child and a community-based standard of behavior for both mothers and children known to both of the participants. The message so far is just a warning, but the implication is that something worse will follow if the child does not listen and change her/his behavior.

One of the most interesting aspects of this cultural practice is its structure. Although this practice was referred to as a curse by Pare who talked about it in English, there is a lot more going on here. If one accepts Danet and
Bogoch's statement that one feature of all curses is the "invocation of harm" (1992:134), then it is obvious that most of what happens when a Pare woman uses this practice is not a curse at all. Rather it is talk about a curse. It is not communications, but metacommunications, i.e., communications about communications. I have only recently recognized the importance of this distinction. If we had inquired about the threat of the curse and the curse separately, people might have told us more.

Edward T. Hall's concept of action chains (AC's) is useful here. Hall says that disputes intensify in culturally designated stages and include a series of signs that indicate just where each person is in a possible chain of events. These signs can be nonverbal cues, body language, verbal hints, and verbal confrontation. All cultures have safeguards set up to keep disputes from going too far, although these safeguards may not work in every case. Hall says,

"Clearly, within the confines of a single culture, disputes as well as the settlement of disputes, follow reasonably well-established patterns. Otherwise there would be chaos (1976:155-6,159, 162)."

Hall’s concept of action chains reveals the strategic nature of the threatening stage. Mama Adija helped me understand the negotiating process.

Mama Adija: You have to go by different stages. It’s not like the first time...--you curse. She says, "You’ve done this to me several times, and I have told your grandma, I’ve told the other people."
ND: "Nobody’s paying attention to me."
Mama Adija: "Nobody's paying attention to me." And they have to warn you. They will say, "Ninakufololote" (Kipare: I will bend over), I will do this. Definitely they will warn you... They look at what will work here. But it's the last, last resort. Sometimes they start with a threat. Then others will negotiate with them. Maybe many threats before doing it. Women are supposed to be very patient and passive. But people know women can do that.

A statement by Margaret Mshana reinforces the point that women are expected to be patient. Margaret remembered that sometimes when a woman threatened to curse too much or performed the curse too much, people would comment, "She's too quick on that." In the same vein, Professor Mvungi remembered an older woman in his family as being "troublesome." She was always threatening to curse.

Mvungi: As a child, your only recourse was to go outside to get some other old person to speak to her for you, and not return until things are negotiated. This is not used against other females. It is still very much there. There is no way it has lost its strength in Mwanga. When I go home, it is very much there. People take it very seriously. The only way to deal with it is to go away.

As stated earlier, in order to learn about the mechanism by which this practice operates, it is necessary to distinguish the two parts, the threat of the curse and the actual curse, which have totally different and separate functions and forms. The concept of words as "performatives," as actions embodied in words, helps us understand this point. Writing about African verbal art, Peek suggests that words used artistically or in performance have a particular kind of power in and of themselves.

The data... support the proposition that the verbal element of a communicative artistic event can no longer be relegated to a supportive or secondary
role. Perhaps a word does not literally "become" its referent, but African expressions about words and speech are intended to be more than simply descriptive. They convey deep concerns with the power of words to bring forth the forces of life, not just their signs (1981:42).

Peek elaborates on the concept of words as acts in African life. He mentions "deeply felt concerns about names, their creation, use and avoidance,...in that to name something is to 'know' its essence and possibly control it" (1981:27). In this sense,

There are no such things as unaffecting words. For example, the Dinka of the Sudan cannot conceive of a song without a purpose—all songs are meant to affect others in some way, normally to the benefit of the singer. Words have force and meaning—one does not produce or receive them idly (1981:27).

Speech act theory carries the idea of "performatives" a step further. This theory provides a way of talking about utterances...in terms of the context in which they are made, the intentions, attitudes, and expectations of the participants, the relationships existing between participants, and generally the unspoken rules and conventions that are understood to be in play when an utterance is made and received (Pratt 1977:86).

This theory states that, in some cases, when a person makes an utterance, s/he actually performs an act. "The saying of it performs the act that it refers to" (Bolinger 1968:166). Both the threat of the curse and the curse fit this speech category of "performative."

When a person uses this kind of performative, s/he does at least two things. One, the speaker performs a locutionary act, the production of a recognizable grammatical utterance.
That is, actual words are spoken. Second, s/he performs an illocutionary act of a particular kind, such as promising, warning, greeting, reminding, informing, commanding. In this way, the spoken words are more than words; they are an action performed. When we look at the five categories into which illocutionary acts are divided by Searle, the distinction between threat and curse becomes clear. Searle’s categories are (1) representatives, "illocutionary acts that undertake to represent a state of affairs, whether past, present, future, or hypothetical, e.g. stating, claiming, hypothesizing, describing, predicting, telling, insisting, suggesting, or swearing that something is the case"; (2) directives, "illocutionary acts designed to get the addressee to do something, e.g. requesting, commanding, pleading, inviting, daring;" (3) commissives, "illocutionary acts that commit the speaker to do something, e.g. promising, threatening, vowing;" (4) expressives, "illocutionary acts that express only the speaker’s psychological state, e.g. congratulating, thanking, deploring, condoling, welcoming"; and (5) declarations, "illocutionary acts that bring about the state of affairs they refer to, e.g. blessing, firing, baptizing, passing sentence" (Pratt 1977:80-1). A threat fits into either category #2 or #3, or both #2 and #3. In contrast, the curse comes under category #5. Clearly, the threat and the curse are different kinds of communication acts. Beyond the locutionary and
illocutionary aspects of the speech act, the speaker may also do a third thing, perform a perlocutionary act.

...that is, by saying what he [sic] says, he [sic] may be achieving certain intended effects in his [sic] hearer in addition to those achieved by the illocutionary act. By warning a person one may frighten him [sic], by arguing one may convince, and so on (Pratt 1977:81).

This last section reinforces the point that threatening to curse and cursing are very different kinds of performative speech acts. The next step is to look closely at the communicative process in which a message is conveyed by the curse.

When Pare women curse or threaten to curse, they are clearly sending messages. Jakobson’s model for acts of verbal communication is useful here insofar as it directs our attention to the basic elements of communication and allows us to identify how the elements interact (1960).

Jakobson’s Model for Acts of Verbal Communication

CONTEXT

ADDRESSER MESSAGE ADDRESSEE

CONTACT

CODE

According to Jakobson, each of the six components is essential to the action, and must be analyzed in relationship to all the
others. Any meaning must be derived from the total act of communication (1960:353).

In a communicative act, the ADDRESSER directs a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE at a point of CONTACT. Both participants must be familiar with the cultural CONTEXT, the whole set of circumstances under which this communication takes place. They must also know how to use a common CODE that encodes and decodes, not only the MESSAGE per se, but the entire communication drama. All of the participants "act" according to a standard set of rules that controls the performance and share a common knowledge about its significance.

The ADDRESSEE is an integral part of the process. Bakhtin rejects the idea of a passive listener positioned outside the speech communication. He says,

The fact is that when the listener perceives and understands the meaning...of speech, he [sic] simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He [sic] either agrees or disagrees with it..., augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on (1981:68).

The MESSAGE is "oriented toward the response of the other" with the sender anticipating a response (Bakhtin 1981:75). The performance of the act calls attention to an established relationship between the ADDRESSER and the ADDRESSEE." By revealing the implicit dynamics at work, this model provides the observer of any communication event with a way to interpret what is taking place with some degree of precision.

For example, the Jakobson model aids us in determining what occurs when a Pare woman, the ADDRESSER, uses the cursing
sequence as a series of MESSAGES to communicate with the ADDRESSEE at a point of CONTACT. The MESSAGES might start this way: (1) *(the MESSAGE)* notice the change in our relationship which I am indicating with a sign; consider this as a complaint; something you are doing is bothering me; a change in your behavior is requested; if you ignore this warning, something bad could happen; (2) *(the meta-MESSAGE)* you did not pay attention to my previous MESSAGE; because this matter is getting more serious, consider this a growing threat; my irritation/anger is increasing; wake up to what is going on; a change in your behavior is expected; severe consequences for you are nearer than when I last spoke about this matter; and so on to more stages in the chain.

This chain of interactions between ADDRESSER and ADDRESSEE becomes even more transparent when the idea of "frames" is introduced, which would apply to #1 (the MESSAGE) and #2 (the meta-MESSAGE) and so on, above. Conceptualizing each step as a separate frame, even thinking of actual picture frames, each of which includes certain messages and excludes others, organizes this communicative event. What is true of frame #1 (the MESSAGE) is not true of #2 (the meta-MESSAGE) and visa versa. A frame is then metacommunicative.

The frame around a picture, if we consider this frame as a message intended to order or organize the perception of the viewer, says, "Attend to what is within and do not attend to what is outside" (Bateson 1972:187).
It could be said that the interaction scenario changes with each frame. In the MESSAGE frame: although the complaint at this stage is low-key, a response is requested/expected from the ADDRESSEE (probably a change of behavior); the ADDRESSEE receives a kindly reminder that perhaps s/he has forgotten or overlooked something to which s/he should be paying attention; the coding used may create a high degree of indirection in the MESSAGE, an approach much valued in Africa; gestures and other kinds of body language would reinforce an important, but not yet intense, communication. The next frame, the meta-MESSAGE, is a MESSAGE about the previous MESSAGE: there has been a move away from the complaint stage; the ADDRESSER now communicates some degree of impatience/anger because the ADDRESSEE did not respond as requested/expected to the first MESSAGE; the ADDRESSER signals a rising level of concern by employing words, gestures and body language that are different than those used in frame #1 to emphasize that this is not simply the same MESSAGE being repeated; a warning/threat that was not present in the complaint is introduced; the MESSAGE may be more directly stated to leave little opportunity for the communication to be misunderstand.

The potential is present in this mechanism for great variety and individual creativity in performance. Although I am aware that it could never be as simple as this, let us look at this cultural practice as consisting of three stages: (1) complaint; (2) threat, and (3) curse. It is possible for a
woman to perform the #1/#2 sequence repeatedly, e.g., complaint, threat, complaint, threat, complaint, threat, and on and on, until the dispute is settled, or at any time she can move onto step #3, the curse. During this process it is likely that others--kin, neighbors, religious officials--would get involved in the negotiations and try to resolve the problem. Some women might adopt as their negotiating style an emphasis of frame #1, the complaint, and a reluctance to ever heat things up further. Others may choose a more confrontational style which moves past the complaint stage quickly and even escalates to the performance of a curse. Margaret Mshana's remark, "Some women are too quick on that," and Professor Mvungi's story about his relative illustrate this last possibility. The statements from these observers imply that if a woman does not follow a restrained pattern of negotiations acceptable to the community, she will face consequences, in this case criticism from others.

Turning to a difference scenario, Mama Adija told me that some families do not consider the curse as acceptable behavior under any circumstances. Interestingly, women in these families would still have the ability to "use" this practice in their own interest. For example, a mother might discuss with her children the reasons that other women are complaining, threatening, and cursing, in this way teaching her children valuable lessons without using a practice with which she is uncomfortable. Additionally, it is possible for
a women to communicate a secondary message to other people besides the one to whom she is directing a specific message. For example, a woman whose child is not behaving properly might speak loudly when she conducts her complaint/threat sequence to alert others that this child is causing problems. In this way she is (indirectly) requesting help in this matter.

There is another way to conceptualize this cultural practice, that is, to see the entire negotiation process as metacommunications, because, in fact, all of these messages, explicitly or implicitly, refer to the curse. Even in cases in which a curse per se is never mentioned, once the process is set in motion, a woman involved in the process embodies a special kind of authority because a curse is one possible outcome. The example of the threat of war or the threat of a fight illustrates this point further. In the case of war, a fight, or a curse, the talking, posturing, threatening, warning sequence is all metacommunications about a particular potential outcome (Shuman 1986:38-42). This "last resort" might never be reached, but the negotiating process will be effective in settling many problems if (1) people view the outcome as a serious unwelcome possibility and (2) the one doing the threatening—the woman in the case of the cursing sequence—has the right and the means for taking the process all the way. What I have tried to convey in this last section
is the great variety of available cultural scenarios in which a Pare woman might use some part of the cursing sequence.

I want to return now to Mama Adija's statement that women generally do not curse other women. Because people did not volunteer much information on this subject and tended to circumvent even direct questions, it is necessary to rely on the little information we obtained and fill in the picture from other sources. For example, no one told us that for the most part when this practice is used that women curse men, but that appears to be the implication of Mama Adija's remark. This conclusion is supported by certain evidence.

For example, three cases of curses being threatened or performed (discussed later in the chapter) all involved women taking action against male decision makers. Two incidents described in the next section concern women potters in Usangi who used the threat of a curse to influence male court officials to decide cases brought against them in the women's favor. Additionally, during Mbiru Pare women used the cursing sequence as protest action against male authority personified by Chief Sabuni, Chief Minja, and the British District Commissioner.

Further support for the idea that women use this cursing sequence in conflicts with men is found in the literature on African women. Later in the chapter I will discuss stories from other parts of the continent about African women using practices similar to the ones used by Pare women. In these
cases, African women used these practices to protest against male authority figures.

Secondly, the patriarchal nature of Tanzanian society has been well chronicled (Bryceson and Mbilinyi 1979; Bujra 1990; Caplan 1981, 1992; Geiger 1982; Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi 1983; Mbilinyi 1971; Rogers 1983; Swantz 1985, 1987). Although as part of his Arusha Declaration in 1967, President Julius Nyerere ended a very strong statement in support of equality for women with these words, "...it is essential that our women live on terms of full equality with their fellow citizens who are men" (Nyerere 1968:109), as we have seen, men tend to dominate all aspects of Tanzanian life. One major reason that gender inequality has remained substantially untouched since independence is that government policies have generally treated the peasantry as "ungendered" and women's labor continues to be exploited by others (McHenry 1994:96). For these reasons, one could argue that this cursing sequence, which is a way for women to assert their power and authority, is used against men because they are the ones oppressing women.

Before turning to a detailed analysis of the women’s confrontation with the Pare chiefs and the DC during Mbiru, I will reconstruct two incidents in current times during which a group of Pare women pottery makers communicated (threatened) with their behavior that they were considering performing "kufololotia." The relevant data contributed by three
informants presents important insights into the kind of issues that motivate Pare women to mobilize quickly for action, the channels by which they communicate, and the ways in which the threat of "kufololotia" exerts political pressure.

As stated earlier, while we were interviewing in Dar es Salaam, Aissia and I learned about recent protests by Usangi women over two matters, a new development tax and fears that women potters might lose their free access to clay soil. As soon as we returned to Usangi, Aissia began to interview women about these protests. She collected stories from women pottery makers about several different protest actions that occurred over the last few years (the two described below were not the only ones). We were especially interested in learning about an incident we heard about in Dar es Salaam, a protest that involved more than 100 women potters who threatened to walk naked at the court in Usangi. During one interview, a woman potter mentioned an incident that sounded like the one that interested us. She had not been involved herself but she indicated to Aissia the home of the woman who, she said, was at the center of the controversy. Before presenting this material, some background information about pottery making in Usangi is necessary.

Pottery making, a home-based craft, is exclusively a women’s activity. While the one other major Pare craft of ironmaking, which was male-dominated, died out early in the century, pottery production has expanded significantly up to
Pottery shards found in the mountains have been dated as far back as the ninth century AD (Omari 1975:8). Generations of women have used clay soil found in Usangi to make pottery renowned in the area for its high quality both for home use and increasingly for sale. These days pottery is one of the principal commodities marketed out of Usangi (Omari 1975:44,82,10).

This craft fits in well with the lives of women in Usangi. Recruitment into the craft is open, and expert potters are ready to share their expertise with women or girls who want to learn. Those with limited formal education are not disadvantaged. No materials are needed beyond natural ones found locally. Potters can fit this activity into their daily routines and around agricultural work that intensifies during peak seasons. As cash is needed, it is possible for potters to increase their output within the limits of time and energy. Because potters know they cannot provide a family's needs solely by producing and selling pots, this activity is always viewed as supplementary to agricultural production, the community's economic base. The sale of pots at 100 to 150 shillings each (in 1991:50c-75c) provides women potters with a year round income in contrast to that from the sale of seasonal farm crops. Potters may choose to stop producing entirely if husbands' incomes or remittances from children employed outside the village cover family needs (Omari 1975:60,71,86,83).
Attempts to introduce innovations into the production system have not been successful. The very things that make this activity beneficial to women act as barriers to different, possibly more efficient, patterns of production or technological advances. Each potter acts as an independent producer performing the work at her home. She organizes materials, family labor, if any, and her own work schedule. Because of the nature of pottery making, she can do it in stages, interspersing it with other chores. Efforts by women potters to make pots or to market in groups have generally not been effective. Government attempts to introduce higher levels of technology, such as the potter’s wheel, have brought no change to a system that is rooted in the women’s lifestyle (Omari 1975:73,86,87).

There is an association of women potters in Usangi situated at the Usangi branch of SIDO (Small Industries Development Organization). A major benefit of membership is the delivery of clay soil by the SIDO lorry to a convenient site in the village. Although SIDO has set aside a place for women potters to work on its premises, most potters do not consider this a viable option. The stories that we heard about Usangi potters protesting against the infringement of their rights to mine clay soil freely did not distinguish between women potters in general and association members in particular.
Women potters have played a central role in those activities that people in Usangi perceive of as positive development. They have used the income from the sale of pots to pay school fees, to supplement the food produced at home, and to buy additional items like clothing, cooking oil, salt, etc. Stephen Nyangarika, Division Secretary (Katibu Tarafa), the highest official in the local government, stated what we learned from many people.

The families that are developed are pot makers. If a man is married to somebody who doesn't know how to make pots, you won't find development. Children are educated, children get food because of pots.

Nyangarika, who is one of eight children whose father died in 1942, told us that his mother "educated the children 'on pots'."1"

The information we learned about the threat by women potters was especially interesting considering the supplementary buy important role pottery products play in the Usangi economy, and the fact that pottery production is dominated and controlled by women. This brief description of pottery making prepares the way for data about two protests by women potters who felt their free access to clay soil, a long-established right, was in jeopardy. One pot maker helped us understand the basis for the controversy over who owns the clay soil. Although this woman is a pot maker herself, she told us that if she found clay soil on her property, she would do everything she could to conceal it so that others would not come to collect clay from her land. If pot makers learn about
deposits of clay in any location, they have the right to take it for their own use. When they collect the clay, crops sometimes get uprooted and the peace of those living there may be disturbed.

Three texts are included here that describe two different protests at the court in Usangi. The first two texts describe one incident and the third text describes a second. In each of the two cases, more than 100 women potters gathered at court in support of one of their colleagues who had been called to court to face charges of trespassing. In describing the second protest, one informant (text #3) told us that the women threatened to walk naked (curse), apparently as a way of pressuring court officials to decide the case in the women's favor, which the court subsequently did. Only this one informant related that a threat to curse was involved. None of the women potters interviewed by Aissia mentioned that the women threatened to curse. Based on the similarities of the two scenarios described here, I would conclude that the threat of the curse was involved both times. Text #3 reveals that the women went to "war" once to protect their rights to clay soil. Since the first instance followed the same pattern of action, I believe that the women involved threatened to curse in the first case as well.

The first text presents in its entirety an interview with Mama Mwajuma (not her real name) in Usangi. When Aissia went to interview her, she was fairly sure that Mama Mwajuma
herself had been charged and taken to court. During the interview, Mama Mwajuma described the incident as if it had happened to someone else rather than to herself. Aissia’s notes are in parentheses. I have added some explanatory notes in brackets. My discussion of these interviews will be limited to information about three key points: (1) the circumstances under which the women mobilized and went to court as a group; (2) the ways in which the women communicated and organized their protest; and (3) how the threat of the curse influenced events.

Mama Mwajuma, #99
5/91
Kipare, AN
At her home in Mbale Village, Usangi
(Shed declined to have the interview tape-recorded.)

**AN:** (Some introductory remarks.) I see you are a pot maker (she had just completed working on 2 pots which were outside her house.) You make beautiful pots. (She smiled.)

**Mama Mwajuma:** I make pots. That’s where I get a little money to buy salt.

**AN:** What do you use to make pots?

**Mama Mwajuma:** Clay soil.

**AN:** Who owns the clay?

**Mama Mwajuma:** It’s government property.

**AN:** Has there been any trouble with clay? (Smile by Mama Mwajuma).

**Mama Mwajuma:** Yes. In 1979 there was a case where clay was found in a (woman’s) shamba [Kiswahili:farm] and when pot makers went to collect it, the owner of the shamba stopped them. There was a scuffle and an exchange of words with one pot maker. The shamba owner took the matter to the court complaining of trespassing. The shamba is at Mweru. She also said that her crops had been uprooted and she was bitten during the scuffle. She however had no evidence for the case. We pot makers and buyers, men and women, went to court to support (kuunga mkono: Kiswahili:joined hands with) our colleague.

**AN:** Do you recall the number of protestors?

**Mama Mwajuma:** About 100. Our friend was fined 250 shillings for beating the farm owner, but we won the case because clay belongs to the government. After winning the case there were
celebrations and ngomas [dances]. The 250 shillings was immediately raised by the protestors and the fine was paid. AN: That was a great victory. Could you please tell me who this woman is, the woman who you supported. Mama Mwajuma: Didn't Mama Mwanamani tell you? AN: No. She didn't. She just directed me to talk to you. Mama Mwajuma: I can’t tell you who she is. Just ask in the houses in the neighborhood and you will be shown the woman. You know, I still have to work on the pots. Do you have anything else to ask? (She was already on her feet signaling that the interview was over.) (AN: I therefore left her thinking that Mama Mwajuma must have been the woman who was involved in the case. This was confirmed later by another potter, Mama Mwanamani, who wondered why she had hidden her identity.)

Mama Mwajuma described her encounter with a woman on the woman's farm. The woman (the complainant) said that when clay soil was collected from her property by pot makers, her crops were damaged and she was bitten in a scuffle with one woman (Aissia and I assumed that the one who did the biting was Mama Mwajuma.) When Mama Mwajuma was called to appear in court, about 100 pot makers and buyers showed up to support her. Even though she was found guilty and fined 250 shillings, Mama Mwajuma declared, "we won the case." She felt they had won because the court reaffirmed, "clay belongs to the government," that is, women's access to the clay was guaranteed by the court. After winning the case, there were celebrations and dances, and Mama Mwajuma's supporters contributed to the 250 shilling fine. Aissia could not resist playing cat and mouse with Mama Mwajuma during the interview, partly because Mama's circumlocution made Aissia uncertain whether Mama was the defendant, a fact that was confirmed later by other women. One wonders if Mama Mwajuma was really
afraid to speak to a stranger about the ten-year-old incident. Other possible explanations for her guarded talk are that she was embarrassed about the incident or that having achieved a victory, she adopted a modest stance. Or it could be that her indirect way of describing this event indicates a local pattern of discourse.

The next interview, presented in its entirety, was with Mama Fatuma Hoseni, another potter, who provided more information about the protest involving Mama Mwajuma. Not only is this text brief but its construction is unusual. Our normal interview procedure was to obtain and record the interviewee’s own statements as much as possible, as in Mama Mwajuma’s interview. Although I never asked Aissia about this particular text, it appears that two things were going on that influenced its construction. Prior to this interview I had asked Aissia to include in the text key Kipare words the women potters were using, and she may have been concentrating on that task. Additionally, Aissia was fascinated by a unique stove on which Mama Fatuma was cooking, and Aissia’s interest in the stove undoubtedly affected the interview. The text below is the exact report (except for my one note in brackets) that Aissia made of the interview.

Mama Fatuma Hoseni, #104.
5/21/91.
Kipare, AN.
At her house in Kiriche, Usangi.
(We had earlier met at Nely’s [Aissia’s cousin] house and Mama Fatuma knew what I was looking for.)
She said she knew a woman who was caught digging clay (egurirwe ekifora ivumba) in Mwero. The shamba belonged to a woman. The shamba had plants, e.g. cassava (muhogo) and sugar cane (muwa/miwa). The plants were uprooted. There was a scuffle (kushukumana) between the women, and the owner of the farm was hurt. She went to court. Word went round among pot makers (varechuma nyungu) in churches and mosques. On the proper day (msi wa kesi) over 100 women went to court. The woman was fined because of the uprooted crops and the scuffle. The supporters contributed 5 shillings each and the fine was paid immediately. People were allowed (vandu vakakundijwa kufora ivumba) to collect clay from that shamba.
(Mama Fatuma is a member of SIDO women pot makers group.)

The text of Mama Fatuma’s interview is brief, but it provides several especially interesting pieces of information. First, "word went round among pot makers in churches and mosques," settings where women gather. In Pare District, Muslim women attend services at mosques, where they are separated from the men by partitions. Second, the mobilization at court of over 100 women "on the proper day" was a tremendous "show of force" in Mama Mwajuma’s favor. Next, "the supporters contributed five shillings each and the fine was paid immediately;" the women came prepared with financial assistance. Last, the real issue behind the women’s protest was clarified by the court, "People were allowed to collect clay from that shamba," that is, the women’s rights to clay were upheld by the court.

A third interview was conducted with a Pare who observed a similar scene at court, although this case involved a male plaintiff. This interviewee asked Aissia and me to be discreet about this material, so the person’s identity is concealed. Because this interview (in Kiswahili and English)
was very long and covered many subjects, only the questions asked by both Aissia and myself and the informant’s answers that concern this protest episode are included.

Interview in Usangi.
Kiswahili and English.
AN, ND.

**Question:** Do women sometimes come to protest at the court? Are there any court cases involving women?

**Answer:** There are some. They only come to court if someone has stolen or taken away another person’s property.

**Q:** Well, ah, we heard about one protest. A woman was brought to court for trespassing. She was brought to court because she was caught digging clay in somebody’s farm. She was also accused of cutting cassava from the farm. She went to collect clay soil and the owner of the farm brought the woman to court.

**A:** It happened in, around 1985 or '86, but the woman won the case. When the case came to court, all women dealing with pottery protested. They came to court to protest.

**Q:** To protest against what?

**A:** They came to protest against the farm owner’s action of denying women access to clay soil which is normally everybody’s property.

**Q:** How many women went to court?

**A:** I don’t remember exactly, but there were more than 100.

**Q:** What about men?

**A:** No. Men came to find out if that man was mad or what.

**Q:** We heard that the women, when they protested, threatened to walk naked, to curse, like Mbiru.

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** What happened?

**A:** They were asked by the Katibu Tarafa not to curse as the government would protect them and make sure that nobody is denied access to clay soil. Normally there are assessors who assist the court who know the traditional law. So they [court officials] asked the assessors for their opinion on how such cases are normally handled. And they [assessors] said traditionally clay belongs to people. If clay is found in a shamba it belongs to the people, it doesn’t belong to this man. After all, no crop grows in clay soil. Yeah, the court and the Tarafa said, they would be on the lookout so that such a thing didn’t happen again. People are not denied their rights.

**Q:** When the woman, when the women, 100 women, came to court, what did they do?

**A:** They came to see if the woman would be given a fair trial or not.
Q: Now I would think that the government, if they see 100 women coming to court, they will know that something serious...
A: Yes.
Q: ...is happening.
A: Yes.
Q: What did the Katibu Tarafa...
A: Yes. The Katibu Tarafa asked some of the women to leave so that only a few of them were left.
Q: Did they leave?
A: They left.
Q: Well, did they stay nearby?
A: They stayed nearby to see what would happen. But after the case, it was decided that judgment should be pronounced soon so as to restore peace. Katibu Tarafa told the magistrate that the case should not take long.
Q: Yeah, it's dangerous.
A: It's dangerous. You don't know what will happen.
Q: How long did it take?
A: About two days.

This third text segment, which described a different protest, provided information about how women potters used the threat of the curse to their advantage. This informant said that over 100 women pot makers came to court in support of the accused, and "Men came to find out if that man (the plaintiff) was mad (unbalanced) or what." Although these protests indicated that women potters harbored real fears about any infringement on their rights to clay, most people in the community--many of whom had benefitted personally from pottery production--believed that only an unbalanced person would try to interfere with these potters' rights. In this case, the man who brought the charges was an outsider. The head of local government, the Katibu Tarafa (Division Secretary) asked the women "not to curse as the government would protect them and make sure that nobody is denied access to clay soil." Court assessors were asked "for their opinion on how such
cases are normally handled," since this right is based in customary law. "It was decided that judgment should be pronounced soon so as to restore peace," that is, the court recognized the seriousness of the women's threat which would hang in the air until the matter was settled. The judgment was announced within two days: the case was dismissed; the woman was not fined. It appears that the threat of the curse by this large group of determined women forced a quick resolution to the court case. One wonders if the presence alone of over 100 women in this situation communicated the threat, or if anything was said by the women.

The Cursing Sequence Performed During Mbiru

Using Jacobson's model, let us next look closely at the communication that occurred when the women performed the curse during Mbiru. Insiders to Pare culture, including the chiefs, were well aware of the serious consequences of the women's curse, and they knew all the component parts, i.e., the CONTEXT—under what conditions women were sanctioned to use this action, in what kinds of interactions, mother-child or grandmother-someone younger, and others, and the CODE that decoded the MESSAGE. The chiefs knew that Pare women "as mothers" had special power and authority to speak and take action. The chiefs were aware that the threat by the ADDRESSER/S called for certain responses from them, the ADDRESSEE/S, toward whom the MESSAGE was directed. I would argue that under other circumstances, the chiefs would have
responded appropriately to the chain of MESSAGES—words and actions—the women were addressing to them, and there would have been no assault on the chiefs and no curse. I would also argue that under normal circumstances (not under colonial rule), if the majority of women united around a critical issue (like Mbiru), either the chief would have responded appropriately to settle the issue or he would have faced the possibility of being removed from office.

In this case, a foreign element distorted the interaction. The British District Commissioner, who did not know the CONTEXT or the CODE, would misinterpret culturally specific MESSAGES because of his ignorance. He would certainly not have understood the series of signals the women were sending, and the intensity that was building up dangerously. (The DC’s position was in sharp contrast to that of the Katibu Tarafa administering the court in Usangi during the second case of the women potters; whether he was Pare or not, this government official’s actions demonstrated that he understood the cultural messages and was therefore able to respond appropriately to the women’s demands and avoid serious consequences for the local community.) The controlling factor during Mbiru was that the DC, as the representative of the British colonial government, held the ultimate power. This incident exposed the impossible position the chiefs were in. The loyalties demanded of the chiefs in their dual roles as
leaders of the Pare and employees of the colonial government were in conflict.

Earlier we showed how central the established relationship between ADDRESSER and ADDRESSEE is in the dynamics of communication acts. When the women "as mothers" confronted the chiefs and the DC, how did they perceive the men? This analysis should get us closer to understanding what was happening. First, let us look at the relationship with the chief. In a Pare community the chief was involved in multiple kin-based relationships that demanded certain things of him, some of them as chief and some as a Pare man of his age embedded in a web of kin and non-kin relationships. While the men were in Same, the women were making daily trips to the chief's court. Our look inside the mechanism of this practice has revealed that a series of negotiations takes place, that no woman just curses. The women were engaged in an action chain of complaint, threat, and so on, before they performed the curse.

When the women harassed and subsequently cursed the chief, their actions were based on an established relationship. The messages the women communicated during those visits to court affirmed the women/chief relationship and followed the three stages of MESSAGE (complaint), meta-MESSAGE (threat), and curse. My attempt to further reconstruct the negotiations that occurred between the women and the chief revealed how constrained I was by English words
and Western categories. Since I did not know even the general form the women's complaints and threats might have taken, I asked Mwajabu Possi Kachenje, a Pare colleague at Ohio State University who is a linguist, to visualize the scene and to imagine the type of things the women might have said to Chief Sabuni. In attempting a reconstruction of this sort. I was looking for a representation of how Pare women might speak in similar situations; the results were closer to what happened than I could imagine.

Mwajabu created a series of messages in Kipare and then translated them into English. She said that, although the women would be very determined and would in no way back down, they would be respectful of the authority embodied by the chief. They would not speak sharply or tell the chief in direct terms what he should do. They would begin by "building him up." The following are words that Mwajabu imagined the women might have said.

"Mfumwa (Chief), we know you are the only one who can solve our problems; you know our hardships and the situation we are faced with since our husbands are in the wilderness; you know, as Pare women, we cannot cross our boundaries, but our community is crying, our children are crying, everyone is crying, we are all crying for your help; if you were not the chief, we would not have come to you; because you are the chief, we believe you will stand up and take charge and resolve this situation; (and finally, the last stage of the
sequence) "Twaremwa" (Kipare:we are tired of it all; we've had enough). According to Mwajabu, this last statement would have signaled a "dead end"; the women were not going to talk anymore.

After a period of sustained, and no doubt creative, negotiations, the women abandoned negotiations (complaint and threat) and women cursed the chief. In their negotiations with the chiefs, the women followed patterns of behavior appropriate for the circumstances, which included indigenous cultural practices, such as "kufololotia." "Kufololotia" (and other practices known to all the Pare participants) provided the women with a powerful mechanism for stating their complaints and implying threats, and, by degrees, increasing the intensity of their complaints and threats. As the women and the chiefs exchanged messages, "kufololotia" as a potential curse was an invisible player in the negotiations. Even as the women were communicating messages to the chiefs, all the participants involved were aware that the women held a metaphorical loaded gun behind the veil of civil interaction. In a sense, Pare society had invested the women with the power to have the last word. It is worth repeating Professor C.K. Omari's strong statement about the women's curse.

[To the chiefs], these women are a threat, not physically [but because of the curse]. The curse is the most feared. So men must behave so they don't reach to that state, because if you reach that state, whatever will happen to you is more
serious than if you fought with spears and arrows. 19

The women were in a state of rebellion with little letup for almost two days. At one point the police chased them away from the court, rescued Chief Sabuni, and escorted him to his home, where the women took up their harassment again. For two days the chief was unable to assert his usual authority. After they chased the women away the second time, some of the police remained in the village to maintain order, and the women did not return to their militant mode.

The women's relationship with the DC was a different matter. As stated earlier, in the Tanganyikan Territory there was more social distance between women and the colonial system vis-a-vis men, in large part because of attitudes about gender roles held by colonial officials. Because of this social distance, the negotiating process that preceded their curse of Pringle was probably shorter and simpler. Many women had heard the rumor that the DC was coming to Usangi to tell them when their husbands were coming back although he actually came with a very different intent. He was not interested in the women and he would have shown that. Mwajabu says that under those circumstances, the women would have been very, very angry. She suggests this rendition of that confrontation:

"Bwana Disii (DC), we have given you all the respect a man in your position deserves; every time you have come to the village, we have said to you, 'Be at home'; but now our homes are no longer our homes because our husbands are in the
wilderness; we are the women who have been taking care of the families all this time, because there are no men around; you are the only one with the power to bring them back; if you can bring them back today, we will be grateful and the gods in Shengena and Kamwala (the gods of the forest where Pare male initiation was held—a place of power) are waiting for that."

Then the women did what they knew how to do. They turned what appeared to be a colonial event into a Pare event with women taking over the authority. They drove the DC from the village.

Eventually things settled down, the DC visited the village, certain things were not mentioned, and there was a pretense of normalcy. And yet things had changed. The dispute over the tax was resolved within the next year or so, although by the time that took place, Pringle had been transferred and Pare District had a new DC. The women’s militancy had its intended effect. The power and authority of the chiefs (the malefactors in this case) had diminished. How big a factor was the women’s violent behavior in the chiefs’ loss of status? I believe it should be recognized as a major factor.

One testimony in particular suggests certain important implications of the women’s actions. Mzee Mrema Kiangi of Ugweno was one of two informants who described a scene at Same in which women from South Pare cursed the DC and defiled the
Then we heard that Pringle went to Makanya [South Pare]. The women led by Mama Mamhando met him. Then Makanya women came to Same. On seeing them Paulo said, "Hata ukavona mche wako usimtetie." (Kipare: Even if you see your wife, don’t talk to her.) "They have their problems and we have ours. Vakavakoma tunemanya iti serikali yatudaa." (Kipare: If they kill them, we will know that the government hates us.)

The women surrounded the DC’s office and danced through the night. They told Pringle to give them children as he was keeping their husbands in Same. The following day Pringle assured the women that their husbands would soon return home. Therefore Makanya women left.

After this incident Paulo told the chiefs, "Vache vose va Vwasu (Upare) vakaza aha kumufololotia munefwa. Uo DC wenyu esikafwe ambu esi Mwasu (Mpare) mira unywi munefwa." (Kipare: If all Pare women come and curse you, you will all die. Your DC will not die as he is not a Pare, but you will die.)

(AN: In other words, the DC will not be affected by this Pare traditional curse, but the chiefs who were Pare would die if nothing positive was done.)

Kiangi: After this incident the chiefs and Pringle met and decided to abolish Mbiru. Then Pringle called Paulo and told him that Mbiru had been abolished.

After Aissia asked a question or two, Mzee Kiangi, a talented storyteller, began to describe scenes from his experiences at Same. By the time we met with Mzee, Aissia and I had been interviewing people for about a month, and I was able to follow Mzee’s narrative in Kipare as he called to mind (current memory) his experiences during Mbiru. Although I could not understand the Kipare, as an observer of Mzee’s vivid performance which included gestures and sound effects, I was able to visualize, at least in part, the scenes he was recalling. The text of the complete interview furnishes
strong images and vivid details. His testimony reveals what he thought the curse meant to the Pare.

Mzee Kiangi recounted that Pringle went to Makanya where the women met him (we heard earlier how women in all the villages "met" the DC and chiefs, defiantly, militantly), and then Makanya women came to Same. When he saw the women, Mashambo cautioned the men, "Even if you see your wife, don't talk to her. They have their problems and we have ours." The women did not present themselves to the male leaders at Same, either to report to them or to ask them what to do. Mashambo's remark acknowledged the women's autonomy and authority to act on their own. This important point cannot be given too much emphasis. The women were not coming to greet their husbands, perhaps to bring them some food, and to ask, "How can we help you?" They had devised their own plans, they had come to Same to carry them out, and there was no hint that they needed to check with the men to get approval or advice. And Mashambo reminded the men that in this context, it was expected that the men would leave the women alone to conduct their own affairs.

The women surrounded the DC's office and danced throughout the night. Then they taunted the DC that, since he was keeping their husbands there, he should impregnate them all. Apparently the women cursed the DC. The most intriguing part of the testimony follows. Mashambo is quoted as telling the chiefs, "If all Pare women come and curse you, you will
all die. Your DC will not die as he is not a Pare, but you will die." Aissia added the comment that the British DC would not be affected by this Pare practice, but the Pare chiefs would die if matters were not settled. According to Wilson and Wilson, in this part of Africa, "Supernatural sanctions were believed to be effective only against kinsmen, neighbors and those with whom a man [sic] was in personal contact (1968:36). Mzee Kiangi connects the incident he described with a meeting between the chiefs and the DC in which they decided to abolish the tax. Mzee Kiangi's last statement adds weight to the argument that the women's actions broke the political impasse and directly led to the abolition of the tax.

More important to this analysis of the curse is the statement attributed to Mashambo. According to this testimony, the women's all-night harassment of the DC provided Mashambo with an opportunity to remind the chiefs that they had a responsibility to settle the political stalemate quickly, and to warn them, that if they did not bring the rebellion to an end, the women had the power of their curse. Mashambo was well aware of the power relationships in this British colonial territory, but he reminded the chiefs that "your DC," the representative of imperial power, would not die as a result of the women's curse, but "you will all die." Although there was substantial evidence throughout the fieldwork period that discourse rules kept many people from
discussing the curse, according to this account, Mashambo made a direct, powerful statement that defined the chiefs' predicament and the women's ultimate power.

As mentioned earlier, we heard a number of stories about women in recent times who threatened to curse. With the exception of one case mentioned below, none of those stories described an actual curse. In each case, the threat was enough to change the situation so that the curse was not used. Two examples indicate the pattern. A male driver at the University of Dar es Salaam was being pressured by his mother who lived in a rural village to bring his children back home for initiation. After some consideration, he decided not to do so. His mother's threat to curse him if he did not do as she asked led to his giving in to her demands. In the next case, a professional Pare woman working in Dar es Salaam told about the first time she heard about the curse. A girl (a distant kin) who had come to the city to live with the woman's family became pregnant. The senior male in the home angrily prepared to throw the girl out. His mother, who also resided in the household, told him, "If you do, "I'll walk naked", so he backed down, allowing the girl to stay.

We heard one story about a woman who cursed her son. A Pare woman told me that a male relative built a number of houses to rent. Although his mother wanted him to build a house for her, for some reason he did not do so. He continued to build houses "in which no one lived." The houses remained
empty "with only rats and snakes in them." People believed that the condition of the houses was the result of the mother's curse.20

Many Pare take the women's curse very seriously, believing that its performance has terrible consequences. During my stay in Usangi I discussed the subject of the curse with both Christian pastors and a Muslim sheik. Although these religious leaders said it was a very bad thing for a woman to curse, and that it was not accepted as appropriate behavior, they admitted that the curse was still used. (I now realize that I do not know whether these statements meant that women continue to threaten to curse or actually perform the curse.) My analysis has revealed this practice to be a form of "women's power" that is often used to resist male authority. It is hardly surprising to find that Christian and Muslim male leaders would oppose its practice.

The reasons the Pare disapprove of this practice and are uncomfortable talking about it are much more complicated than I have been able to portray here. I can think of two additional factors that complicate the issue. First, there are strict rules against both about females exposing parts of their bodies and about how such a subject might be discussed. The second matter concerns what people believe about curses and related practices that are part of Pare culture, what people might be willing to discuss about what they believe, and under what circumstances such subjects might be discussed.
Although I was able to reconstruct the two stories about large groups of women potters mobilizing to defend their rights to supplies of clay, much of the data about the recent women’s protests in Usangi was so confusing and fragmented that it is impossible to get a clear picture about how this cultural practice impinged on these events. Did women threaten "kufololotia" or to walk naked as part of these recent protests? Did women perform a curse? What actually happened is not clear. When I interviewed Minister Cleopa Msuya, North Pare’s MP (Member of Parliament) who is from Usangi, I asked him about the recent protests by Usangi women. Msuya’s response, I would suggest, indicates how most educated Tanzanians probably view the subject of cultural practices like "kufololotia." Msuya said that Tanzanians should use "acceptable methods" and the "new institutions" when they had grievances.

Why can’t they find either through the party, through their own organization, UWT, through the church committees, whatever they want, to put pressure on. We encourage them to use those lines. It’s up to us to find a system where we redress any issues through recognized mechanisms.

When the Minister asked me how we were dealing with women’s problems in the United States, I confessed that we were having major problems, too, although the problems and the circumstances were different than those in Tanzania. Msuya responded,

We are adjusting. We are feeling our way. We are trying to find some ways to sort out these problems. They may not be necessarily American, or
western, but something that is at least different from the traditional system, and perhaps something that is not technically as western as what we find when we travel overseas.

One issue that has not yet been addressed fully in this analysis concerns the ways people do or do not talk about this cultural practice and the women's protests in Usangi. Eric Ng'maryo, the Chagga lawyer, poet, and political activist who first gave us information about recent women's protests in Usangi, told me that women would not consider their actions as protests. Mwajabu Possi Kachenje, the Pare linguist mentioned earlier who has lived in both North and South Pare, helped me understand this point. She said that since there is no word for protest in Kipare, Pare women would explain what we would consider protest actions by saying, (South Pare) "Twafikwa"—"We're fed up, we're tired of the situation," or (North Pare) "Twaremwa"—"We have failed, we cannot handle the situation." She stressed that these statements in no way imply a feeling of helplessness, but a point at which patience has worn out and "enough is enough." The point at which a woman passed her limit of tolerance would affect the pattern of intensification from complaint to threat to serious threat and perhaps all the way to curse. Each step in the sequence requires different messages that follow a complex system of coding in order for the sender of the message to make it clear that the messages are both continuing and changing.

Radner and Lanser have written about acts of coding in women's folk culture. The kind of coding that interested
these authors is found in hierarchical situations of many kinds in which members of the dominated sector take a certain risk if they communicate openly. In the case of gender inequality, "the women's attitudes and understandings cannot always be openly acknowledged because of their social, economic, and emotional dependence on the goodwill of the men" (1993:2). The coding of messages accommodates two things. First, it allows for the clandestine expression of ideas, beliefs, feelings, and so on, that the dominant group, and even some of the dominated group, might find to be disturbing or threatening if expressed in open terms, and, second, it may serve to empower the dominated group and thus lead to change.

Because coded messages say one thing and mean something else, their study presents special problems, as Radner and Lanser learned. [These] "acts of coding...are ambiguous in that neither the fact of coding nor the key to the code has been made explicit, and [they] are therefore indeterminate in intentionality" (1993:4). Learning about the kind of situations in which coding is a factor helps us understand the relationship between a text and a subtext, that is, the relationship between what is actually said and what is meant. At every stage in the cursing sequence, there is a text and a subtext, that is, words and the meaning that lies behind the words. Radner and Lanser believe that inferences can be made from "the performance-in-context, which includes what we know of the performer and her circumstances," although those
inferences "[do] not rely on the performer’s own word for its guarantee" (1993:7). For us to understand the Pare women’s cursing sequence, we must pay close attention to what the performers of the act say and what they say they do and at the same time try to understand coding systems that are intended to disguise, not reveal, what is going on. For example, a number of Pare told us that women are not expected/allowed to complain. Yet it appears that women who use the cursing sequence, in fact, are complaining. It is easy to conclude that the complaints and the threats related to the curse are coded messages.

I have identified at least three interrelated factors involved with this cursing sequence which complicate the decoding process: (1) rules of discourse that govern how people talk or do not talk about it, (2) beliefs that people hold about the supernatural power connected to curses; and (3) people’s embarrassment about the women’s uncommon behavior. I have discussed at length some of the ways in which rules of discourse and a system of coding limit what an inquirer might learn about this practice. Because the element of belief in the supernatural remains amorphous and difficult for me as a cultural outsider to pin down, I will not attempt to extend that part of the analysis until I learn more on that subject. However, since I believe I can shed further light on the question of people’s embarrassment, I want to concentrate on that now. At the most here, we will benefit from
understanding the concept of "face" and the idea of losing face. For this we will turn to Erving Goffman’s work.

Rituals of Protest

At this time I want to introduce the idea of viewing this cultural practice as a "ritual of protest." The following section, which will explore this idea, connects this study of Pare women’s protest actions with studies of women’s political activity in other parts of Africa. In all these instances, viewing the protest events as ritual behavior provides an interesting entry point for analysis.

Although it is impossible to "see" social relationships, a subject that is a major concern of this research, it is possible to understand something about such relationships by observing and analyzing ritual acts in which cultural messages are carried. This approach focuses on the communicative aspect of ritual; in fact, it studies ritual quite literally as a language (Leach 1968:524). Viewing this cultural practice as a "ritual of protest" reveals how well it fits within the category of interpersonal or interaction ritual.

Erving Goffman’s work is a guide for understanding the dynamics of interactive ritual behavior. Instead of studying "men [sic] and their moments," Goffman chose to study "moments and their men" [sic], concentrating his attention on instances of human interaction (1967:3). Goffman states that a "ritual organization" of social interaction structures the nature of face-to-face encounters within a group of people. A process
of socialization teaches each person her/his place in society and ensures that an individual, who has become "a kind of construct" through the process, will be able to participate appropriately in social life (1967:45). Moral rules learned during socialization,

...if followed, determine the evaluation he [sic] will make of himself [sic] and of his [sic] fellow-participants in the encounter, the distribution of his [sic] feelings, and the kinds of practices he [sic] will employ to maintain a specified and obligatory kind of ritual equilibrium (Goffman 1967:45).

Goffman introduces two concepts that open up the interaction ritual to view. He suggests that each person in a face-to-face encounter acts out a "line,"

a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he [sic] expresses his [sic] view of the situation and through this his [sic] evaluation of the participants, especially himself [sic] (1967:5).

As s/he approaches an encounter, each participant is already equipped with a particular "face,"

the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he [sic] has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes... (1967:5).

Normative rules and established routines that largely predetermine discourse and behavior limit an individual's options, that is, a participant cannot chose a face or line at random, but must choose one that s/he will be able to maintain.

[While his [sic] social face can be his [sic] most personal possession and the center of his [sic] security and pleasure, it is only on loan from
A person must not only work to maintain her/his own face (Goffman calls this "face-work") but must show consideration for the face presented by others with whom s/he interacts (1967:6,10). In any encounter, a set of ground rules tacitly accepted by all the participants regulates who can speak at different times and what subjects can be introduced. During each interaction, a participant subjects his [sic] behavior to the expressive order that prevails and contributes to the orderly flow of messages. [I]t is a good thing that spoken interaction has the conventional organization given it;...it is a good thing that the self has the ritual structure given it (Goffman 1967:39).

Using Goffman’s model, the dynamics of the confrontation between the women and government officials during Mbiru are revealed. The face that Sabuni carried with him into the meetings with the Pare was clearly delineated. To the Pare, he was chief, that is, paramount leader, ruler, commander, boss. When they met the chief, the women as a group claimed a collective face as "mothers," a position of high status in the community. The chief’s line during his meetings with the women conveyed some contradictory messages that could not be sustained, messages such as: he, the chief, was in charge (looking out for the people’s interests) and therefore the women should not worry; because the tax was a government tax, it could not be abolished; although there was no sign of them, the women’s husbands would be home soon. The women’s line
communicated that they, as responsible "mothers," were holding everything together at home during this crisis; they were respectfully waiting for their leader, the chief, to return things to normal; and their patience, which was wearing thin, had limits. Did this last part of their line contain a threat? After an appropriate period of time, when their respectful behavior and their powers of persuasion had not accomplished their objectives, the women attacked the face (reputation) of the chief. The cultural practices they used could be seen as shaming devices put in motion to destroy the chief's face/reputation (Edgerton and Conant 1964). They meant to embarrass the chief.

As a result of the women's attack, the chief lost face. He had not been able to sustain the line he presented, that is, the claim that as chief he was providing the leadership necessary to resolve the tax issue. Because of his position within the colonial administration, he could no longer save his chiefly face, no matter how hard he tried or how good his intentions. Because the chief's authority was in large part dependent on the people's support, when the women withdrew their recognition of his authority, his reputation as chief was seriously impaired.

The situation of the colonial administrator was different. Colonial officials in Tanganyika were not dependent on or accountable to the local people. The DC could only lose face if he displeased those who granted him his
authority, that is, his superiors in the chain of colonial command, and at the next level, the British Colonial Office. Because in the 1940s the overriding concern of the colonial government was stability (McCarthy 1982:5-6), when the women rebelled, the DC also lost face (his reputation) and he was transferred. 22

One way to understand the victory that the women's actions brought the Pare is through this model of an attack on the face of the leaders. However, the fact that many of the women were embarrassed about their actions, after the fact, is an interesting point. Their actions had followed a recognized pattern. The curse and the other acts they had performed were cultural resources open to women in such oppressive situations. Had the women lost or gained face? The answer to this last question depends on whom one talks to about Mbiru. The reader could not read the women's accounts of Mbiru (see Chapters 3 and 4) without noting that most of them were extremely proud of what they had done. They should have been proud of their actions. They were incredible!

Goffman's model aids in making the connection between the Pare women and Mbiru and instances of women's militant behavior in other parts of Africa. These cases fit a general pattern. During the period when foreign rule was changing African life, the balance between male and female roles in society was being eroded. There was considerable encroachment on women's rights and privileges. Many African women
responded aggressively to this challenge. Because there were indigenous practices designed for the women's use in oppressive situations, these cultural resources made it possible for women to attack and, in some cases, destroy the face of male leaders. The use of rituals of protest were effective in the short-term. However, in none of these instances did the women's actions gain them long-term advantages. The following brief accounts describe events in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Kenya.

Nigeria

When the British colonial administration in Nigeria moved to monopolize power, they took into account existing political structures and roles controlled by men but ignored those that had been managed by women. Under colonial rule, the women were all but shut out from political participation and power. Previously women in Igboland had exercised considerable economic and political power. They were independent economic agents who controlled their earnings. They also played important roles in village meetings and had powerful political institutions of their own, i.e., women's meetings (mikiri), market networks, and kinship groups. Additionally, women had the right to strike, boycott, or use force to back their decisions (Van Allen 1972:165-6). Besides strikes and boycotts, the women had a powerful ritual of protest to use in oppressive situations.

To "sit on" or "make war on" a man involved gathering at his compound,...dancing, singing
scurrilous songs which detailed the women's grievances against him and often called his manhood into question, banging on his hut with the pestles women used for pounding yams, and perhaps demolishing his hut or plastering it with mud and roughing him up a bit. A man might be sanctioned in this way for mistreating his wife, for violating the women's market rules, or letting his cows eat the women's crops. The women would stay at his hut ... until he repented and promised to mend his ways. [Such action by the women] was considered legitimate and no man would consider intervening (Van Allen 1972:170).

This cultural practice played a central role in the Igbo "Women's War" which occurred between 1928 to 1930. The immediate cause of the protest was a rumor that women would be taxed for the first time in a period of deteriorating crop prices. However, the women had a long term, more serious, grievance against the corrupt warrant chief system of local government instituted by the British.

Women throughout Igboland were actually demanding the removal of the warrant chiefs and closure of the native courts and European firms. Women had no place in the colonial government or law courts, and were rapidly losing out in the new economic structure (Amadiume 1987:140).

Although the unrest lasted for nearly two years, one month of intensive activity occurred in 1929. Tens of thousands of women demonstrated, burned down government buildings, and harassed government agents. The warrant chiefs were special targets. In the process, more then fifty women were killed and a similar number wounded.

During the rebellion the women all dressed in the same way: their heads were bound with ferns symbolizing war, their faces smeared with ashes, they wore short loincloths, and carried sticks wreathed with young palm fronds. The sticks

The attire described was the prescribed dress for women "sitting on a man." Although the women's demonstrations and riots precipitated the collapse of the warrant chief system, most of the women's long-term rights and privileges were never reinstated (Amadiume 1987:147-161).

**Cameroon**

In 1958 Kom women began to feel pressure from the continuing encroachment of colonial rule into every aspect of their lives. The women's specific complaints at this time concerned some arbitrary agricultural edicts and rumors that their land was to be sold. Customarily when Kom women faced oppressive conditions they mobilized to take disciplinary action against the oppressor (usually a man or men) by using a ritual of protest called anlu (pronounced ah’loo). Anlu was a disciplinary technique used by Kom women as a response to particular offenses. A woman who believed she was offended would call other women in the immediate area to her aid by using a war-cry. The offender, usually a man, would present his account of the incident to the head woman of his own compound.

She would discuss the matter with older women of the quarter and they would then decide on a course of action. The women could summon the offender, hear the case, and decide to accept the apologies and payment of goat and fowls. This would settle the case (Ritzenthaler 1960:151).
However, if this simple procedure did not settle the matter to the women's satisfaction, after stating their intentions to the paramount chief, the women would set another series of actions into motion.

On a set day [the women] dressed in leafy vines, articles of men's clothing, and paraded to the culprit's compound around five o'clock in the morning. There they danced, sang mocking and usually obscene songs composed for the occasion, and defiled the compound (Ritzenthaler 1960:151).

In 1958, as a result of their grievances, several thousand women responded with an expanded version of anlu. [They] seized control of tribal affairs in Bamenda Province of the British Cameroons. By mid-1958 the women were strong enough to take the political initiative. Using anlu,...revamped into a tightly organized, well disciplined, powerful organization, they rendered the paramount chief and his executive council impotent, and unseated the ruling party in the 1959 election (Wipper 1982:56).

Their uprising lasted for more than a year. Ardener recounts one incident that has interesting parallels to the Pare story, in that the women used personal insults and alluded to the man's death.

The women sang and danced and...told the world Mr. Chia [a council member] belonged nowhere--'He is excreta.' And they would shrill out 'U-li-li-li-li' and inform the ancestors that their culprit sons were on the way to join them (S.Ardener 1975: 38-39).

Next the women assembled on a hilltop, set up a demonstration farm of their own with farming practices that defied the disputed government policy, and set anlu in motion.

The next day...saw the women in Bobe Andreas Ngong's compound where fighting ensued. Jerome Ngong used a cutlass on one of the women and sticks
flew here and there... After ruining much property the 'Anlu' marched on the market beating and driving away such men as had dared to put up wares... 'The men can't have their fun while we are suffering' (Ardener 1975:39).

The material does not describe the aftermath of this uprising, i.e., how women's lives were affected, except to state that eventually peace was restored and the anlu leader was given a seat on the local council (Wipper 1982:60).

Kenya

The Kikuyu of Kenya suffered serious victimization from two British colonial policies common to settler colonies, i.e., the alienation of large areas of land from indigenous people and the large-scale use of forced labor. Although opposition to colonial rule was just beginning to consolidate in the 1920s, one incident reveals that women took a militant role in the resistance movement.

One way that Kikuyu women made a strong statement of disapproval was by using the "guturama ng'ania," which appears to be almost a duplicate of the Pare women's curse. This practice was "the strongest insult at the disposal of a Kikuyu woman" and involved "the displaying of one's genitals toward the person or thing cursed" (Wipper 1982:53).

Quarrelling women use it once in a while when they are furious with each other, though Kikuyu generally find it disgusting. It was also used as a group curse. Women of one ridge showed their disapproval of women of another ridge or of some domineering person who had aroused their ire in the following way. They...stood in a line with their backs toward the offender, bent forward and lifted their skirts in unison. That gesture indicated the end of social intercourse with the people thus
insulted, or in the case of a man the women's refusal to any longer recognize his authority (Wipper 1982:53).

The bold action taken by a group of Kikuyu women in Nairobi in 1922 sounds like this practice.

In March 1922 Harry Thuku, leader of the East African Association, was being held in a Nairobi jail. Thuku had been challenging the colonial government over certain oppressive policies, i.e., tax increases, the reduction of African wage rates, and a hated identity card system. Furthermore he had been organizing women coffeepickers. On the first day of a general strike called by the East African Association, several thousand people marched to the police station demanding Thuku's release. After saying prayers for Thuku's safety, the crowd dispersed peacefully.

The next day, with a much larger crowd in attendance, a delegation that had met with colonial officials came outside and asked people to go home. But this time "the members of the crowd were in no mood to leave... The women were particularly militant" (Wipper 1982:52). Wipper records the words of an eyewitness.

"Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru...leapt to her feet, pulled her dress right up over her shoulders and shouted to the men: 'You take my dress and give me your trousers. You men are cowards. What are you waiting for? Our leader is in there. Let's get him.' Hundreds of women trilled their ngemi (a high pitched cry) [in agreement and defiance]. Mary and the others pushed on until the bayonets of the rifles were pricking at their throats, and then the firing started. Mary was one of the first to die" (1982:52).
Wipper describes "a shift in the crowd leadership to the women," and believes that the women’s actions, Mary’s raising of her dress and the ngemi, "signalled the cessation of men’s authority over women" (1982:53).

Henceforth women would take the lead. Not content to employ the gesture alone, Nyanjiru verbally insulted the men. Her behavior, far from being idiosyncratic, appears to have followed a traditional practice and to have had group backing (Wipper 1982:53-54).

Because of her audacity, Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru became a hero of the anti-colonial movement. The Kanyegenuri, a Kikuyu political song which served as an anthem of national resistance during Mau Mau immortalizes the actions of Mary and other Kikuyu women (Wipper 1982:53).

These short summaries indicate the interesting nature of African women’s militant behavior. There are similarities between the cultural practices used by women from different parts of the continent. Our interest is not in tracing origins or making comparisons but rather in showing the dynamic nature of these practices and their creative use by different groups of African women.

These stories of women’s opposition to colonial rule are connected to the struggles of contemporary African women. These protests in Nigeria and Kenya in the 1920s, in Pare District in the 1940’s, and in Cameroon in the 1950s all involved women’s refusal to recognize male authority. But not all authorities ask to be recognized. Certainly the colonial authorities in these four countries were not directly
accountable to the women in the same way that the Pare chiefs had once been accountable to members of their communities, including the women. Recent stories from Kenya, Zambia, Uganda and Tanzania (see beginning of this chapter) show that women in African continue to take collective protest action against constituted authority. What can be surmised about the relationship between contemporary African women and the new institutions in which authority resides? I have more to say on this issue in the Conclusion that follows this chapter.

Conclusion

My analysis has revealed the kind of problems that sometimes occur when Western categories are used for description in other cultural settings. If "kufololotia" is referred to as a "curse," it reveals little about what the practice involves and actually misleads those wanting to understand the practice. Perceiving this practice as a "curse," that is as "an invocation of harm," makes it impossible to comprehend the place it holds in Pare life. Although this practice sometimes includes an invocation of harm, i.e., a curse, and always has a curse (an invocation of harm) as a powerful reference point, it is both more and less than a curse.

My analysis has revealed this cultural practice to be a complex mechanism that provides women with a powerful negotiating tool in a wide variety of situations, including those that are oppressive. As with all folklore, this
practice, on the one hand, follows a pattern based in past usage, and, on the other hand, is open to variation in present performance; thus it encompasses past and present, continuity and change. Because of the potential for creativity in the present performance, women can adapt this practice to suit a variety of situations and their own individual styles and needs.

We have seen how this practice follows a sequence of performative verbal acts, each different stage performing a different function. I have identified three, which I call complaint, threat, and curse. My data supports the premise that women use this practice as a threat much more than as a curse. The three stages offer the performer a great deal of flexibility in adapting the practice to fit a particular set of circumstances. This flexibility would even allow a woman who is not inclined to use this practice herself to influence the behavior of others by referring to how others use it. An earlier example illustrated this point, i.e., a woman instructed her own children about proper behavior by referring to a cursing sequence being used by a woman in the neighborhood.

Having learned about the dynamics of this practice and the pattern it follows, it has been possible to reconstruct more accurately Mbiru events and the women’s recent protests in Usangi. Based on the women’s testimony that they had cursed the chief during Mbiru, we have been able to
reconstruct something of the negotiating process in which the women were involved with the chief. Because one informant told us that the threat of the curse was acknowledged by the Katibu Tarafa during a recent protest in Usangi, we can speculate that the second case included a similar threat. The result is a better picture of what the women did and what their actions meant.

We have learned from testimony about Mbiru that in 1945 women’s groups, which had internal mechanisms for tight discipline, had autonomy and authority to make plans and take action on their own. This is not to say that the women were operating in a vacuum. Rather, they were actively discussing matters with men and were undoubtedly influenced by what men said and by events as they unfolded. The fact that women actually performed the curse during Mbiru reveals a great deal about the women’s perceptions of that situation and their central role in the protest. Their daily visits to confront the chief with the request that their husbands be returned and that village life be restored to normal did not produce results. Their negotiations sent clear, culturally defined messages to the chief that matters should be resolved or there would be consequences. And when the colonial presence disrupted the normal women-chief relationship that had a mechanism for resolving differences, the women used their ultimate weapon.
The women's use of this threatening/cursing sequence these days (and the use of similar cultural practices by other African women) reveals something important about how women are situated in society and how they perceive their lives. While Islam, Christianity, and Westernization have had strong influences, and many Pare informants distanced themselves from the threatening/cursing sequence, this practice continues to be utilized by some women as a powerful resource for resisting male domination. As in previous times, large groups of women do not mobilize and protest except under conditions of extreme duress. This practice could be seen as marginal power kept in reserve for extreme situations. If such a practice were allowed to play a central role in social life or is used often, it would not work as a powerful resource for women.

The two recent issues over which Usangi women protested, the development tax and the threat to women's potters' rights to economic resources, are survival issues for the women. One informant quoted Iraqw women (Mbulu area) who were protesting the development tax as saying, "We do all the work. Let the men pay the tax." If men currently dominate the important arenas of society and male-dominated institutions are the exclusive channels for the resolution of grievances, what does that mean to women? It would appear that present social structures and practices do not represent women's interests adequately.
It continues to be a challenging exercise to write about the women's actions. For example, let me return to remarks by Kimambo, Lawi (although Lawi's remarks are about protest actions by Iraqw women, the issue is the same), and Jean O'Barr that raise interesting questions about interpretation. In Chapter 3, I objected to Kimambo's portrayal of Usangi women as being "in their homes alone missing their husbands" (1991:106). I also found Lawi's statement about Iraqw women troubling (see this chapter, Note #2), "It is almost certain that peasant women are closer to the entire process of life creation and life sustenance" (1990). Jean O'Barr's gloss on the Mbiru material in a publication--as late as 1984--follows a similar line.

The involvement of Pare women was essentially a conservative reaction. During the tax riots, women asked that the order in their lives be restored. They wanted their men home, and the dispute settled. By asking to be impregnated, they vocalized their demand for a continuation of life as it was (1984:146).

I have struggled to understand how these three respected scholars (Lawi is a professor at the University of Dar es Salaam) could describe the women's activities in similar terms which appear to me to misrepresent what happened. Two different aspects of the word "conservative" reveal the complexity involved in this analysis. One definition supports O'Barr's (and Kimambo's and Lawi's) interpretation of women's role in the protests while a second seems to contradict the facts. The first definition, "conservative: tending to oppose
change, favoring traditional views and values," appears to portray the women's view of events. They opposed the tax, they opposed the new, arbitrary strain of chiefly power, they opposed the foreign ruler, and, in the end, they used their most powerful weapons in support of their cause.

The problem resides with the second definition, "conservative: moderate, cautious, restrained." It is hard for me to think of the women's actions as "conservative" in this sense. Not only did the women act militantly, but prior to their militant action, women's groups made contingency plans in case their members were injured during the confrontations (battles) they were planning. At least on the surface, those actions defy the ordinary definition of conservatism. Additionally, none of these three writers acknowledged the power and authority embodied in the women's actions.

An article by Kaplan, "Female Consciousness and Collective Action," suggests one way to understand the apparent contradiction in the use of the term "conservative" (1982). Although Kaplan is taking an essentialist position (a subject to which I will return), she makes some interesting points about women's mass movements. She argues that for women in some situations, political consciousness emerges from what she calls female consciousness.

By placing human need above other social and political requirements and human life above property, profit, and even individual rights, female consciousness creates the vision of a
society that has not yet appeared. Those with female consciousness accept the gender system of their society; indeed such consciousness emerges from the division of labor by sex, which assigns women the responsibility of preserving life (1982:546,545).

Kaplan believes that female mass movements have been based in this kind of female consciousness developed among women during everyday interactions in community settings.

Community solidarity forms in opposition to a ruling class whose power is supported by army and police. Common antagonism, even more than shared views, welds people together, and consciousness among women that they constitute a community often appears when they share outrage. When they perceive some violation of the norms they uphold according to the sexual division of labor, they gain consciousness of themselves as community (1982:551).

Kaplan's study of three cases of female mobilization in Barcelona between 1910 and 1918 revealed how women's actions could be considered conservative and revolutionary at the same time. This point connects her argument to the Mbiru material.

The events that occurred there show that women's defense of the rights accorded them by the sexual division of labor, although fundamentally conservative, had revolutionary consequences (1982:551).

Based on this line of reasoning, one could say there is no contradiction in interpreting the Pare women's actions as both conservative and revolutionary. The Pare women were doing what Pare women do. When their lives were disrupted, they acted. When their normal relations with their chiefs were compromised, they reacted to subvert--although only temporarily--the structure (chiefly authority) that they
considered to be at fault. This appears to be a case in which the Western categories of "conservative" and "traditional" are not suitable. Is it possible that a cultural practice can be both conservative and revolutionary? This dilemma is at the center of a continuing debate in folklore circles.

Folklorists (and development practitioners) continue to grapple with the question of whether folklore (cultural practices) enables or constrains its practitioners. Is there power in one’s cultural expressions or are they in some way the antithesis of power? There is a continuing feminist dialogue about women’s oppression and whether women forge their own chains. It is certainly possible that different observers viewing the same scene would have different interpretations. Here is one example. Although she takes no position on the issue herself, Alcoff discusses the positive side of cultural feminism.

[The] point is well taken, that it was our mothers who made our families survive, that women’s handiwork is truly artistic, that women’s caregiving really is superior in value to male competitiveness (1988:414).

At the opposite end of this particular argument is the angry commentary by Diane Christian in the Journal of American Folklore. Christian finds the above ideology a "sentimental paradigm," enslaving and personally repugnant. She believes that the presumption of "a woman-centered ideology...silences appropriate questions" about women’s situation within a patriarchal system that limits women’s power. To say that
women have power "through children and kitchens" is no longer a viable position, according to Christian (1988:53).

Do Kimambo, Lawi, O'Barr, and Kaplan's statements above essentialize women? Are they taking the line that women's lives are determined by their biology, equating femaleness to some "natural" penchant for cooking, nurturing others, and serving as the consciences of their communities? The suggestion that women are naturally more virtuous than men or that women are naturally better equipped or able to carry out social responsibilities is viewed by Pollitt as a trap that women must avoid. She says,

Peace, the environment, a more humane workplace, economic justice, social support for children—these are issues that affect us all and are everyone's responsibility. It is as though women don't really believe they are entitled to full citizenship unless they can make a special claim to virtue. Why isn't being human enough (1992:806-7)?

However people choose to interpret this example of women's militant behavior, Pare women (and women in Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia) continue into the present to repeat certain patterns of protest to make political statements. During recent protests, women in Usangi stated complaints and threatened consequences (that they would walk naked) over two issues. Earlier in this chapter I described the protests made by sizable groups of women potters in Usangi who felt their right to clay was in jeopardy. The second issue women were protesting (which I only mentioned) was the new government policy of directly taxing women for the first time. Although
government leaders regularly urge all Tanzanians to use the new institutions when they had grievances in these situations, Usangi women chose to use familiar practices in which they apparently had more confidence. Does this persistent use of indigenous cultural practices suggest that these practices are multi-purpose and can be both conservative and potentially revolutionary? Perhaps, rather than thinking of the practices as subverting a social hierarchy, it is more accurate to see them as holding the hierarchy to certain limits (see Lawless 1993 on this point).

Notes

1. Columbus Dispatch, Vol. 121, No. 244, page 5A.

2. Lawi ascribes only the most conservative of motives to the women,

...in essence the women's agony streamed from the disapproval of acts leading to the extinction of the society culturally and socially, and fear of that end. It is almost certain that peasant women are closer to the entire process of life creation and life sustenance (1990).

I will return to this issue at the end of the chapter.

3. Dr. Amandina Lihamba, interview in Dar es Salaam, 5/7/91.

4. Until 1991, UWT was an adjunct of Tanzania's single political party, first TANU, later the redesignated CCM (Rogers 1983:27). Even though UWT was established as a women's organization, party interests claimed priority until recently. In 1991, in response to the call for democratic
reforms, CCM released UWT and four other national organizations from party control and granted them autonomy.


7. Mama Adija.

8. Interview in Ugweno, 10/4/90.

9. Interview in Dar es Salaam, 11/21/90.

10. Interview in Moshi, 1/7/91.

11. Mama Adija.

12. My notes, conversation in Moshi, 5/18/91.


15. Interview in Usangi, 2/13/91.

16. Interview in Dar es Salaam, 11/21/90.

17. There is one kind of communication in American culture that clarifies this idea of the message calling attention to an already established relationship, that is, using a greeting card to send a message. The fact that thousands of copies of one particular greeting card with a particular artistic design and some specific words would be chosen as appropriate by a great variety of people in different situations is hard to fathom unless the idea of an established relationship is comprehended. One example will illustrate this point.

When a college woman buys a Mother's Day card for her mother, she could choose a sentimental card, a humorous card
or even an insulting card, and the message would be the same, because she is validating an established relationship. The mother will receive the message, whatever its images, words or tone, in the spirit of the relationship as she perceives it. (Of course, cards are not completely interchangeable; a card would give some clues to the relationship between the giver and the recipient.) On the other hand, a person might feel some apprehension choosing a card for someone if she/he is unsure of her/his own relationship with the recipient. Take the case of a college woman choosing a Mother’s Day card for the woman who has recently married her father. Until a relationship is clearly established, this kind of communication may present problems.

19. Interview in Dar es Salaam, 11/20/90.
20. Name withheld.
21. Interview in Moshi, 5/28/91.
22. McCarthy, who studied the Tanganyikan colonial bureaucracy from 1919 to 1940, says that the administrative mandate, "peace, order and good government" was translated into "an absence of physical threats to bureaucratic hegemony over the territory" making stability the overriding concern (1982:5-6);
I want to return now to three topics: the process of change, the ability of women to use cultural resources, and the question of women's empowerment, before suggesting further research on this material.

The Process of Change

As part of my study of Mbiru, I have been interested in the socioeconomic change that occurred in Africa in the last century and the ways in which the process of change affected women and men differently. Early in the century, Pare men began to have opportunities and experiences not available to women, and these opportunities and experiences gave men certain advantages over women. Many men began to live outside the villages in the areas where most resources were being invested and in which prestige began to reside. During this time society began to be artificially divided into separate spheres: "public" concerned with extrahousehold matters and "private" dealing with household activities (Staudt 1987A: 193).

This division of reality into public and private comes to parallel the male and female worlds, even though the indigenous precolonial reality did not always conform to that division. Over time, the state, through its policies and systems of
participation, creates that reality (Staudt 1987A:193).

As an additional consequence of the changes that occurred, "whatever economic activities and autonomy women may have once had are distorted through male preferential policies which assume a public-private reality" (Staudt 1984:61). (A public-domestic dichotomy—rather than public/private—might be more appropriate in the Pare case, a subject addressed later in this conclusion.) In the process, women’s voice and power was diminished (Staudt 1987A:193). Add to this that in Tanzania, the general perception—as expressed in government policy, the media, and in private conversations—is that the "men’s world" represents the future and the more convention-bound "women’s world" constitutes a past from which people are expected to be moving away.

The implications of this situation for women and development are enormous. The male-dominated public world is the locus for development planning and implementation, the environment in which development practitioners operate. This public world in Tanzania is based on imported models. One could say that development policy makers and practitioners have a different culture (e.g., different from that of poor rural women and men who are supposedly their clients) with organizational structures, discourse patterns, and a plethora of cultural practices based on models from colonialism/modernization/Westernization. Because it has been viewed by most policy makers as "the future," the imported development
culture has more prestige than the indigenous culture and in many ways actually subordinates the practitioners and practices of indigenous culture. In addition, resources have been invested in and largely consumed within this development culture.

When rural women approach the development culture, they appear to fit the category Edwin Ardener refers to as "muted groups" (1975). That is, those with limited experience in and limited knowledge about a particular setting tend to be inarticulate and ineffective when they are required to function within that environment. They are at a disadvantage because they have little experience speaking the proper language; they may not know the rules of discourse which govern effective communications; and they may not have enough knowledge about the social or political dynamics to be competent actors in that setting. It may also be the case that norms of behavior restrict some people (women?) from participating in those settings.

Jean and William O'Barr have written about the politics of language in Tanzania where the use of a single African language has made an enormous contribution to consolidating the various ethnic groups into one polity. However, the use of Kiswahili in government institutions and transactions has a discriminatory element; it has favored three groups: the young, men, and the educated (W.O'Barr 1976A:43). Jean O'Barr described how language competency affected people's ability to
participate in village councils in Pare District. In the 1960s she observed that old people who had complaints or requests had a hard time following council proceedings, and that women with limited ability in Kiswahili spoke openly in the vernacular before the meetings started but were reluctant to speak once formal sessions began and Kiswahili was used (1976:81). (See also Bloch 1975 for a description of how established discourse patterns set a frame by which communications are severely restricted—what can be said, who can speak—in different kinds of public meetings.)

It is then the case that those who are "muted" in this way have little access to the cultural resources available to those who can operate effectively in that environment. Rural women have the ability to manipulate the resources available in their own cultural settings, but the resources in their world have been shrinking. I believe that this scenario describes the situation for rural Pare women. (See also Mlama 1991 for an example of village workshops within which rural women felt empowered to "speak" effectively about development problems that concern them through their "traditional" media, i.e., dance, song, drama.)

A related point is found in Moran’s research on Grebo women in Liberia (1989). Moran suggests that African women’s contemporary protests are related to their lack of representation in the new institutions. She learned that Grebo women do not expect or trust men to represent fully
their interests. Moran believes this attitude is based in the longtime dual-sex form of social organization in West Africa (see also Okonjo 1976). Utilizing this cultural resource, West African women united in collective action to represent their own interests (Moran 1989:443).

West African women seem to demonstrate a repugnance for "going through channels," taking their complaints through a hierarchy of usually male representatives... [T]heir concept of "representation," in the political sense, is closely connected to the cultural construction of gender in West African societies (1989:443-4).

It may be the case that this reluctance to work through channels in male-dominated institutions is true of Pare women as well. Their reluctance may be related to the way that gender has been constructed in Pare society, an idea supported by my data on Mbiru. It may be that Pare women continue to renew their familiar forms of political expression because they believe that male-run government and party bureaucracies do not represent their interests as well as women-only groups have customarily done. This last point adds to the complexity of the issues under discussion. On the one hand, there is evidence that women have not been granted equal access to new institutions and practices. On the other hand, it could be argued that women reinforce this situation by continuing to activate political forms and groupings in which they have confidence.

One issue has yet to be raised. Under present circumstances in which development (colonialist/modernization)
culture dominates society, is "kufololotia" unthinkable because it is "uncivilized" behavior, that is, "traditional" in the most negative sense, for example in comparison with "civilized" behavior such as killing someone with a gun or the viewing of videos which treat women as sexual objects to exploit and portray violence in graphic terms? In addition, should we ask whether women continue to use "kufololotia" for the very reason that it is "uncivilized"/"barbaric" behavior as it has always been. Is the conclusion that, in this case, women plus uncivil behavior equals power?

Women's Ability to Use Cultural Resources

It is easy to argue that successful development for women depends at least in part on women having access to available resources. This ethnographic inquiry sought to learn about the cultural resources to which Pare women have had access in two time periods, during the Mbiru tax protest in the 1940s and in current times. Among the most valuable findings, this research has provided a vivid and detailed picture of the organizational structure and activities of the women's protest actions during Mbiru.

Using their already established women's groups as the base of operations, women met, discussed their situations under protest conditions, planned strategies, and took action. Women leaders conducted meetings, served as public spokespersons, and enforced strict discipline (apparently decided upon by group members). Women supported the men's
protest action in Same by shouldering the men's normal workload in the villages, as required, and organizing and sustaining a supply line of food and other essentials going to Same. In addition, the women were making frequent visits to the local courts to put political pressure on their chiefs to settle the dispute.

One important question posed by the inquiry was, how much independence did the women have to make their own decisions and control their own activities during the protest? Although colonial officials in Tanganyika could not imagine that women were acting on their own, there is evidence that the Pare women's groups actually had a high degree of autonomy to make their own decisions and to take action on their own initiative. As Mama Tapita Azaeli of Ugweno said, "At that time men used to meet to discuss issues concerning them... And women used to meet to discuss issues concerning them" (See also Mzee Kiangi's testimony in Chapter 5). Of course the women did not act in isolation. We learned that men and women were constantly consulting about the kind of political initiatives to take.

After identifying some of the cultural resources available to Pare women in the 1940s, I wanted to learn whether Pare women continue to have access to the resources that will enable them to fulfill their multiple productive and reproductive roles in society. More research is needed to learn how the cultural resources to which contemporary rural
Pare women have access compare to those available to Pare women in the 1940s, and whether development initiatives are helping women gain, maintain, and increase their access to available resources.

In my graduate program I read many studies of development projects—even some heralded as very successful based on economic indicators—that have not benefited women at all, if women’s economic welfare and basic family needs were measured. Some "development" has even created new problems for women. The Mwea Irrigation Scheme in Kenya’s Central Province is one such case. I have chosen to discuss the Mwea project here because it illustrates some of the challenges involved in successful development for women.

In this project a large area of dry plateau was successfully turned into land for rice cultivation, large numbers of landless peasants were settled on the scheme (more than 3,000 from the 1950s to 1966), and the scheme turned a regular profit (Wisner 1982:5). It is easy to understand why, based on these economic indicators, the Mwea scheme was viewed as a success. However, a research team in the 1970s found that many women had abandoned the project and others were seriously discontented. The research report disclosed that development plans had not taken into account women’s socially-defined economic activities and responsibilities or the necessary facilities that would be required for people to live comfortably on the scheme (Lewis 1984:181).
In that part of Africa, women are normally responsible for growing family food and obtaining supplies of water and fuelwood. At Mwea, land for family food production was available only at a distance, and it was of poor quality; fuelwood was available only at local markets—at a price. Only men had legal status on the project, and men received the cash payments for rice production, in spite of the fact that women did a large part of the productive work and needed cash to buy food and fuelwood. Additionally, water supplies on the scheme were polluted, and children's health had been adversely affected. Because of all these factors, women found themselves in an untenable position, a position that appears to fit Smith's description of a woman's "odd role, lacking authority and over-burdened with responsibility for outcomes over which in fact she has little control" (1987:22).

During the fieldwork period, people told us that Pare women were expected to be very patient and not to complain. Was part of the problem at Mwea that women's opinions were not solicited in the planning and implementation stages, or were their opinions given but not taken seriously? Did women have any way to state their complaints? It appears that rules of discourse can either facilitate or impede women's access to cultural resources.

The Empowerment of Women

I chose to include a rather lengthy narrative of Mbiru in this dissertation, incorporating a considerable amount of my
data on the women’s participation into what was already recorded about the protest because I was convinced that this kind of history has the potential to empower women. This conviction was based partly on my readings about the women’s history movement and also on the effect the Mbiru story had on the three members of the research team and the other Tanzanian women with whom we discussed it. It was obvious that the story of Mbiru was in some way significant to a number of women who heard about it. What was it about this story that had a special effect? Did it have meaning for us because it portrays women as agents of change rather than as victims of circumstances, and that each of us as a woman considered the story of these special women to be in some way our own story? Jill Ker Conway describes students’ response to a new course she initiated at the University of Toronto on the subject of women’s history.

What fascinated everyone was that we were showing that an historical narrative could be constructed using the records created by so-called inarticulate women, and that to use these records suggested profound questions of reinterpretation for the standard chronology and periodization of the past. "What excites me," I heard a woman student say..., "is that I’m seeing myself as the subject of history. That means I can change it if I like" (1994:201).

However, when it comes to the Mbiru story, we learned that some Pare women, both participants and non-participants in the protest, have chosen not to discuss the women’s protest actions. It is clear that at least some women do not view the telling of this story as a cultural resource that empowers
women. Additionally, two experiences that I had challenged me to reexamine my ideas about the consequences of telling the women’s Mbiru story.

On two occasions when I talked with Tanzanian women (all of whom were actively involved in development for women) about the female threatening/cursing sequence as women’s power, my comments were met with a stony silence. In hindsight it is not difficult to see that those particular women found the categories of "women’s power" and "curse" incongruous. My previous analysis explains some of the reasons for this perception. These experiences showed me how important it is to provide an appropriate context for this story, a context that would give people the opportunity for questioning the boundaries of their categories. There is another piece of this complexity that needs attention.

It may be that the power in these practices (like "kufololotia") may be enhanced by the fact that they are rarely talked about. Just recently a Nigerian couple told me that there has been "a lot of talk" in Nigeria about the possibility that women might "walk naked" as a means of resolving the political stalemate in that country. Perhaps this example reveals the real power in this kind of women’s political action. It could be that the power of "kufololotia" is not in an historical recalling of the women’s use of this practice, as I am doing as part of an academic discourse. The power lies in the murmurings and rumors about whether women
might actually take this action, in the threatening, in rumored posturing, that is, in metacommunications about a possible curse. Such a discourse is very different from that of women's history that I have characterized as empowering for women. Part of the potency of this practice is because it is hard to pin down. It is interesting to realize that women generally know about these practices and how to use them, and yet the process by which they learn what they know about them is not easy to trace. As someone attempting to open a discourse about these practices, I wonder what the result will be if these practices are more openly discussed. Does the power these practices embody diminish if well-kept secrets about them are revealed?

This discussion reveals the importance of research like this on women's political culture. Those interested in reaching women with development must have better information about the structure of women's lives, the ways in which women communicate, and the incongruities involved with women's power, such as the incongruities attached to the practice of "kufololotia," as we have seen. A study of social organization, discourse patterns, and one cultural practice reveals something about how things work (and do not work) in a community. If development planners had at least this kind of basic information available to them, and they paid attention to it, perhaps we would be writing more success
stories, in contrast to reports like the one about the shortcomings of the Mwea Scheme.

Attempts to design a better model of development reveal just how difficult this task can be. On the one hand, for development to be sustainable, programs must be sensitive to existing social structures and cultural practices, rather than superseding, replacing, or exploiting local ways of doing things. One would hope that an emphasis on initiatives that are appropriate locally, as opposed to foreign models, would lead to development that can be sustained. On the other hand, a progressive model targeted for women would have to recognize and acknowledge that patriarchal structures pervade the whole world, that the gender inequality that exists is for the most part ignored (Rogers 1983:39), and that development programs for women must find ways to challenge inequality, not make accommodations with it.

There are a number of interesting directions in which this research might be taken. I will mention two, both of which have to do with language behavior within the general field of sociolinguistics, a field of study concerned with the social role of language. The first has to do with women’s communications within a Pare community before a large number of men migrated out. In this kind of community, power and authority were dispersed in relationship to people’s status and roles. More information is needed in order to understand
how women's roles and women's power were related to discourse patterns.

One would assume that women's views had to be considered because of the community's dependence on women for the production of food and the reproduction of the next generation of community members. What were the patterns for women's speech (communication)? Were women excluded from speaking in public or were some women allowed to participation in public discourse, for example, elderly women who attained an elevated status at a certain age? What mechanisms were available for women who wanted to influence events? What channels could women use for communicating their ideas and opinions? Although the Pare to whom we talked generally agree that women are expected not to complain, in fact we learned about cultural practices available for women to use when they want to register what we recognized as a form of complaint. In addition, although women are expected to be passive and patient, we learned that there are ways for women to signal their anger or impatience.

Did women participate in some discourses by listening in public and speaking only behind the scenes? Turton writes about a situation with the Mursi in Ethiopia that might provide insights on this point (1975). Turton learned that religious leaders in the community did not take part in public meetings and he concluded that their special status and claims to power in part depended on their nonparticipation in certain
aspects of public life. Further research could investigate whether there is a similar relationship between Pare women and public discourse. Could it be that women’s status and power is enhanced rather than diminished by their absence from public debate? We do not want to make the mistake of assuming that the only kind of action occurs on the public stage. Goffman’s idea of "front" and "back" stage behavior (1959) would be a valuable tool for further research. A recognition that front- and backstage are both valid locales for communication was helpful to me in analyzing "kufololotia."

A second intriguing entry area for further inquiry is the concept of language domains as developed by Fishman (1986). In his studies of multilingual communities (as Pare society certainly is), Fishman determined that there are different domains in which diverse language codes are used. He extended a schema originally developed by Greenfield, a schema based on five domains: family, friendship, religion, education, and employment. (The addition of a political domain to cover the government/party/development arena would make this model workable in the Pare case.) According to Fishman, language use is further regulated by three additional factors: topic, role relations, and locale. Thus a multilingual speaker uses various codes depending on the sociocultural setting (domain), the role relationships among participants, the topic being discussed, and the actual physical location of the encounter.
Fishman's schema could serve as a base for asking further questions about Pare women's language behavior. Are rural Pare women limited to participation in family and friendship domains and excluded from participation in the public domains: religious, education, employment, and political? Are women socialized to participate in these public domains only as listeners? Is women's construction of self intertwined with role expectations which are played out in, and limited to, the family domain? Considering women's role as wife and mother, producer and reproducer, women's role in the family domain could be viewed as a dominant role, perhaps the dominant role, in that particular setting. Is women's dominant role in the family an excuse for restricting women's participation in the public domains? Is it considered inappropriate for women to translate the communicative skills used and perfected in the family domain to other domains, or have women been constrained by strict norms of behavior that apply only to women, limited opportunities, and ideology from even thinking of participating in other domains? Does the interrelationship between identity, domain, and language give women considerable power within the family domain (see Myerhoff 1978), but prevent the development of communication competence necessary for participation as speakers in the public domains? Is women's power restricted by this limitation, and if so, in what ways?
A new inquiry would seek to understand better the domains that existed in precolonial society and those that exist now, and the relationship between them. There are reasons to believe that there were basically two domains in precolonial Pare society. These could be designated as "domestic" and "larger than domestic." All activities, i.e., family, social, educational, economic, political, and religious were carried out within these overlapping community domains.

Certainly the makeup of domains shifted during the colonial period, substantively and permanently. Because the relationship between the domestic domain and whatever is not domestic has changed greatly, as this research argues, the domestic domain could not continue to be the same. Whereas the domain structure was fairly stable in the earlier period, the current construction appears to be unstable, in process. The overarching question that would frame this research would be, how have women's lives been affected by this change in domains.

This issue has an interesting bearing on the discussion in Chapter 1 about what the term "tradition" stands for. The current public domains in Tanzanian life are in large part new constructions--some would erroneously call them "modern". Although the domestic domain is not intact--indeed it has changed greatly--some persist in thinking of it as traditional, that is, unchanged. The promotion of the correlation between women and tradition is used by some men in
Tanzania who want to control women. Some Tanzanians working in the development arena similarly promote the correlation between women and tradition as one means of identifying themselves as "modern" and creating distance between themselves and peasant life.

These two additional areas of research would seek to understand how the changing construction of domains is related to women's use of language as a resource. According to William O'Barr, language must be considered as a major resource in the political process (1976A:7). In this case, O'Barr is using political process in the broadest sense to indicate politics in all domains of social life. New research should not limit its concerns to the persuasive function of rhetoric in speech, but also be interested in the persuasive function of other forms of communications which combine ritual practices, body language, enforced silences, and deliberate non-response, for example. This kind of research would get closer to understanding how women influence events and negotiate for power.

Notes

1. Interview in Ugweno, 10/5/90.

2. Parkin writes,

Counterpoised to [the] fixed terms of the elite are the more variable expressions which question established assumptions. They are the murmurings of a shadowy counterimage. They are the property of the mute categories, to use Ardener's concept, which strive to attain the articulateness of those who dominate them (1984:362).
3. Writing about esoteric practices," which he calls Dagara (his ethnic group in Burkina Faso) technology, Some believes that the potency of these practices is related to their secrecy being maintained.

...the very existence of the technology practiced by secret societies depends upon its members’ silence. To the Dagara, the esoteric is a technology that is surrounded by secrecy. Those who know about it can own it only if they don’t disclose it, for disclosure takes the power away. Through Nyangoli [a friend] I had learned of the villagers’ inability to discuss esoteric knowledge and of their love and respect for the hidden. This had taught me to be less vocal about certain subjects that I perceived were not supposed to be talked about (1994:60-1,212).
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWS

FORMAT: Name, (age, many are estimates), Identification. 
Date of interview, Location, Language/s used, 
Interviewer/s: AN - Aissia Ngadaya; MM - Margaret Mshana; 
ND - Nancy Dorsey.

The research team interviewed a total of 159 people: 96 
women and 63 men.

Interviews about Mbiru included: 25 women who had gone to the 
chiefs' courts; 13 men who had gone to Same; 16 Pare (11 
women, 5 men) whose parents had gone either to Same or the 
courts; 3 children and 2 grandchildren of Chief Sabuni and 
Chief Minja; 7 who were government officials during Mbiru; 6 
who were teachers during Mbiru. There were many other 
interviews in which Mbiru was a subject.

Interviews about contemporary life in Usangi included: 8 local 
officials (4 women, 4 men); 4 Lutheran pastors; 1 Muslim 
sheik; 3 school administrators; 1 current and 1 former MP 
(Member of Parliament); 9 women pottery makers and 2 pottery 
traders (1 woman, 1 man), and a number of people with 
connections to Usangi who lived outside the village.

Anonymous #1 (65), a man who went to Same; he requested that 
his name be withheld. 
9/25/90. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.

Anonymous #2 (c40), a woman in Usangi who requested that her 
name be withheld. 
10/7/90. Usangi. English, Kiswahili. ND.

Aloo, Fatma, Director of TAMWA (Association of Women 
Journalists). 

Anyotii, Salome, daughter of Gerson Marisa. 
4/21/91. Lusaka, Zambia. English. ND.

Ashighiwa, Mama Helena (90), woman leader in Ugweno; she went 
to chiefs' courts in Ugweno and Usangi. 
10/5/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.

Azaeli, Mama Tapita (c80), she went to chief's court in 
Ugweno. 
10/5/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.

Barunguza, Abduh, Director of SIDO (Small-scale Industries 
Development Organization), Usangi. 
5/20/91. Usangi. English. ND.
Besha, Ruth, Professor, Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam.
5/1/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.

Chacha, Lois, a school teacher.

Chachage, Demere, a professional working on women's programs with the Dutch international aid agency, in Dar es Salaam.

Daudi, Mama Amina (65), at age 20 in 1945, she went to chief’s court in Usangi.
9/29/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN, ND.

Deghesha, Mama Mwanamina (57), her mother went to chief’s court in Usangi; she took food to her mother there; her father went to Same; she carried food to Kisangiro for the men at Same.
10/3/90. Ugweno. Kipare AN, ND.

Elikana, Mzee Petro (c60), a retired civil servant.
10/4/90. Ugweno. English. ND.

Fanueli, Mama Ruti (70), she went to chiefs’ courts in Ugweno and Usangi.
10/5/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.

Filipo, Mama Navonahedi (79), her husband was a teacher in 1945; her mother went to chief’s court in Usangi; her father went to Same.
1/3/91. Usangi. Kipare. MM.

Fundisha, Mama Magdalena (82), she went to chief’s court in Usangi; her husband went to Same.
1/3/91. Usangi. Kipare. MM.

Gerson, Mzee Peter, he went to Same.

Hamisi, Mama Adija (c70), she went to chief’s court in Ugweno but was told to go home since she was pregnant; the baby was born during Mbiru and was named Namugingu (handcuffs); her husband went to Same.
10/6/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.

Hoseni, Mama Fatuma, a pottery maker.
5/21/91. Usangi. Kipare. AN.

Ismail, Mama Asia (60), a 15 year old girl in 1945; her mother went to court in Usangi.
9/17/90. Mwanga. Kiswahili and Kipare. AN, ND.

Isumaili, Mama Mwajuma (Sekirigwi) (73). See Women Dancers.

Jeremia, Mama Kominati, a pottery maker.
5/15/91. Usangi. Kipare, AN.
5/21/91. Usangi. Kipare. AN.

John, Mwalimu Jonathan (75), a school teacher in Usangi in 1945; he was transferred (exiled) to Central Province during Mbiru.
10/7/90. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.
Josia, Mama Haika (35).
6/12/91. Usangi. Kipare. MM.
Juaelli, Mama Dora (c65), she went to chief’s court in Usangi; her husband went to Same.
2/13/91. Usangi. Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Juma, Mama Amina, Local Chair of UWT (Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania).
9/21/90. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.
Juma, Mama Mwatumu (65), her mother went to chief’s court in Usangi; her father went to Same.
10/1/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN.
Juma, Mama Neteghenjwa (86). *See Women Dancers.
Justine, Mama Elipendizi (80), witness to events in Usangi.
9/18/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN, ND.
Kaasha, Mama Monica Luka (c60), daughter of Miriam Luka, one leader from Usangi.
1/6/91. Moshi. Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Kaasha, Mama Trufaina Luka (c60), daughter of Miriam Luka, one leader from Usangi.
1/6/91. Moshi. Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Kachenje, Mwajabu Possi, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Dar es Salaam.
10/9/93. Columbus, Ohio. English. ND.
Kalaghe, Mama Mwanamani Husein (c45), a pottery maker, she was born during Mbiru.
5/16/91. Usangi. Kipare. AN.
Kalaghe, Mama Mwanaisha Husein (co-wife with Mwanamani), a pottery maker.
5/16/91. Usangi. Kipare. AN.
Kaleya, Mwalimu Fanueli (80), former Lutheran teacher, school inspector.
9/15/90. Usangi. English, Kiswahili, AN, ND.
1/4/91. Usangi. Kiswahili. MM.
1/6/91. Usangi. English. ND.
1/18/91. Usangi. English. ND.
5/15/91. Usangi. English. ND.
Kange, Mama Happiness, Secretary to Katibu Tarafa (Village Secretary) in Usangi.
5/16/91. Usangi. English and Kiswahili. AN, ND.
Kangero, Nelson, Mkuu (Principal), at Lomwe Secondary School, Usangi.
6/5/90. Usangi. English. ND.
Kasela, Sharifa.
4/10/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Kassim, Sherbanu, (Chagga) lawyer and administrator, University of Dar es Salaam.
3/1/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Kiangi, Mzee Mrema (c80), he went to Same; his wife went to chief’s court in Ugweno.
10/5/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.
1/15/91. Ugweno. Kipare. MM, ND.
Kijo, Rhoda.
5/24/91. Usangi. English. ND.
Kimambo, Isaria N., Professor of History, University of Dar es Salaam.
9/6/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
5/1/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Kime, Mzee, restaurant owner in Lushoto, a witness to events in South Pare.
10/13/90. Lushoto. English. ND.
Kinanja, Mama Saliha (c85), a leader in Ugweno, she went to chiefs’ courts in Ugweno and Usangi; she had a baby during that time and named him Masumbuko (problems).
10/6/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN.
Kiritiano, Mama Priskila (85), she went to chief’s court in Usangi; her husband went to Same.
10/3/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN.
Kisengua, Mama Mariamu (over 80), she was pregnant in 1945 but she went to chief’s court in Ugweno; she was told to return home, had a baby and named the baby Namugingu (handcuffs); her husband went to Same.
10/6/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.
Kisumo, Peter, Executive, Tanzania Sugar Corp, former MP (Member of Parliament).
1/7/91. Moshi. English. MM, ND.
Kita, Mzee Hassani (89), a relative of Chief Minja; he went to Same; his wife went to chief’s court in Usangi.
1/18/91. Ugweno. Kipare and Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Kitia, Mzee Fundisha (86), he went to Same.
1/9/91. Usangi. Kipare. MM.
Koda, Bertha, Lecturer, Institute of Development Studies, University of Dar es Salaam.
5/1/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Kombe, Mzee Abdala (over 70), a pottery trader.
5/19/91. Ugweno. Kipare. AN.
Kulenge, Mama Hezena Hemedi, a pottery maker.
5/21/91. Kilimanjaro area. Kipare. AN.
Liana, Mzee Manyari Mareale Omari (71), he went to Same.
2/11/91. Usangi. Kiswahili. ND.
Lihamba, Dr. Amandina, Professor in Department of Art, Music and Theatre, University of Dar es Salaam.
5/7/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
MCH (Mother Child Health Clinic) staff, Usangi.
1/11/91. Usangi. English and Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Maeda, Mzee Asseri Yoeli (69), an agricultural officer working in Makumira in 1945; he came home to Usangi to visit and then joined the men at Same.
1/9/91. Usangi. Kipare, Kiswahili. MM.
Maeda, Mama Matulo, veterinary and agricultural officer in Usangi.
5/23/91. Usangi. English. AN, ND.
Makadi, Mzee Mohamed (over 100), Mlao (sub-chief) in Ugweno, collected mbiru taxes.
9/17/90. Mwanga. Kipare. AN.

Makuyo, Rhobi, an RN (registered nurse), the designer of a Red Cross program in Family Life Education.

Makuku, Mzee Eliezeri (95), he went to Same.
10/3/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN.

Mangare, Mama Mwanasharifa (75). *See Women Dancers.

Marisa, Josia, son of Gerson Marisa.
6/12/91. Usangi. Kipare and Kiswahili. MM.

Marisa, Rev. (53), Lutheran Pastor; as an eight year old, he heard his first gunshots when police fired into the air to frighten the women in Usangi.
2/8/91. Usangi. English. ND.

Marko, Adela.
5/21/91. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.

Marko, Mercy.
5/21/91. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.

Marko, Mama Neteghenjwa, a pottery maker.

Marko, Mwalimu Yese (70), a school teacher in Usangi during Mbiru; he was transferred (exiled) to Tabora.
9/27/90. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.

Mashashi, Mama Mwanaidi (77). *See Women Dancers.

Mavura, Mzee Yusufu (80), a retired government health worker.
9/28/90. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.

Mbao, Mama Hadija.
6/12/91. Usangi. Kipare and Kiswahili. MM, ND.

Mbati, George, Secretary General of SUDECO (Sugar Development Company).

Mbati, Mzee Godwin (c70), a retired civil servant.
10/10/90. Usangi. English. ND.

Mbati, Mama Naetweeli (63), daughter of Mlao (sub-chief) in Usangi, her mother went to chief's court in Usangi.
9/28/90. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.

Mbati, Peter Philip (58), his father, a teacher in Usangi, did not go to Same; Peter witnessed events in Usangi.

Mbia, Mwalimu Ibrahim, Assistant Head, TTC, Teachers' Training College, Usangi; born in Mamba, South Pare.
10/11/90. Usangi. English, Kiswahili. AN, ND.

Mbele, Dr. Joseph, Professor, Literature Department, University of Dar es Salaam.
11/13/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.

Mbura, Mama Niwaeli Shishira, she went to Same with other women to visit their husbands; her husband went to Same.
1/91. Interviewed by Amon Msuya in Chôme, South Pare. Kipare.
Mbuya, Hedwiga, Women-in-Development program officer, USAID.

Mbwana, Mzee Sefu (90), Mnjama (chief minister) in Usangi during Mbiru.
9/20/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN, ND.

Mcharo, Mzee Omari, (90), he went to Same.
10/3/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND

Mgaya, Anna (57), daughter of Mwalimu Kaleya; witnessed events in Usangi; she was 12 years old in 1945.
12/6/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.

Mgaya, Mama Jamesina (56), retired nurse (RN).

Mgaya, Philemon (c65), retired Inspector General of Police, Tanzania; his father, a Lutheran pastor, and his mother, a close friend of the Sabuni family, did not participate in Mbiru because of their ties to the chief.
12/6/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.

Mgaya, Mama Upendo (76), witness to events in Same.
9/24/90. Usangi. Kipare and Kiswahili. AN, ND.
10/15/90. Usangi. Kipare and Kiswahili. AN, ND.
10/18/90. Usangi. Kipare and Kiswahili. AN, ND.
2/13/91. Usangi. Kipare and Kiswahili. MM, ND.

Mgonza, Mzee Joseph (71) in 1945 he worked for Moshi Trading Company; he gave his entire month’s salary in support of the protest.
10/4/90. Ugweno. Kiswahili. AN.

Mikaeli, Mama Enitwaa.
5/27/91. Ugweno. Kiswahili and English. AN, ND.

Mikaeli, Mama Esteri (76), she did not go to chief’s court because she had a small baby; her husband went to Same.
10/4/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.

Minja, Mzee Hassani, son of Chief Minja.
1/15/91. Ugweno. Kipare, Kiswahili, English. MM, ND.
1/18/91. Ugweno. Kipare, Kiswahili, English. MM, ND.

Mjema, Miriam.
11/26/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.

Mkindi, Mwalimu Abdi Athumani (53), son of Namshali Shedehwa, one leader in Usangi.
2/3/91. Usangi. English, Kiswahili. ND.

Mkindi, Mama Ridhaa Iddi (40). *See Women Dancers.

Mlama, Dr. Penina, Chief Academic Officer, Professor in Department of Art, Music and Theatre, University of Dar es Salaam.
5/7/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.

Mleche, Mama Alima (over 80), she went to chief’s court in Usangi.
9/26/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN.

Mmari, Alice, Director, Family Life Education, Red Cross.
Mndeme, Rev. Mathias, Professor, Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, born in Mbagga, South Pare.
5/31/91. Makumira. English. ND.
6/92. Columbus, Ohio. English. ND.
Mnero, Mama Mwanaidi. a pottery maker.
5/21/91. Usangi. Kipare. AN.
Mramba, Israel Julius, a restaurant owner in Usangi; a member of the Usangi Village Council.
5/15/91. Usangi. English. ND.
Mrindoko, Mama Haika Malaki (75), she went to chief’s court in Usangi, her arm was broken when police chased women.
9/19/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN, ND.
Mrisha, Rev. Walter, Lutheran Pastor, Usangi.
2/9/91. Usangi. English. ND.
Msami, Mama Zubeda Hasani (c65), she went to chief’s court in Ugweno although she had a small baby.
10/5/90. Ugweno. Kiswahili. AN, ND.
Msangi, Mack, an engineer/businessman in Usangi.
12/31/90. Usangi. English. ND.
Msamo, Dr. Gloria, DMO (District Medical Officer), Director of Usangi Hospital.
6/6/91. Usangi. English. ND.
Mshana, Bishop Eliewaha (64), Bishop of the Same Diocese of the Lutheran Church; he was a new teacher in Usangi in 1945.
1/30/91. Same. English. MM, ND.
Mshana, Mama Saidina.
6/12/91. Usangi. Kipare and Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Mshana, Margaret (58), research partner; Program Director, Lutheran Church, Moshi; her father was a teacher and a leader of the protest in Usangi; she remembers secret, late night, pre-protest meetings at her house in which men from Ugweno and South Pare met with local male leaders.
1/5/91. Usangi. English. ND.
1/16/91. Usangi. English. AN, ND.
2/13/91. Usangi. English. ND.
Msofe, Sheik Miraji Said (61), a leader of the Muslim community, Usangi; his mother went to chief’s court in Usangi; his father went to Same.
Msuya, Amon, grandson of Chief Minja.
9/7/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Msuya, Honorable Cleopa, MP (Member of Parliament) from Usangi, Tanzanian Cabinet Minister.
5/12/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Msuya, George.
9/9/90. Usangi. English. ND.
Msuya, Mama Perpetua (c55), her mother went to chief’s court in Usangi; her father went to Same.
2/11/91. Moshi. Kiswahili. AN. ND.
5/17/91. Moshi. Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Mturi, Mzee Aza (80), court clerk to Chief Sabuni.
9/18/90. Usangi. Kipare, Kiswahili, English. AN, ND.
Muhamadi, Mama Mwanasha (over 80), she went to chief’s court in Usangi. (co-wife).
Muhamadi, Mama Mwajuma (80), she went to chief’s court in Usangi. (co-wife).
9/26/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN.
Mvungi, Dr. Abdi, Lecturer, Sociology Department, University of Dar es Salaam.
11/21/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Mwishwa, Mzee Petro (c80), he went to Same.
10/6/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.
Ndaalio, Augusta.
Ndama, Mzee Justine (90), court messenger to Chief Sabuni.
9/18/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN, ND.
Ndoile, Mzee Ali (80), court messenger in Ugweno; he collected mbiru taxes for Minja; he was against the protest.
1/15/91. Ugweno. Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Ngadaya, Aissia, research partner; administrator in the College of Commerce, University of Dar es Salaam; her mother had a small baby and did not go to the chief’s court; her father went to Same.
9/90. English. MM, ND.
Ngido, Mama Fatuma (Binti Ngido), (over 80), she went to chief’s court in Usangi.
9/16/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN, ND.
Ng’maryo, Eric, (Chagga) lawyer, poet and novelist in Moshi.
5/28/91. Moshi. English. ND.
Ngomoi, Mzee Ali Kinayashi (79), driver for the chiefs, based in Same during Mbiru.
1/31/91. Same. Kiswahili. MM, ND.
Njaritta, Mwalimu Hamisi, was a schoolboy at the Native Authority (NA) School in Usangi during Mbiru.
10/14/90. Usangi. English, Kiswahili. AN, ND.
Njaritta, Jumanne, owner of Kariakoo Market, Usangi.
10/90. Usangi.
Njaritta, Halifa (53), his mother went to chief’s court in Usangi; his father went to Same.
10/16/90. Usangi. Kiswahili, English. AN, ND.
Nyangarika, Steven, Katibu Tarafa (Division Secretary) in Usangi; his mother is a pottery maker.
5/25/91. Usangi. Kiswahili, English. AN, ND.
Omari, Dr. C.K. (54), Professor, Sociology Department, University of Dar es Salaam; his mother went to chief’s court.
10/29/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
11/20/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
5/10/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Ombeni, Mama (36), Head Teacher at Msangeni Primary School in Ugweno; born in South Pare; her grandfather went to Same.
10/4/90. Ugweno. English. AN, ND.
Petro, Mama Natonjwahedi (75), she did not go to Minja’s court because she was pregnant; her husband went to Same. 10/6/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN, ND.
Qorro, Martha, Lecturer in Communications, University of Dar es Salaam. 3/26/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Rugumyamheto, Alice. 10/15/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Sabuni, Agnes (45), granddaughter of Chief Sabuni; an administrator at the University of Dar es Salaam. 11/16/90. Dar es Salaam. Kiswahili. AN.
Sabuni, Mzee Francis (c60), son of Chief Sabuni. 9/25/90. Usangi. English. AN, ND.
Sabuni, Mzee Onesmo, son of Chief Sabuni. 10/16/90. Usangi. English. AN, ND.
Sembua, Mama Nanzia (c65), witnessed events in Usangi; she had two small children including a baby and did not go to the chief’s court. 10/1/90. Ugweno. Kipare. AN.
Sembua, Mzee Ramadhani (80), he went to Same. 10/7/90. Ugweno. Kipare, AN.
Seti, Mama Kezia (63), she was 18 years old in 1945, she went to the chief’s court in Usangi. 9/29/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN, ND.
Sewangi, S., Lecturer at Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam, his father (whom we interviewed) went to Same, his mother went to chief’s court in Ugweno. 4/10/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Shaidi, Dr. Leonard, Department of Law, University of Dar es Salaam. 11/20/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Shayo, Rose, Lecturer in Institute of Development Studies, University of Dar es Salaam. 9/6/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Shishira, Elieho K., Institute of Resource Assessment, University of Dar es Salaam. 11/7/90. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Simeon, Mzee Fanueli Kavugha (75), Lutheran school teacher in Ugweno during Mbiru. 10/4/90. Ugweno. English. ND.
6/6/91. Ugweno. English. ND.
Sirieli, Mama Helena.
6/16/91. Usangi. Kipare. AN.
Solomon, Florence, a pottery trader.
10/17/90. Usangi. Kiswahili. AN, ND.
5/15/91. Usangi. Kipare. AN.
Tekina, Mzee Richard (70), shop owner in Same; during Mbiru he
left his job in Kisangara to join the men protesters in
Same.
1/30/91. Same. Kipare and Kiswahili. MM.
Tenga, Nakazaeli, lawyer.
5/1/91. Dar es Salaam. English. AN, ND.
5/6/91. Dar es Salaam. English. ND.
Tuvana, Mwalimu Solomon (c65), a school teacher in Ugweno; he
walked to Same where he was told that teachers should
keep the schools open; he slept a few hours and returned
home.
10/6/90. Ugweno. English. ND.
Women Dancers.¹
1/10/91. Usangi. Kipare. MM, ND.
2/14/91. Usangi. Kipare. MM, ND.
Yeremia, Mama Nafikahedi (70-75), she went to chief’s court in
Usangi; her husband went to Same.
10/2/90. Usangi. Kipare. AN.
Yohane, Mama Salome (c100), she went to chiefs’ courts in
Ugweno and Usangi; her husband went to Same.
10/6/90. Ugweno. Kigweno. AN, ND.

Note
1. The women dancers: Mama Mwanaidi Mashashi, Mama Mwanasharifa
Mangare, Mama Halima (Majwii) Salimu, Mama Mwanajuma (Sekirigwi)
Ismaili, Mama Neteghenjwa Juma, Mama Mwanaidi Ramadhani, Mama
Hadija Shabani, Mama Ridhaa Iddi Mkindi (Rasuli).
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW TEXTS

(See Chapter 4 for analysis of these four interview texts.)

Mama Helena Ashighiwa

This is Aissia's text constructed after the interview (not recorded) with Mama Helena. The text begins with Aissia's introductory notes. Notes in parentheses are Aissia's comments and explanations. ND's notes: in brackets.

Ashighiwa, Mama Helena #38
(10/5/90
She is about 90
At her home at Fumbuan'gombe, Kifula. She has 10 children, 6 sons and 4 daughters. She was a woman leader during the Mbiru protest. She went to both Ugweno and Usangi. Kipare; AN, ND Currently she is living with her blind, paralyzed husband, over 100 years old, her son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. One teenage grandchild is severely handicapped, another an albino and 2 have eye problems [ND:i.e., cross-eyed]. The family's poverty is severe.)

[ND. In shade outside jiko--kitchen building. Daughter-in-law and young children listening. A marching band is practicing at a school across the valley. Helena and AN dancing. Helena got up several times to demonstrate a point, went and got a ruler to show how police beat women on buttocks with flat sticks. According to custom, we visited her blind, paralyzed husband before we left. After Aissia and I had given Helena our small gifts (400 shillings:c$2 and a headscarf), she said "God is good to me that someone from so far away has come to visit me in my home." When we left, Helena walked with us along the road for more than a mile.]

Mama Helena: Mbiru started when men went to Same during the war. When they stayed there for a long time we decided to follow them. I was the woman leader. I would yell,
"Uwi! Vache vose na kwa Minja. Bwana shauri eneza."
(Kipare: Uwi! All women should go to Minja’s The DC is coming.)

**AN**: Who told you that the DC was coming?

**Mama Helena**: Msangeni women [the village where Chief Minja’s court is located]. All women went to Minja’s court and the DC came. Then we asked him, "Vome vetu veza rini" (Kipare: When are our husbands coming back)? He responded that they will come back soon. We spent the whole night singing and dancing at the court. We sang traditional songs (not Christian or Muslim). In the morning the DC wanted to leave but we stopped the car. We threw stones at the car and broke the glass. Chief Minja asked the women to let the DC go as the men would soon come back. The DC was therefore allowed to go. In the following week we heard a yell from Usangi,

"Uwi. Vache vose na kwa Sabuni. Pringle eza Vusangi kutuwirwa iti vome vetu veza rini."
(Kipare: Uwi! All women should go to Sabuni’s. Pringle is coming to Usangi to tell us when our husbands are coming back.)

Women (including myself) went to Usangi. At Usangi we found Usangi women already there. We spent the whole night singing traditional songs and dancing. Some women were dancing with sticks turned upside down. This is very bad. It means death to the person to whom it is directed.

A man called Andrea of Usangi told us that Pringle would come the following day with police. He told us not to be afraid. He further said, "The police are carrying flat pieces of sticks (mapau) to frighten you. Don’t run away until the DC tells you when your husbands will come back."

Then the DC came with the police. He asked me, "Unatoka wapi" (Kiswahili: Where do you come from)? I answered that I came from Ugweno. He gave orders to the askaris to chase us away. They used the sticks to hit us on the buttocks. Women ran away crying. Some fell in the process hurting themselves. I didn’t run. I remained there standing up. Then one policeman came to me and asked, "Unafanya nini" (Kiswahili: What are you doing)? and I responded, "Nimechoka" (Kiswahili: I am tired). Then I left and found some of the Ugweno women on the way. That was the end of Mbiru as far as women were concerned. Later men returned from Same and Mbiru ended.

**AN**: Were women instigated? (Kipare: Vache vetetumwa kuandamana, literally, women -- were they asked -- to make a procession)?

**Mama Helena**: No. We wanted our husbands back. We were not sure of their security and there was too much work for women to do.

**AN**: Do you talk to your children and grandchildren about Mbiru?

**Mama Helena**: No. They don’t ask. They are not interested.
AN: What were your responsibilities as a woman leader?
Mama Helena: Yelling, leading women during the protest and making sure women responded to yells. In fact I was a church elder even before Mbiru and I was one of the first Christians of Kifula. I was baptized at Shighatini before Kifula church was built.
AN: Did you attend mission schools?
Mama Helena: Yes. I can read and write.

Abdi Athumani Mkindi: Son of Mama Namshali Shedehwa

This text is the transcription of the tape-recorded interview. A few sections are summarized because they had no bearing on this research. At a few points, it seemed that the interview was ending, and I turned the recorder off, only to find the conversation continuing, in which case I turned the recorder on again. These places are marked (Off and On).

Mkindi, Mwalimu Abdi Athumani #64, TAPED #18
2/3/91
At ND’s house in Usangi
ND
53 years old
Mostly in English, a little Kiswahili. At one point, when Abdi was struggling to find words in English for what he wanted to say, I suggested that he use Kiswahili, if he chose, which he did. Abdi teaches primary school: mathematics, Kiswahili and political education in Usangi. He is the third born child of Namshali Shedehwa, one of the two main woman leaders in Usangi during Mbiru. He and an older brother are the only surviving children of Namshali who died in 1980 at the age of 60, making her 25 in 1945. Abdi was 8 years old at the time of Mbiru.

ND: (Introduction: two women leaders of Mbiru protest activities in Usangi, Miriamu Luka and Abdi’s mother, etc. I told him about the recent interview with Miriamu’s daughters in Moshi.)
Part of the story that we’re interested in is that oftentimes when stories about protests are told, they write about what the men did. But the women in Usangi and Ugweno were very tough, and they participated in this protest in very serious ways.
Abdi: Yes.
ND: And so, we’re interested to find out not only about the women’s actions, but about the women leaders, what kind of
people they were. Now, you’re too young. You weren’t born yet during Mbiru?
Abdi: No, I was born. I was in Standard 1. I was almost eight years, as I can remember.
ND: So you maybe remember a little.
Abdi: I can remember very little.
ND: Do you know when your mother was born?
Abdi: Well, she died in 1980. I think she was 60 years. At the time of Mbiru she was a very young woman. I was the third child of my mother.
ND: In 1945 when you were eight years old, how many children did she have?
Abdi: She had a total of four children. Two have died.
ND: Please tell anything you remember about the period of Mbiru.
Abdi: Umm. First of all, what I can remember. My mother was appointed, like a chairman, in this village here. She held one meeting up there somewhere at a place called Kwanakimbu. She collected women there and they donated some money, they started to make a fund. Each woman, as far as I can remember, she donated 10 cents. That money, they collected just because,... suppose when they go to Mbiru, in case if you get injured, that money you can get as assistance. Now, they collected that money. And, as far as she told me, one day DC, I can’t remember his name, I think it was Mr. Pringle, he came here because Chief Sabuni had been detained by women there in the court for at least two days. Now all women from this village and other villages, they came, they made him not to go home. After two days, so he is to give information to Same to need an assistance from the DC. So the DC came with some few policemen. He tried to disperse these women but unfortunately he failed. So by that time he was hungry, so he went to a certain house that was thatched with banana leaves there, and...to take a meal, an afternoon meal. But the women didn’t allow him, so they took that food and they threw it away. As I’m told, but this...I didn’t get that from my mother, but many women told me that my mother beat the DC. But this really, I didn’t ask my mother.
ND: But you heard that story.
Abdi: I heard that story. So the DC went out. He entered into his car. He wanted to drive it, but my mother told all the women to catch the car so that he couldn’t move. But later on, they found that they couldn’t hold the car. So they let him go on. He went. Between Store Mombasa there, before you reach the Store Mombasa, school boys, those from Kiliveni where I was schooling, they put banana leaves [perhaps this means banana tree trunks which could have a diameter up to 8-10 inches and be as tall as 8-10 feet; this would be equivalent to placing logs on the road] on the way so that the DC couldn’t pass. Now they threw stones and broke his glass. But unfortunately he passed and then he went. By that time there was no road which passes through Fanuel Kaleya’s. The
road was this one. So he drove his car. When he reached there, a place called Mbagwe, he met another blockage on the road. So he went out of the car. He passed through the forest.

ND: The DC? Walking?
Abdi: Yes. So the people put fire around him so they could burn him, but by the time they put fire there, he had gone out. So he went to Same.

ND: You think he walked to Same?
Abdi: Yes. He walked through that forest and passed this way and went down to Kisangara and then got another car to send him to Same. Now, after that, my mother, as far as I was told, collected the other women and told them to go to Chief Sabuni's home. They went there. They slept there, singing all kinds of local or native songs, and playing, they were...they never went in the latrine when they wanted to help themselves [relieve themselves]. So they helped themselves [relieved themselves] outside near the door and other things.

ND: They were angry.
Abdi: Yes. Later on in the evening,...early in the morning, so the police were sent there to disperse these women, and most of them ran away after they have seen the police. They ran away and some were hurt. Some had children on their back. But they went. Very few were left there, as far as I've been told. Later on, the policemen were able to disperse those women and then they went home. That's as far as I can remember. If you have any question, you can just ask me.

ND: Do you remember seeing anything yourself? I mean, you were eight years old. Do you remember seeing the women meet? Do you remember the time when your mother was away and you knew something was going on? Do you have any special eight year old memories?
Abdi: Yes. I never attended any meeting. But as far as I remember, my mother, when she was going to attend these meetings, we were left at home with our grandmother. She was the one who is to find food for us, and some women went out, when they went to the meeting, they had some children on their back. Now they stayed there with no food. When it becomes time like this, my mother was, as the chairman, she had to be asked her permission for those women to go home to feed their children and then back. You can't move from that position without the permission. And they had two, we can say by-laws they had kept. Now when you said that all women had to attend the meeting, if you don't go out to attend that meeting, your banana leaves have to be cut or your house can be burned. So that frightened the people. All women had to go out, whether you like it or not. Now when those,...so suppose you had five or six children, you can't go with all of them. Some had to be left. If you had bigger children, they had to look after those children. Or if you had an old woman who can't walk, so she had to take care of those children. But all mothers had to attend the meeting.
ND: Very interesting. Do you remember seeing anything around the court? With your own eyes? Because it’s interesting. Everybody saw something different.
Abdi: I didn’t attend the meeting in the court myself but I was in the classroom. We saw trucks loaded with policemen who came and they passed there on their way to the chief’s house. We were in the class at that time. But after a very few minutes we saw women coming running. Now, because they were our mothers, we had to ask them what has happened. They told us that the policemen have come and they want to kill us. So everyone is trying to escape so that she might not be injured. Now I remember one woman, I asked her about my mother. She said I can’t tell where she is but I think she’s still there. (laughs) So she said your mother is still there. So by that time we went home to see if our mothers were back. But as far as I remember, my mother didn’t turn up that day until the next morning. That’s when I saw my mother.
ND: Do you remember worrying that she wasn’t home?
Abdi: Yes. She wasn’t at home. I was very much worried but when she came very early in the morning, I asked her why she didn’t come until the following day. She said we were there because we were the leaders so we have to see that everything is safe there.
ND: So she felt she had responsibilities.
Abdi: She had other responsibilities there.
ND: OK, that’s very interesting. Well, we are trying to find out why some women were chosen as leaders. Now your mother was pretty young, 25 years old.
Abdi: Yes.
ND: Why do you think she was chosen as leader?
Abdi: I asked this question after the death of my mother. That, how did you come to appoint my mother to become the leader of this place. She said, first, she knew how to read and write. By that time there were very few women who knew how to read and write. So she knew this. That was the first point. Another one -- she was tough.
ND: What’s the word in Kipare or Kiswahili for "tough"? Or how would they describe her in Kipare or Kiswahili?
Abdi: In Kiswahili "alikuwa imara, hodari" [Kiswahili: she was strong, firm, resolute, brave].
ND: Uh, huh, she had courage.
Abdi: And "ana jasiri" [Kiswahili: she was audacious, daring, bold]. She was very courageous. So that’s why they appointed her. She couldn’t fear white people. By that time to face a white person was very difficult.
ND: We’ve heard some funny stories. (both laugh)
Abdi: It wasn’t very easy to face a white person. And to collect people it needs some technique. So she had those techniques. And people could hear her.
ND: She had a strong voice?
Abdi: Yes.
ND: She wasn’t afraid of anything?
No. And then she was very fluent in talking to people. Yes. That's why they appointed her. She was part of a sub-chief's clan? And so in a way she was going against the chief's system. No. You know, people who were in the lineage of chiefdomship were Mbaqa. My mother is Mzaria. But still her father was sub-chief in that area. So he was in that lineage. Yes, she had to think seriously before she did this. Are there other stories about your mother, about her being tough? Tell me some other things about her, things you remember, times when she was tough, when she acted like you say. Anything you remember that makes you proud of her. She was very tough. Even before she died...how can I tell it in English? I’ll tell you what. I’m working with Margaret Mshana. Yes. You know her, she said she knew you. Just pretend to tell the story to her, use Kipare or Kiswahili, and I’ll record it, and she can translate it. Tell it in Kiswahili and I can follow. For a long time she has been living at Tanga. Still she was respected as one of the best women in that area where she was living. She was respected for many decisions and suggestions when some women wanted to, if they have any trouble or anything, they have to come to see her for any advice. Therefore she was a daring, brave, and thoughtful woman. These are the few things I can recall. She was very generous.

Now when you visited her house, you must not go out without getting something from her. Let's say, a cup of tea, or food, or something like that. So she was very generous. Now she always talked...she didn’t fear a person, even if you, suppose you do something wrong to her, she wouldn’t be afraid to tell you what you have done to her. She must always be very frank. And very fluent to tell you what you have done to
her. Yes. I think those are the major points which made her probably to be appointed as the leader during the Mbiru.
ND: That’s very young for her to be chosen by the other women. Very young. What was she like as a mother? You obviously got a very good education.
Abdi: No. None of us went very far. For myself, I completed Standard 8. I didn’t go any farther than that. And the firstborn died very early, I think when she was two. She sank in the water and unfortunately, she died. And the other one just completed Standard 6, and then he went for carpentry for five years, the work which he is doing up to this moment. My youngest sister died when she was very little.
(We talked a little about his teaching. He is close to retirement. Then Abdi brought us back to the subject of his mother.)
ND: Did she work in the shamba like most women?
Abdi: She had many shambas. She was a very hard-working woman.
ND: What about your father, did he go to Same during Mbiru?
Abdi: Yes, he was there.
ND: What did he think of your mother doing what she did?
Abdi: Ah, my father wasn’t against what my mother was doing. She inspired him and he had nothing to talk about her. Because you know that act [kufololotia] was not liked by many people.
ND: Some people thought it was too serious?
Abdi: Yes, they were very serious about it. So, anyone who was seen was against it. Nobody could hinder her from doing whatever she wants to do. So my father was not against it. He inspired even my mother to do what she was appointed by people to do.
ND: So he encouraged her.
Abdi: Yes, he encouraged her.
ND: And he wasn’t ashamed?
Abdi: No. And you’ve given me another point. My mother was not a shameful woman. No, she wasn’t.
ND: Tell me about her education.
Abdi: Her education. She just went to Standard 2, but still she could write well, she could make simple mathematics.
(Off and On. Then we moved on to the subject of the female curse.)
Abdi: I do it to threaten you.
ND: Well, that’s it, it’s a threat. It’s not really done much.
Abdi: Yes. Suppose if you wanted to take my shamba or something else, and if I wanted to threaten you so that you don’t take it. Then I tell you that I will do this.
ND: But it’s only a woman.
Abdi: But now, for the time being, women never do it.
ND: They don’t do it.
Abdi: No, unless if that woman is not... (and he made a gesture that I thought I understood).
ND: She's unbalanced.
Abdi: Yes.
ND: But a normal woman wouldn't do it anymore.
Abdi: No, they don't do it.
ND: There have been Christian women we have interviewed who say that it was not done during Mbiru. They are embarrassed to say that women did the female curse at Mbiru. And so, in the Muslim community it's not acceptable to do anymore?
Abdi: No, no, no. In Muslim, it's really very bad, very, very, very bad.
ND: But in 1945...
Abdi: I think it was done.
ND: We have people who tell us they did it.
Abdi: They did it, by that time, it was not a threat, not only a threat, but because their husbands all have gone to Same, and the women just remained here. So they thought that the chief had died. They didn't mean, they knew he was there,......but they said this chief is now dead.
ND: He wasn't acting like their leader.
Abdi: Yes. And when they do that thing it means that they want him to die. That's what they did because they were really very angry about their husbands being outside of their houses. So they tried to do everything which was unusual.
ND: Yes, that's the point, isn't it? They wanted everyone to know that they were very serious.
Abdi: Yes, serious.
(And then we moved on to talk about the practice of turning sticks upside down as a curse.)
Abdi: When we play our net games, we use it. Now when we overturn it like this, it's a bad sign to the person we're playing against him. Now we have our local games. Now when we play them we use this bamboo tree, we cut it, and we use it for playing our ordinary local games. But if now I want this thing to be bad for you, I overturn it.
ND: It means I give my opponent bad luck.
Abdi: Yes. It's bad luck to you. They did it to the chief. Now they did that because they thought the chief is dead. They were not interested for him to live any longer. Now this sign, when you have turned this, it is a sign to show that I don't want you to live any longer. That's why I've turned this upside down. We don't do this when we play, we put like this. The mouth looks up. Now when I mean something bad to you, I overturn it.
ND: But when you're playing in the game, under what circumstances would you ever do that? I mean that's serious.
Abdi: No. It's not serious. (We are not communicating on this point in English.)
ND: If you... OK let's say that you are a boy and you are playing a game, and one of the boys on the other team does that to you, what do you think it means?
Abdi: Unless there is hatred between me and him. If there is no hatred, it will not do anything bad. And this is only a superstition. I can’t tell how much it works. (We talked on about this issue without communicating very well. The point was that turning the stick upside down means there is some very bad feeling, and that one boy is wishing bad luck on the other. Perhaps this is like trying to get a psychological advantage over an opponent?)

Abdi: Now if this is seriously done to Wapares, we feel that something bad is going to happen to the person to whom that thing is done. That’s what we believe. Whether it happens or not.....

(Now we shifted to the belief that it is bad luck to count wealth or children.)

Abdi: Mostly, as we believe, we Pare, we never count children and cows. We just give them in numbers or in colors, but we never give a specific number, say three or four or five. We believe that if you count your cows, 1,2,3,4,5,6, they will die.

ND: So you still don’t do it. Even today, with your cows.

Abdi: No. To myself, now I can give you an exact number, 3,4,5. I don’t believe in that.

ND: OK, but at that time...

Abdi: But at that time, even if you go, you meet a very old man now with many cows, he won’t give you an exact number. It’s very bad to Pare,... Now if you enter in his herd and you start counting his cows, oh, it’s very bad.

ND: No wonder Mbiru was a problem.

Abdi: And that is one of the problems because they wanted for Wapare to give an exact number of his or her cows, something which is very bad with Pares. It’s what we believe. Whether there is any harm or not, we can’t tell. That’s what we believe. And even if you come to my children, I can just give you the names of my children, or I can say, but mostly, I can say I have two children but I can’t count them, 1,2,3. So that is one major problem which rose in Mbiru because Pares will never give the number of their cows.

(Off and on. Moved to the subject of solidarity among the men.)

Abdi: Now, it’s a bit interesting. People there (at Same), though they assembled many people from many different parts of Upare... You know that the good ones, the bad ones, were there. But even if you dropped just a shilling, it would be collected and it will be announced until it goes to the person who had lost it. That was very interesting. So no theft was there.

ND: Why do you think that happened?

Abdi: Well, I think it is due to the leadership of Mzee Paulo Mashambo. Yes. I think it was that man. Because they were there for one thing. They didn’t want anything to interrupt their side. And that man was very good in prayer. He was a Christian. He prayed all the time. But if somebody did
something bad here then something will happen to him. So they feared. And that’s what I heard about Mashambo. They lived there very, very peacefully.
(The last subject we discussed was the old Pare system of birth spacing. Abdi and I both commended the old ways in which children were born 4 to 5 years apart. He did not know why the system worked so well. He thinks it has been lost, that no one knows about it anymore.)

Trufaina and Monica Luka Kaasha: Daughters of Mama Miriamu Luka

The following text is a transcription of the interview tape. The interview contained both Kiswahili and English. An English translation of the Kiswahili part of the text is provided.

Kaasha, Mama Trufaina Luka #59 TAPED #8
Kaasha, Mama Monica Luka
1/6/91
Swahili/English
In their home on Kenyatta Street in Moshi
Margaret, ND

[Normally I never noticed anything unique she did, especially at the time I was a teacher in Usangi. And...at the time she was said to have led women during Mbiru, I was not around and never bothered to know mother’s issues. That’s the thing I was not informed about.]
Na nimejaribu kuzungumza wakati huo Mzuti aliipokuwa na aliiku wa mdogo. Alike wewe unavyosema kuwa aliiku wa anasema, na mambo yakitekea anasema aliikuwe po lakini anasema hawezi kukumbuka ilifanyika, isipokuwa anasema mtu ambaye labda anaweza kutupa mwangaza zaidi akeleza ni mwanamke gani alitangulia labda, Peter Kisumo.
[And I have tried to talk about the time when Mzuti was still young. He was studying as you had mentioned and cannot remember how things went. But he says Peter Kisumo is the person who can enlighten us on which woman was in the forefront (leader).]
MM: Tunakwenda kwake kesho.
[We will visit him tomorrow.]
Trufaina: Lakini mtu mwingine anaweza kueleza, kwa kweli mimi siwezi kueleza habari ya mama alifanyaje. [But I think someone else can describe the situation better. Honestly I cannot explain what mother did.]

MM: Lakini labda maisha ya mama yenu je mlimuonaje? Wewe kama malimu, umekuwa mwalimu na sasa mama kweli amekwenda ndiyo, lakini mama tulimuonaje ukilinganisha sasa na maisha ya wanawake kwa sasa hivi. Kwa mfano, maana yake leo asubuhi umesema mnaaposoma kwenye gazeti, mimi ninaposoma kwenye gazeti, au kwa mfano ukiona wanawake wengine kwenye matelevisheni na ukiwikia na vitu vinavyosemwa huko, unaka unasaema, "Ee kumbe na mama yangu naye..." [But how did you find your mother’s life? As a teacher, and now that your mother has passed away, how do you compare her life to current women’s lives? For example, when you read newspapers, watch television and see what other women do, or hear some issues being discussed, can you say, "Ee! So my mother was also..."]

Trufaina: Ilipotokea vurugu. [When there was a riot.]

MM: Aaa hata alivyokuwa, labda Monica na yeye kwa sababu... [Even the way she was, maybe Monica also because...]

Monica: Yaani anasema mama tulikuwa tunamuonaje? Alipokuwa anavyoishi. [She is saying, what did you think about Mother? What was her life like?]

MM: Ah, hata sasa hivi tunamfikiriaje. Alivyokuwa aki... akialivyolea watoto wake, anavyoishi na watu, aliyozungumza hata mambo ya Jumuiya au hata akishiriki. [Ah, even now, what do you think about her? How she was... How she brought up her children, her interaction with people, what she used to talk about, her involvement in the community.]

Trufaina: Nafahamu sana mama alishiriki sana mambo ya kanisa, kwa mfano, alishiriki kama mama wa kwa akipo na uongozi fulani ambao haukwandikwa mahali, kitu kama hicho. "Kwani mimi nilishasoma mambo kama hayo... Ni kitu ambacho kimenipita. Na" kama hicho kitabu cha Mbiru... [I know mother was involved in church affairs. For example, she was active in church and had certain leadership qualities that have not been documented anywhere. I have never read anything concerning those issues. It’s something that I have missed... and there’s the book about Mbiru.]

Monica: Katika maisha yangu mimi hayo niliyokuwa namuona si nilikuwa namuona ni mama mama wa kawaida pale nyumbani. Kwani niliyokuwa amefanya vitu gani vya zaadi katika maisha yangu niliyokuwa pale? Manake hivyo vitu vilipotokea sikuwepo sikuona kitu cha zaadi, laiti ningeukepo wakati ule wa mwanzo mwanzo au alivyokuwa, sikuona kitu ambacho alichokuwa akisema isipokuwa ni mama aliyekuwa ni mtu alikuwa haogopi kitu. Ni mtu ambaye huwezi kuja ukumuogopesha kwamba utafanya hivi,
akashituka kwamba "kwa sababu nimeambiwa hivi..." akaacha kufanya kitu chake kwa sababu atafanya.

[To me, mother was like any other woman around at that time. I did not see anything unique in her throughout my life at home because I was not around during all those happenings. Had I been around at home, those days... What I know is that she was a courageous woman who feared nothing in her life. She was never threatened by anybody or even thought about things like... "because someone told me this..." or stop doing what she wanted to do because of fear.]

Trufaina: Nilivyokuwa nikimuelewa au kama alivyotulea sisi, hawezi kuogopa kukuadhibu kusema mtoto huyu siwezi kwa sababu, au baba yao atasema au mtu mwingine ataniambia kwa nini unawafanya watoto hivi na hivi... aa. Ni mtu anafanya kazi yake namna anavyopaswa kufanya bila kujali kwamba ataambiwa na nani. Kwa hiyo, mambo ya Mbiru ninavyokumbuku, ingawa wakati ule mimi nilikuwa Moshi. Ninavyojua ni kwamba nimeambiwa na mama alipigwa.

[As I knew her or the way she brought us up, she never hesitated to reprimand a child, fearing that the child's father or any other person would question about it. She did what she was supposed to do regardless of who said what. So I can recall about Mbiru, although I was in Moshi by then... What I know is that mother was beaten up.]

Monica: Mimi nilikuwa Moshi wakati huo mambo yakitokea nikanapata nikanapata habari kwamba mama amepigwa sana akiwa anaongoa wanawake. Wakaenda mpaka kwa Chifu Sabuni. Akiongoza wanawake kwenda kwa Sabuni kusema kwa nini waume zao walikuwa Same wakati huu wakigombea wakitetea habari za Mbiru. Sasa mama ndiye alikuwa kiongozi, kuongoza wanawake wenzi wakaenda kwa Chifu Sabuni, ndio huku wakaitwa askari, mama wakapigwa huko. Hillo ndiyo ninayoja. Na mama alitaka aeleze. Lakini vinginevyo sikutaka kuelewa zaidi. Alipigwa huko kwa Chifu Sabuni, kwa Chifu Sabuni wakifukuzwa sasa. [I was in Moshi when I was informed that Mother was beaten up as a result of leading other women. They went to Chief Sabuni's. She led the women to Chief Sabuni's to inquire as to why their husbands were at Same during Mbiru. Mother was the leader when they were going to Sabuni’s place. Then policemen were called. That’s when Mother was beaten up. And Mother wanted to explain the story. But I never wanted to know more about it. She was beaten up at Sabuni’s, at Chief Sabuni’s, where they were chased away.]

MM: Na askari ehe.

[By policemen, yes.]

Monica: Yeye akiwa ndiye anaambiwa ndiye kiongozi, wanafukuzwa sasa wanawake kule kwa Chifu Sabuni, mama akiwa ndiye, leader sasa.

[She was described as the leader. They were being chased toward Chief Sabuni’s place. Mother was the leader then.]

Trufaina: Hapana, lakini nafikiri nyinyi Margaret mlikuwa kule zaidi. Wakati wale wanawake walipokusanyika mahali pamoja, au

[No, but I think, Margaret, you were there at that time when they gathered. When women gather at one place... the women who met after their husbands had gone to Same because of Mbiru... And wherever there is a group of people, outspoken and vocal leaders have to be chosen. Just as my sister has said, Mother was one of the brave spokeswomen. She could talk. That is why I am saying Mother was able to talk on behalf of other women, for their husbands who were against Mbiru in Same. So they united and said they wanted to know about Mbiru.]

MM: Hivi mzee alikwenda kwenyewe ee Same?
[Did your father go to Same?]

Trufaina: Yeye alikuwa Same. Mzee sasa alikuwa Same na Wapare wengine wote wamekwenda Same. Sasa wanawake huku milimani wama systems Chifu sasa, "Waume zetu wako wapi?" Ndio sasa wamekwenda.

[He was at Same. He was at Same with all other Pares who went to Same. Then the women from the mountains went to see the chief and asked, "Where are our husbands?"]


[Mother was the spokeswoman on behalf of other women. She was leading, that is, she would speak before any other woman. You could not speak in chorus. It would be chaotic. What I can say is that I cannot exactly say what points were made by those women. What issues were raised by those women, I do not know. But Mother raised the points before anybody else. Mother was good at talking, but as to the points raised at that time of Mbiru, and since I have not read the book on Mbiru, I cannot say anything meaningful. But it is written that Mama Miramu and Biti Kangero led the crowd.]

MM: Haikuandikwa chochote.
[Nothing is written on that.]
Trufaina: Lakini ee mimi nakumbuka kitu kimoja kuhusu mama na nilikuwa nasikia mama wakisema mama alikuwa anaongoza sala. Anafanya sala, anasali, watu wanakaa, wanakaa kimya anasali kabisa kwa kirefu kabisa, anaomba, anaomba anawaombea na watu wote. Sasa hicho mimi nakumbuka kuwa yeye aliongoza hata kufanya sala.

[But, ee, I remember one thing about mother, and I used to hear people saying that mother used to lead prayers. She would pray and pray. People would be quiet and pray for a very long time. She would pray, pray for everybody. That’s what I remember. I remember that she led others in prayers.]

Monica: Sala ya asubuhi ya kuomba asubuhi wakikutana sasa wanapo... Kabla hawajaanza kazi huko walikuwa wanasali.

[Morning prayers, in meetings. Now when they... before starting any work, they used to pray.]


[I don’t know, I don’t know... I just know that Mother was saying Miriam was also praying. They were saying that she was an amazing and strong person who was never moved by anything when she was praying. I wonder if she was praying in the presence of policemen. You know, teacher, we were in classrooms. I remember we were in classrooms.]

Trufaina: Nyinyi mlikuwa mnasoma wakati huo?

[Were you students at that time?]


[But we were there when they (the women) were chased away. We were in those classrooms near the current office at the mission place in Kapenta. We saw women rushing. We were locked in the classrooms and ordered not to go out.]

Monica: Si wadogo!

[Because we were young.]


[There is nothing extra. I can only recall that when I arrived home, women from Ugweno had run and were hiding at our house. Then because father was a teacher, and since teachers
were not allowed to join in the protest, her job was to hide other women. I remember one woman who came to our home and asked, "Are there policemen here?" Mother said, "Don’t worry. Come in." Mother was guiding the women inside and showing them where to hide.

Monica: Sijui cha zaidi. Mimi sikupata lolote habari ya mama kwamba.... Na vyakula pia. Walikuwa wananini... wakikusanya vyakula ili wawapelekee waume zao kule wakila. Wanawake wanapotokwa sehemu zao walikuwa wanaleta vyakula vinakusuniwa mahali pamoja ili vitumwe kupelekwaa. Vijana wanatoka Same kule, wanakuja wanachukua vyakula kuwapelekea mabwana zao kule. Lakini mimi kwa hapa, hicho sijui na wale wazungu, naniiii, askari walipokuja wakuwaogopesha kwamba watawaniwe wale wakina mama walikataa. Na mama kuwaambia "Msikimbie kweni hapa hapa, kama wakituwa watuwe hapa hapa lakini hakuna kukimbia." Ndiyo akapigwa sasa. Sasa hiyo ndiyo aliyokwawa akizungumzia. Lakini kwamba alianzaaje, maana alisimama imara. Kwamba alianzaaje? Waka...mpaka. Kindi na huko kilomini wote wlikuja mpaka wakakutana wanawake wote toka Ugweno mpaka kwa. [I know nothing else. I got no information on Mother that... (can’t hear) ...and food also. What did they have? They collected food to send to their husbands. Women used to collect food to be sent to their husbands. Young boys would come from Same to collect food. But I know nothing else, and those white people... when the policemen were demanding that they should disperse, the women refused. Mother said to them, "Do not run away! Stay here! Let them kill us! We will never run away!" So she was beaten up. That’s what she used to talk about. But as to how she started,...she was strong. They...(can’t hear)...until. People from Kindi and Kilemeni gathered here. All women from Ugweno.]

Trufaina: Sabuni pale nasikia pale hapakuwa na nafasi. [We are told that every inch of Sabuni’s place was full.]


[I know that. And they came twice. They came when Sabuni was at court and women stopped him from going home. While Sabuni was at the court, the women stayed there the whole day. Minja was sick. That much I know. They stayed there the whole day. The police and Kibacha came from Same. They came, threatened the women, and told them, "Go away."]

XX: Aa, sasa DC na Sabuni, sasa nakumbuka kabisa, mama huwa anasema chakula kilitolewa nyumbani kwa Sabuni, akaletewa pale kotini. Wakati wanaanza kula, wanawake wakachukua mchanga, wakatupia kile chakula.

[Ah, now the DC and Sabuni, now I can clearly remember this. Mother used to say that the food was taken from Sabuni’s place]
and sent to the court. When they started to eat, women threw sand at the food.


There are two versions of the story. Some people say one woman took a stick and hit the DC, but what I remember is that sand was thrown onto the food, so that they were unable to eat the food. Then they slept at the court, Sabuni and Minja, Minja being sick. A message was sent early in the morning for more policemen. The police escorted Sabuni home. Women moved to Sabuni’s place. They slept there. In the morning the police came and chased them away. The DC’s name was Pringle. I remember this, and his vehicle was stopped at our place near Mzee Fanueli’s. Barriers were put on the road to stop the vehicle. Schools were closed because teachers were thought to have conspired with other men. Then father was sent to Same. Because father...]

Tru: Sasa kumbe wewe unajua kuliko mimi? Mimi kweli habari ya mama.

[So, it seems you know more than I do regarding Mother.] MM: Sasa hihi ni yangu lakini sasa inabidi sasa tusikie na mwingine na mwingine na mwingine. Mimi nina vingi ambavyo nakumbuka lakini sasa haviwezi kuwa ndio hivyo maana kwamba mimi nakumbuka halafu sasa sijui sasa mi nami ee kwa mfano mimi najua ni huyo mama kwa kweli labda hata nimesoma mahali ndio nilikumbuka kuna mama mmoja wa Ndanda wa Malaki, alivunjika hata mkono, lakini nikikumbuka kwele aliikuwa kwenywe wanawake walimsema sasa huwa aliikuwa imara alisimama na mama, ndio wale watu wa mwisho mwisho. Mke wake alivunjwa na mkono kabisa. Maana ni wale waliibaki kusukumwa na mtutu wa bunduki. Hawakuwapiga, as such, walikuwa wanasukumwa na ule mtutu wa mabunduki.

This is my version—it is necessary to hear other people’s versions. I remember a lot of things, but they cannot be the only ones. I read some of the things from books. For instance, it is now that I remember there was one woman from Ndanda, at Malaki’s, whose arm was broken, and I remember her being mentioned as one of the strong women who supported your
mother to the end. His wife’s arm was completely broken. They were the ones being pushed by the gun barrels. They did not beat them as such. They were being pushed using gun barrels.]


[Maybe there were no tear gas bombs at the time. Because sleeping at the court until the next morning when other policemen had to be ordered, I think there were no bombs. But I do not know how this story escaped my mind. So there are people, but mostly Mother... I used to hear mother saying that they led others. (can’t hear) Which year was this?]

MM: Arobaini na nne arobaini na tano. Nafikiri yalianza maana Krismasi sasa ndio sasa natafuta hiyo Krismasi. Manake Krismasi ya mwaka huo ambao wanaume watakwenda Same, ndiyo Krismasi baba walipelekkwa Same wakawekwa ndani. Halafu tukaanbiwa kuwa sisi tutakula Krismasi bila baba. Halafu ule mkesha wa tarehe 24 baba alirudi. Walirudi toka Same. [1944 or 1945. I think it started at that time, because at Christmas time men went to Same. They were locked up on Christmas Day. We were told we would celebrate Christmas alone without out father. Father came home on Christmas Eve. They came from Same.]

Trufaina: Na baba yako alipelekwa?

[Was your father sent to Same also?]

MM: Alipelekwa ee. Kuwekwa ndani na machifu. Si walishitakiwa kwamba wakiwa kama waalimu baba walishitakiwa. Kwamba wameachia watoto wakapiga?

[He was, yes. He was locked up by the chiefs. They were sent to court on grounds that they, as teachers, allowed students to strike.]

Trufaina: Aaa, kuwa wao ndio wamefanya fujo. [Ah, so were they regarded as rioters?]

MM: Ndio wanachochea watu wanakataa Mbiru. Sasa DC alishitakiwa kwa Region Education Officer. REO akawaita wakaenda Same, wakapelekkwa kortini, walipofika kortini wakashinda. Sasa lakini wanashinda siku ile ile ya mkeshawa wa Christmas. Ndio sasa wanaachiwa, wanaambiwz rudini. Ndio wakatoka Same kwa mguu, wakaja usiku kwa mguu kutoka Same. [Yes, instigators against Mbiru. DC was reporting to the Regional Education Officer (REO). REO called them to Same. They were sent to court and won the case. They won the case on Christmas Eve. They were released and allowed to go home. They had to walk from Same. They arrived home at night.]

Trufaina: Eee, kwani hata wanaume waliokwenda Same walikwenda kwa magari?

[Did the men go to Same by car also?]
Baba walipitia Kindoroko, Kisangara hiyo walikata. Basi wakaja wametokea Kisangara wakaja wakasema "tumekuja." Hata juzi nilipokwenda kumuona Mzee Kaleya akasema, "Ee walishinda pale Same na walishikwa mkono na kupewa hongera na wakaambiwa mmeshinda nendeni."

[Father passed through Kindoroko and Kisangara. They came from Kisangara and said, "We are here." Even when I went to see Mzee Kaleya the day before yesterday, Mzee Kaleya said, "Yes, they spent the whole day at Same. People shook hands and congratulated them for winning the case."]

Trufaina: Ulikwenda kwa ajili ya kesi?

[Did you go (to see Mzee Kaleya) because of the case?]  

MM: Nilikwenda kumuona kaka kwa ajili ya... Kwa ajili ya kufahamu mambo mambo haya, ee.

[I went to see my brother because of...because I needed to know about these issues, yes.]

Trufaina: Sasa ndio unasema ndio walipelekwa yeye na mwalimu Enock kutoka Ugweno na Mwalimu mwingine kutoka South Pare?

[And are you saying that he (Margaret’s father) and Mwalimu (teacher) Enock from Ugweno and another teacher from South Pare were taken to court?]  


[I did not know the second name. I know his name was Aza somebody. They were sent to court by the chiefs and were told, "These are the instigators. They are instigating the citizens against the tax."]

Trufaina: Yeye mwalimu Fanueli na mwalimu Gerson.

[Mwalimu Fanuel and Mwalimu Gerson?]  


[I know Mwalimu Fanuel was not taken. My father was. It’s Gerson. I remember clearly, and even Mzee Fanuel came and told us plainly, "You will celebrate Christmas without your dad." At that time men had not gone to Same yet.]

Trufaina: Wakati huo nina hawajaenda Same?

[At that time had men not yet gone to Same?]  

MM: Baada ya hapo ndipo wanaume sasa wakaenda Same. Na ndio maana wwalimu wakaambiwa wao wasiende.  

[After that men went to Same. Teachers were forbidden to go.]

Trufaina: Baba walipelekwa kabla sasa nakumbuka kwamba baba alitusindikiza mimi na Christopher, wakati tunakwenda Tabora. Wakateremka Same kwenda kwenya Mbiru. Lakini vurugu ilipotekea... Ee, baada ya miezi miwili, si walikaa miezi miwili.

[Dad and others were sent to Same before that. I remember him escorting me and Christopher on our way to Tabora. They
stopped at Same to go to Mbiru. But when trouble came...yes, after two months. They stayed for two months.
(can't hear.)
Trufaina: Sasa yeye anatoka wapi? Ujerumani?
[Where is she from? Germany?]
MM: Mmm, Amerika.
[No, America.]
ND: Jimbo la Ohio.
[The state of Ohio.]
Trufaina: Wewe ndiwe unaandika historia?
[Are you a historian?]
MM: Anajishughulisha na mambo ya Africa lakini zaidi kuhusu mambo ya wanawake.
[She deals with African issues, mainly women’s issues.]
ND: You know, men leaders are remembered in oral testimony, in oral histories or are written about in history books. But oftentimes women leaders are not, so we are searching for women leaders like your mother.
Sasa, wao katika mambo ya kushughulika kuhusu mambo ya wanawake au maendeleo ya wanawake sasa ndio wanawesta maendeleo ya wanawake yameanzia wapi? Sasa ni lazima warudi nyuma kuona kuwa sasa wanawake wameanza kujishughulisha na mambo haya tangu lini. Kwa sababu kwenywe historia tunasoma za wanaume hata ukisoma tangu wakiwa Nkrumah na nini na hivi lazima kutakuwa na wanawake huko katikati lakini hakuna aliyeandika. Kwa mfano, kila mtu amezungumza mambo ya Nyerere, lakini sijui kama Bibi Titi, ingawa Bibi Titi alikuwa hand in hand na Nyerere, sijui ni mara ngapi Bibi Titi ametajwa na sasa hivi Bibi Titi amesahaulika kabisa. Bibi Titi hajafa yuko hai lakini amesahaulika – generation hii haimjui Bibi Titi.
[She says the books we read talk more about men. They document what different men have done. But there are not books written about women and history, even for those women who have done exciting things. Nobody says anything about them. They want to know more about women’s development, how it started. But it is essential to go back to past history to find out when and how things started. We read more about men’s history. Take the case of Nkrumah’s era. I am sure there were women in politics at that time but nobody has written about that. For example, we hear so many people talking about Nyerere, but not much about Bibi Titi who was hand in hand with Nyerere. She is completely forgotten. Bibi Titi is still alive but completely forgotten. The present generation does not know anything about Bibi Titi.
ND: Right.
MM: Haimjui na alikuwa mstari wa mbele.
[They do not know her. She was at the forefront.]

**Trufaina:** Na ndio katika kuhutubia walidai Uhuru alikuwa mwanamke wa kwanza. Alikuwa wa kwanza.

[She was the first woman to fight for independence. She was the first.]

**MM:** Na alikuwa mwanamke ambaye ndiye alidiriki kusimama kwenye jukwaa na kuzungumza. Kwa hiyo Bibi Titi amesahaulika. Sasa ndio hao, sasa lazima kwa mfano sasa hivi mimi mtu kama huyu, lazima nikiwa nakumbuka kitu unataja. Sasa anapotajiwa hiki kitu ana anesogea anasema ni nani mwingine alikisikia hiki kitu kwa mfano, watu wengi, watu wengi wanasema.

[She would courageously stand in front of people and give speeches. And so Bibi Titi is forgotten. That is why when I meet someone like this who wants to know about the history of women, I tell everything I know and ask others to provide information also.]

**Monica:** Ee. Nimesikia ndio.

[Yes, I have heard that.]

**MM:** Lakini, mmm, si wewe mwalimu ni wewe Monica wanasema Mbiru ilikuwepo na wewe ulikuwa hapa hapa Moshi. Lakini sasa kihistoria Mbiru ni ya wanaume, lakini Mbiru haikuwa ya wanaume, Mbiru ilikuwa ya wanaume na wanawake na wanawake played more role kwa sababu wanawake walishika nyumba wakatunza nyumba na watoto na kila kitu, na wakashughulika, wakapeleka vyakula Same. Hicho najua kwa sababu vyakula vilikuwa vinapitishiwa pale kwetu. Halafu wanawake wana sio wanapeleka vyakula Same tu. Wanatwanga mahindi wana changanya na maharage kabisa. Wana.... vinafungwa, vinapelekwa Same, na wanaheba.

[But people say you, Mwalimu Monica, you were here in Moshi when Mbiru started. But historically, Mbiru appears to be a men’s issue. But it was not just men’s. Mbiru was a concern of both men and women, and women played more of a role because they were taking care of the house, children and everything, and worked hard to send food to the husbands. I know that because the food was transported through our home. And women did not simply send food. They would pound maize (corn) and mix it with beans. They... the foods would be wrapped and carried to Same.]


[They would fry the corn, pound it, and the flour was put in calabashes. A thin porridge was made as the main dish for people since they could not cook. They could not cook makande because it would take them a long time. Flour was sieved and
put in calabashes. Flour would be stored somewhere else while milk was always stored in calabashes. They would prepare porridge and drink it. That was their food.

ND: So if they can describe the kind of woman their mother was, even if they don’t know anything about her relationship to Mbiru, but if we can... can they describe their mother? What kind of leadership did she have, what kind of things did she do that made her a woman leader?


Ilibidi aende akasome pamoja na mtoto wake Danieli. [What mom did mostly was leading others in places like different households. For example, Mzee Luka’s at Mfinanga’s, Mother was a woman leader. Whenever there was a funeral, or a wedding, mother would lead others. She would lead others in celebrations and other necessary events. In church she was also at the forefront, a church leader, a church elder. She was a church elder for a long time. She had to go to school at her old age. She went to school with Daniel, her son.]

MM: Eeee!

[Really!]

Trufaina: Alisoma, wanakwenda shule pamoja kwa sababu baba alisema ni lazima ajue kuandika na kusoma barua, hawezi akimuandika barua aende akiombe kwa mtu mwingine. Kwa hiyo ilibidi aegisomee elimu ya watu wazima kama hii inayofundishwa sasa. Ajue kusoma na kuandika.

[Yes, she went to school with him because Father wanted her to be able to read and write letters on her own. He did not like the idea of other people reading letters he sent to her. She enrolled in adult classes like the current adult education classes so that she would be able to read and write.]

Monica: Yaani aliolowwa hajui kusoma akamzae mwanae wakaenda shule. Kwa hiyo ilibidi aende shule na mwanae darasa la kwanza wakawa wana kwenda shule na mtoto wake.

[That means she was not literate when she got married and went to school with her son. So they went to school together.]

MM: You get it?

ND: No, tell me.

MM: Their mother got married. She could neither read nor write, but then after the first boy, her first child is a boy, the boy grew until he went to school. So when the boy was going to school, he went to school with his mother. So the mother attended classes until she could read and write. And this is exceptional, is exceptional.
ND: Wonderful! Jamani, ee?

MM: Because the husband was a teacher, he insisted. He said, "I can't stay with a woman who can't read or write, because she has to write and read her own letters." And so she went to school with her son. This is really exceptional during those years. Ilikuwa ni miaka ipi?
[What year was it?]

Monica: Kaka alizaliwa kama 18 kwa hiyo ni katika 1920s. Halafu sasa, alizaliwa 1918 mpaka sasa ongeza miaka kumi.
[My brother was born in 1910. Therefore it was in the 20s. Add ten more years.]

MM: About more than 20. About 30, 1930. So it's very early. I mean those years, for a woman to leave the house and go to school...

ND: With her child...

MM: With her child.

ND: Very interesting. Well, one of the other things that women leaders often do is they are problem solvers for their communities, for the places they live. If a husband and wife are fighting, maybe this woman leader acts as a judge and helps solve the problem. Did your mother do that? You know, I think of them as wise women.

XX: (can't hear)

MM: Yeah, kama, anavyomuelewa ni kama ni mtu mama alikuwa na heshima na akili je kwa mfano katika pale kijijini kama kulikuwa na ugomvi wa mume na mke au kulikuwa na kupatanisha au nini, mama alikuwa anashirikishwa? Alimchukuwa mama kama kiongozi wao wa mambo ya kusuluhisha na vitu kama hivyo?
[Yeah, she recalled about her mother. She saw her mother as an intelligent and respectable woman. She would make reconciliations between married couples. Mother was famous for that.]

Monica: Mara nyingi, mara nyingi sana kama watu wanagombana.
[Several times, several times, when people fought.]

Trufaina: Halafu enzi zile mara, watoto wakiiume walikuwa hawaruhusiwi kufanya kazi kama kupika, kukata majani, na kutwanga. Lakini sasa ilibidi mama yeye yeze mtoto wake wa kiume, kwa sababu alitanganiza wa kiume, ilibidi awashirikisha watoto wake wote wale wa kiume wafanye kazi, wanasa kidia kupika, kukata majani, kufagia na kwenda shamba pamoja naye. Hakuchagua kazi ya mtoto wa kike na wa kiume kijijini. Hata mara nyingine ilibidi ashitakiwe. Anaitwa Misheni kwamba kwa nini anamfanya mtoto wa kiume anakata majani.
[And at that time sons were not allowed to do household chores like cooking, cutting grass for cows or pounding. But Mother, having had boys first, she decided that all children would do all the household chores regardless of gender. They would help in cooking, cutting grass, etc. She did not have jobs exclusively for boys and girls. Consequently, she was reported to the mission and was reprimanded for making her sons cut grass.]

MM: Are you recording?
ND: Yes.
MM: OK. It’s really something.
ND: OK, what?
MM: Because, you know according to the Pare tradition, the boys are not allowed to do women’s work. Who divides this women’s work, God knows. And so,...but because now her mother had the first child as a boy, she didn’t divide the work. So the boy, or later on, she had more boys, the boys were doing the same work like the girls. They were cooking, they were cutting grass, and they were doing this.
ND: She was a revolutionary.
MM: Yeah. And then it came at a point where she was called even at the church committees and was cursed because she was making the boys to work, to do women’s work.
ND: Interesting.
MM: Yeah, it’s a history.
ND: And you see, throughout every generation there have been women that said, it’s fair for women to have equality, and have done things like this.
MM: Yeah.
ND: And then we never hear. The next generation, there’s no record. It’s in my own history, too, that women fought these battles wherever they were but there’s no record for us to build on.
MM: Mmmm.
ND: And we have to begin every generation anew, and start as if nobody’s ever done this struggle. Now, please tell them what we just talked about.
MM: Yeah, anasema kwa hiyo kweli ni sasa hili jambo ni zuri, kwa kweli ni kitu kizuri cha kuelewa kwa sababu hata kwa ee... kuna mambo ambayo hata wanawake wamefanya lakini sasa hakuna mtu ambaye amewatii kuwa fulani, mama fulani alifanya kitu hiki. [Yeah, she says this was a good thing. It is good to understand this. There are so many things that were done by women but nobody has given credit to women. For example I remember my mother did the same.]
(I have chosen to leave out the next part of the conversation between Trufaina, Monica and Margaret. They discussed some old practices, among them infanticide. The reason that Trufaina and Monica discussed the subject was to show how courageous their mother was in opposing this practice. It seems to me that it is not appropriate to include here this intimate sharing of information among friends. It also has no direct bearing on this research.)
MM: I think this is something that is important. Their father beat their mother, and so the mother cried very loud and when the people came, they said, well, now I know that I have really borne a man. She was really a man.]
Monica: Alikuwa ni mfanyakazi hodari, mana ndie aliyotulea sisi na kututunza na kutulisha maanake wakati ule baba alikuwa anashughulika na mambo ya Mbiru na... Kwa hiyo Mama ndiyo
She was a hard worker. She took care of us when Dad was busy during Mbiru. So, Mother was working with her hands to feed us all and also to pay school fees. We had to go to school.

[Every evening we would show her what we did in school. She would be able to tell whether we were doing well or not.]

Monica: Wewe huko shule ukifundishwa, alikuwa anatia moyo wewe kama shule kwa nini unapata X, bila shaka hukufanya vizuri lazima utaieleza ulikuwa unacheza na ndio maana ukakusa. Alikuwa anatia moyo sana.

[If you did not perform well, you had to explain why, even though she did not know much. She would ask why you got an "X" and whether you were fooling around at school. She was very supportive.]

ND: How many girls did your mother have?

Monica: Sisi Tulizaliwa 12, watatu wakafa tukiwa wadogo, tukabaki 9 sasa amekuwa kaka tumebaki 8.

[We were 12. Three died when they were young. We were left nine, and 1 died. Now we are 8.]

ND: How many girls and how many boys?

MM: 4 girls and 4 boys.

ND: I’m interested. Are you girls tough like your mother. Are you daughters tough like your mother?

X: ENGLISH Yes. (all laugh). Why not?

ND: You know, this is very interesting because somehow when we hear of a woman like this, who challenged society, somehow the men get us to think that this is deviant behavior, abnormal behavior, instead of what women should be doing. And then the next generation, we have to do it again. Now, please share...

MM: Yeah. Anasema sasa ni wazi kuwa unajua inatokae wakati mwingine kuwa mtu kama mama yenu ee wakati watu wanashika mambo anaonekana ni mtu kabisa wa pekee. Kwa hiyo, Kihistoria ni mtu wa pekee. Manake mambo mengine anafanya na wanaume wanaona zaidi ni mtu wa kiwaidha lakini sasa hivi kule kutokea mtu wa kiwaidha kuna kufa. Hakuna sasa mtu anayejua nini kimetokea kwa hiyo ndo maana anauliza kuwa katika nyinyi watoto wa kike kuna ambaye amechukuwa... Sasa amekuwa ni mtu unaweza kusema kwa kweli huyu amekuwa hivyo kwa sababu mama yake amekuwa hivyo. Sasa ni historia ambayo imejijenga.

[Yeah, it happens that women like your mother are regarded as exceptional. Historically, she is unique. She does some things just like men. But nobody recognizes what she does. Is there anybody among the daughters who is like your mother? Anyone among you whom you can say resembles your mom in her actions?]
ENGLISH  Well, I know these daughters. They are very
courageous, very courageous because...
Trufaina; Ni mtu anayewafahamu watoto wa yule mama ndiye
anayeweza kuja kwamba kati ya wale watoto wa yule mama wa
kike labda fulani ndie anawewe kuwa sawa na mama au anakaribia
lakini sasa sisi wenyewe hatuwezi kuja.
[It is impossible for us to see. Other people can say it. It
is hard for us to tell. We do not know.]
MM:
[What she is asking is whether you as your mother’s daughters
emulated what she did.
Monica; Anachosema ni kwamba kama mama alivyo kuwa
anavyofahamika kijijini je na watoto wanafuata nyayo hizi hizi
kama Margaret anavyosema? Kwa hivyo karibu wote hakuna mtoto
wa mama ambaye hawez kuwa mzungumzaji au anayeweza kusaidia
watu wengine karibu wote tuko tunajaribu. Hatuku... unajua
mama angekuwa ninii kweli angekuwa mtu wa siasa sana.
Angekuwa amesoma kama sisi enzi setu angekuwa mbele sana
katika siasa. Sisi labda tuseme katika mazingira yetu
yunakuwa tofauti na ya mama, kwa sababu... (can’t hear)
...pengine katika kulea watoto wetu sisi, hasa mimi labda
ningekuwa mtu wa siasa sana. Lakini hivyo wa watoto wakati
ninasomesha kukiwa rafiki kwendo rafiki siasa zaidi. Ikanibidi
rifanye kazi kuwa bidii ili niweze kusomesha watoto. Ndio
maana siasa ni kidogo nilikwenda kwa... na kurudi nyuma.
Halafu sasa ambapo ningeendelea zaidi, ndio sasa nime...
siwezi kupigania kiti kama madiwani unakwenda kuke
unashinda unawewe kijijini afya hairuhusu sasa.
[Nearly all of us are courageous, can talk in front of crowds,
and help and guide others. We try. We did not... You know,
if Mother was alive in today’s , or had been our age, she
would have been a politician. Our environment is different
from hers. Maybe I would have been a politician. But my
career as a teacher did not allow me to join in politics. I
had to concentrate on teaching. That is why I lagged behind
in politics. Now I can’t contest for any political post. My
ill health does no allow me to do that.]
X: XX: (can’t hear)
MM: Yeah, it’s obvious that anybody who knew our mothers and
who knows us now, they could tell. They’re the ones now to
tell that, "OK, she is just like the mother." But otherwise
themselves they feel they are OK, they are tough, and they
don’t fear, and they’re good in talking, and they’re not
afraid of talking in anything. And mwalimu is giving her own
example. She said, "for example, for myself, I see myself
with my mother. If my mother would have had my education,
she would have been more active than me because,"
ND: Even more?
MM: Even more. And then, she says, for example, because she
grew her children herself, and so she had more responsibility
to the children. She couldn’t stand the high post, siasa,
like being the leader of a village or something like that
because of other responsibilities with the children. And then after she almost finished the responsibility, the children have gone to school, now she became sick. So the health again didn't allow her to be as active.

**ND:** But you think that your mother, if she had had education, she would have done something very special? She was a very special woman.

**Trufaina and Monica:** ENGLISH Yes, of course, yes. **MM:** This is how I know this mama. She was very special. There are cases where I recall when I was seeing her in the church. She, you know, was dressing like a European. You'd never see her in a kanga. You never see her in...

**ND:** That was progress to her.

**MM:** Very, not to her only, for the whole community. She was exceptional. And I remember as a young girl, I was admiring and sometimes I was telling my mother, why don't you do like Koko? And my mother would say, oh, no, no, no. What Miriam does, no one else can do. (Laughter) And she was really up to the standards. This is how I remember her. Up to date.

**ND:** When did she die?

**X:** 1978.

**ND:** And how old was she?

**X:** She was 85. [If she was born in 1905 and died in 1978, actually she was 75.]

**MM:** But she was still very strong.

**The Women Dancers**

On two occasions Margaret Mshana and I met with four Usangi women who had participated in Mbiru. At our first meeting, the women danced, "as during Mbiru." The next time we met, we toured the area around the court where the women's confrontation with the DC and chiefs had occurred. On both occasions we turned on the tape-recorder. Because a group of people were talking while they moved around, the tapes are hard to transcribe. The following text contains both Kipare and English. The Kipare part was originally transcribed by the same Kipare speaker at the University of Dar es Salaam and then reviewed by Mpare Mwajabu Possi Kachenje who is a
linguist. Mwajabu also translated the Kipare text into English.

**Dancers (2nd session) #72B TAPED #17**

2/14/91

[ND Four dancers, MM, ND. Margaret’s sister-in-law and Mama Naetweeli Mbati were present only at Margaret’s family home where we met the women. The six of us—the four dancers, MM, ND—walked to the court buildings for a tour after having soda at Margaret’s. The women: Mwanaidi Mashashi (77), Mwanasharifa Mangare (75), Halima Salimu (60), Mwajuma Isumaili (73).]

(MM: "Kevata nyatu sa nguto," a leading song which started at Margaret’s home. It is sung when one starts to talk or explain something. It is giving a message in a poetic way. We started walking from Margaret’s home to the hospital to see where Mbiru activities took place at the court in Usangi.)

W: Igare leti livushwa iki vache vose vegurire huvu, iki niho hantu negwia huvu iki, iki negwa nevuka kitambaa chateka, iki ula mwenyε igare aresikia vwasi, avechija mondo, latikwa noko kotini.

[When the car was started, all the women held it like this. I fell down this way. After I had fallen down and rose up, my headscarf was gone. Then the owner of the car felt sorry for us and drove away. The car was driven to the court.]

MM: Iki kotini ne hio?

[Now, where was the court?]

W: Kotini nire aho aho; heicho iki Mfumwa vewaha na mzungu. Iki, vagerwa he igare vatikwa na kotini.

[The court was just there; therefore the chief was here with the white man. Then they were put into the car and sent to the court.]

MM: Heicho vevushijwe aha na igare?

[So were they taken from here in a car?]
thermos flask with tea. He was told, "Yes, now you have brought this flask. Make sure all the children get the tea before your father does." Then he said, "But why don't you let father drink a little?" His father told him, "Take the tea back." The son was told, "How could he drink the tea when our children are hungry? After all, why should he drink it? He is the one who put our men in the wilderness. Even if you had twenty flasks, they would not be sufficient anyway."

MM: Heicho iki, igare lekinavuke aha iki letongie na kotini? Ahaa, vache ingeri vakaratera nyuma.
[Then, after the car had left here, was it driven to the court?. Ahaa, then the women followed it.]
W: Ula Pringoli akatonga iki, akatushigha aho. Heicho ikikave kula simu yakoroshwa Same, iti magare avuke kula na mapolisi, ambu Mfumwa eho ekomwa.
[Then Pringle left us there. Evidently there was a telephone call to Same saying that cars and policemen should be brought here because the chief was in danger of being killed.]
MM: Ikio, igare lekinavuke hala kotini, Sabuni ekinafishwe hala...
[So, when the car left the court, after Sabuni had arrived there...]
W: Vateta Kingereza chavo korokoro vala vakatonga.
[They spoke their English gibberish, then the others left.]
MM: Pringoli yeesiseiye he igare wa kangi.
[Pringle never got out of the car again.]
W: Hai, vakatonga, vevecha Mbakwe vakagerwa mbagha ni vana noni, va Shighatini. Basi iki Vakatonga, kave aha vetonga kiaviya chaliwa, simu jabighwa iti asikari vavuke uko iti vaze ambu Mfumwa eho ekomwa.
[No, they went. After they had passed Mbakwe and Shighatini, people started a fire. Then they left, but as they were leaving, evidently phone calls had already been made that police should be ready and come because the chief was in trouble.]
MM: Ikio, Minja ye ereshinjia aho?
[Now, did Minja sleep there?]
W: Atonga, atonga na mche wakwe ula eitangwa Majabu ambu iki huvu Nesimanya iti iki etiwa eho Same kana hi ambu esina mwana, ambu twekiingia kumvinia Minja mche wakwe eketie huvu. Erarwa, etiwa, "Mche wesimogha ntasa iii niwe weikaa na mme? Vache vemogha vashighe kuikaa na mme, uikae na mme ingawe?" Iki hala vekinatonge kave simu yabighwa iti asikari vaze. Twemanyije mbumbu, aho nyumba ni mijungu:"Kayo namburikayo Mfumwa Mainoro afwa majingoe he hayo, kayo na mburi kayo, iki sindaki jirawelae ee haya."
[He went. He went with his wife known as Majabu, who is said to be currently living in Same. She did not have a child. We insulted her and said, "You, barren woman, are you the one living with this man? It would be better for those women who are fertile to live with him rather than you." At that time phone calls were already made for the police to come. We knew
nothing inside the court. We were singing, "The chief died yesterday and flies are all over him."

Iki uswi twafuma ambu hena mshewa wewaho wa kizungu, twafuma twaitekaa na wifi wangu arefwe, ne Tenamburi emvekie Namghanga, nisikia aha kwa Msembea aha "Hururu." Navati, "Vukeni magare aza mukonekomiwa ahosi." Tenamburi eti, "Nakukukwenzuia nakukwenzuia, iki niwa nahi?" Twakwea naho, ye twabunguruma haleghu hala twasikia aho vaghanji viratu vekinabighwe mpengeni, "Paa." Weremanya vantu va kiume, "Uwii! Uwii!" Hena vefumia he madirisha hena vegwa. Twasikia ingeri hachenjea twasea, twavati "Yetoni chaokaze?"

[Then we went outside under a tree and sat with my late sister-in-law and Tenamburi who held Namghanga (her baby). Around the Msembea area I could hear, "Hururu." I told my colleagues, "Stand up, the cars have arrived. You will die if you sit there." Tenambura said, "Where do I go? I have already wet my pants." We went up and down the hills. Then we heard the soldiers' marching feet, "Paa!" You know how men are. "Uwii! Uwii!" Some went out through windows. Some fell down. Then we asked, "What happened, guys?"] Namshali eti, "Mweho hii?" Twamti, "Twerewaha rae." Eti, "Murewaha?" Twamti, "Iyee." Twavati, "Iki chaokaze." Mariamu eti, "Mhereja ngasu aha hetiwa yavo tutonge na kwa Sabuni, ngasu yatosha kweri utirami nevinie." Hechao hetiwa "Muntu ena mwana eamwa atonge aamwishe mwana anaze. Uo mche enesa eshotiwa nyumba." Nakwea kaa mwana wengu amwa, natemia ng'ombe jangu igomba. Twavuka ingeri twasea. Harika, tweseao! Sikuvukara iki iti tuyoe kwa Sabuni, vintu vyafurirwa nzieni, vintu vyafurirwa nzieni, mbuji ji... magonji ekomwa, mitwi iforirwa nzieni.

[Namshali said, "Where were you?" We replied, "We were here." She said, "Are you here?" We replied, "Yes." We asked them, "How is it going?" Mariamu said, "It is ordered that tomorrow we should all go to Sabuni’s place." The dance was incredible. I did not dance. The next morning it was announced, "Anyone with a baby should go to breakfast and come after breast-feeding. Any woman who will refuse to come back will have her house burned." I went home, breast-fed my child, and fed my cow. Then we went down. We were heading to Sabuni’s place. A lot of things were buried in the way. Goats and sheep were slaughtered and their heads buried on our way.] MM: Ikio yefoririwe hi, hiyo.

[Where were they buried?]


[There. I said, "Guys, where are we going? Let’s go back." Mariam said, "No, we have to reach that place. We can’t go back." What to do? We just walked. It was getting dark.] MM: Avo ye foririeo mwevamanyije?

[Do you know who buried the things there?]
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How? I don't know. Maybe they did so in order to make us stupid, unable to walk." (MM: They thought they were bewitched.) Then Mariamu said, "We have to reach there." When it was sunset we arrived at the place. Yulia, Sabuni's wife, took a cooking pot and threw it at the banana grove. A sound, "Poo," was heard. She asked, "Why are you here?" We said to her, "The pot you broke won't harm us. The bad luck will come back to you." Sabuni said, "You know, old Naheja is my age mate. How dare you shameless children follow me around." He was told, "You should impregnate all the women here to prove you are a man."


[Abeli said, "This is his own house, built by him. You attacked him at the court. What are you looking for here?" He was answered, "He never worked in sisal plantations to cut sisal. It is through our husbands' money that this house was constructed. Show us where you helped cut the sisal." He said, "Aa, I have nothing to say." The women entered the house with their bamboo sticks (mijungu) and drums. Some of them sat outside. I climbed up the hill. Wow! What sounds from drums and dancing sticks from inside the house! Soon my sister-in-law, by the name Majabu, came and said to me, "I have asked permission from Mariamu so I can go home because I have a baby, Rabia." I can not remember whether it was Rabia or Mwanahawa.]

mwarfwa mukasia." Iki weti mghenji akushaghashe mawe umushaghashe, haya iki tutonge. Hee, twevecha hala kwa Solomoni halao, tusikia nkunga ni "Uuwwii twakenijjwa aka Kitalae! Uuwwii twakenjwae!

[She said to me, "Go also and tell her you are sick, you have pains on one side, in the ribs and you need medication at the hospital." I said, "I am not going to ask for permission. I will just tell her I am leaving." She said, "You know you might get fined." I said, "It will be OK." When we were down at Anderea’s place, we were almost bitten by dogs. Then we arrived at Solomon’s place and arrived home where I breast-fed my child, ate, and slept. In the morning I refused to leave my place. Mwanasha said to me, "Let’s go for medication." On our way, Mronga said to us, "I wish you were injured. You wanted to kill the old man. I wish you had all been killed." "Well, let’s go," I said. When we were passing Solomon’s place, we heard the lukunga, "Uwi! We are being killed at Sabuni’s place! We are being killed!"


[People were moving across the river with sounds, "patalapatala." We went uphill and stood at the top and looked down. "Uwi! We have been killed at Sabuni’s place." We then went down and asked, "Where is mother, my mother-in-law?" They said, "She is nowhere to be found, but she has already gone through Mbale, through that forest to Kengia market." We searched for her in vain. When we arrived home her husband said, "I went through Mbale and arrived at the market place." After two days the men arrived. Nothing else was said. Two days and that was enough.]

(ND: The next part is about the incident near the court in which Namshali/Mariamu knocked the DC’s lunch out of the cook’s hands as he was carrying it to the guest house.)

MM: Ekinabighe kila kijo...

[When she knocked the food down...]


[We hid her. She is short. She was hidden and was never seen. The chief was looking for her so that she could be arrested. She was hidden. Sabuni looked for her in vain. He said, "I know that woman; she’s from Kighare." We told him,
"We cannot see her. We do not know her." He said, "Wait, I will see her." He never saw her.

MM: Mwemvisie eze?
[How did you hide her?]

W: Terajunguluka aho, terajunguluka aho aha eteta terewaho, emmanyije? Iki mntu wesimmaiyeo? Iki tukazomana wesinimanyijeo? Vakisangara vewaho, Vaghweno, Vantu va ruru vose pere, uti hekive muyaghayagha, uti emvonie! Kijo kikabighwa, iki aha vaghenji vekuvisa na kunu, ye akatonga akavusha igare lakwe akatonga, niye uo egerwa mbaghi Mbakwe. [She was around us, moving around in the group. Even when the chief was talking about her, she was still around. But if you do not know someone in such a big crowd, you will never get her. The chief started his car, and fire was set in Mbakwe.]

MM: Iki. Yee Kibacha ena na igare lakwe ne DC lakwe?
[Chief Kibacha and the DC each had his own car?]

W: Iyee, na vantu vakwe.
[Yeah, and his own people.]

MM: Heicho Kibacha yee esitongie na kunu kotini.
[So Kibacha never came here at the court?]

W: Hai, hai, hata Minja esifikie kunu, hai vava.
[No, no, even Minja never came here, not at all.]

MM: Ahaa, na Kibacha iki akatonga na vantu vakwe, niye agerwa mbaghi Mbakwe.
[Ahaa, Kibacha then went with his people, that's where fire was set.]

W: Eeee.
[Yes.]

MM: Heicho mbaghi yekigerwa DC kunu tenafika uko?
[So the DC was not there when the fire was set?]

W: Hai, hai.
[No, no.]

MM: Ahaa, ikio irawe hena vache vangi veshinjie he barabara?
[Were there women lying on the road?]

W: Ai he barabara, ya hii?
[What, on the road? Which road?]

MM: Ai DC ekitonga huvuo hakaketa ai vache veshinjie aho he barabara huvu.
[We were told that when the DC was driving this direction, there were women lying on the road.]

W: Twesivvonieo ambu uswi twazana kunu kotini, ikio chewa si kuvina ngasu?
[We did not see them because we were already at the court. We had one job to do--dancing.]

MM: Heicho igare lezie hala likavecha aha huvu likaza mhaka aha? Ahaa, ingeri likavuka aha huvu likasea noko, barabara nire ii ii.
[So, did the car pass through this way up to here? Ahaa, then it went downhill on this same road.]

W: Nire ii ii.
[This road.]

MM: Vesinaza kurala kijo veho hi?
[Before coming to eat, where were they?]
W: Vewaha kotini vakateza kula.
[They were at the court.]
MM: Vewaha kotini na vache vehohi?
[Where were the women?]
W: Tweho kula.
[We were there.]
MM: Vekinafume iki niho vakaza kula iki?
[So after that, did they come to eat?]
W: Vakaza kula, ambuo tehena varerugha kijo.
[They came to eat because there were people responsible for cooking.]
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