"A SOLITARY TREE BUILDS NOT": HESHIMA, COMMUNITY, AND SHIFTING IDENTITY IN POST-EMANCIPATION PEMBA ISLAND*

By Elisabeth McMahon

When emancipation occurred on the Indian Ocean island of Pemba, most slaves' movements were constrained by colonial policies. While many certainly moved from their former master's land, many more remained. The responses of former slaves on Pemba to emancipation mirrored similar patterns found on other small island communities such as St. Louis and Gorée in Senegal, and the Caribbean islands of Barbados, Antigua, and Montserrat among others. In all of these islands government policies and limited access to land for purchase forced ex-slaves to remain as squatters on the land they had previously worked and used as their provision gardens. For ex-slaves around the world, freedom rarely meant citizenship. Thus, former slaves had to find ways to incorporate themselves into the larger society in which they lived. As in the Senegalese colonies, former slaves on the island of Pemba worked to integrate themselves into the local community.

In day-to-day life on Pemba, community mattered in how a person negotiated their status in society. A variety of factors counted in creating status, but one that has been overlooked is the role of heshima or "honor." There was no single way to earn heshima and no single person who bestowed it on others. Rather, it was a social status that a person earned from their community over time and through their behavior. While economics and heritage were certainly reflected in one's heshima, they were not the only factors in deciding who had heshima and

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3 Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies (Chapel Hill, 2000), 5–22.
who did not. Only the members of a community could impart this status, which was constantly renegotiated as people moved, married, and progressed through life.

For the majority of the Pemban population—who had legally been slaves until the final abolition in 1909—the development of *heshima* was one way in which members could redefine their identity. As Ann Twinam’s work in colonial Latin America suggests, honor was communally negotiated—not something that was simply assumed. “Embedded in a simple hello could be underlying codes that precisely located an individual’s rank within the social hierarchy.” While this suggests a top-down approach to who could confer *heshima* on an individual, it is more likely that this negotiation took place from both the top and the bottom. Trevor Getz notes that in colonial Senegal, “Wherever possible, these individuals [former slaves] sought to assert a higher status by reworking their family trees or suing their antagonists, who were usually their former masters or their masters’ relatives, with whom they were economically forced to remain in contact.”

Social status was something in flux and contested, on all levels of society.

*heshima* was significant for the less-affluent classes on Pemba: the former slaves, migrant workers, peasants, and especially women. For these groups, *heshima* allowed them status in the community, permitting them access to land and credit during the non-harvest seasons, and status in local disputes through the court system. Having *heshima* became as vital for some people as their ethnicity, and for former slaves having *heshima* was an important factor in giving them community acceptance in the post-emancipation period. As later examples will show, people’s status, their *heshima*, was negotiated regularly and denoted their place in the communities in which they lived.

Background

Omani Arabs began a concerted effort to colonize the East African coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By the 1840s, the Omani Sultan moved his capital to Zanzibar Town on Unguja Island, the largest of the Zanzibari isles. While Unguja was the home of the Arab elite, the majority of the agricultural produce exported from the islands came from the second-largest island, Pemba. Slave labor was used throughout the Sultanate to produce cloves and coconuts for export. In 1890, ostensibly to end slavery, the British declared a protectorate over the Omani domains. Within seven years the British had forced the initial abolition

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4 Note that this means *legally* freed by the government and does not always correspond to reality. Evidence that people remained enslaved after 1909 abounds and will be discussed later in the article.


of slavery and ushered in a period of shifting identity as former slaves and masters negotiated the difficult terrain of maintaining a social hierarchy in a “free” state.\(^7\)

Ethnicity is, as is its twin term “identity,” socially constructed at different times and places. As Leroy Vail and others so famously argued, ethnicity or “tribalism” was a modern product of European and African intellectuals.\(^8\) While others have since shown that indeed precolonial ethnic identities existed, all consider ethnicity as fluid over time.\(^9\) This means that every moment in time and space is a possible location for reinterpretations of identity. Frederick Cooper, Jonathon Glassman, and Randall Pouwels all point to the way economic factors influenced identity in East Africa, suggesting that power dynamics were a significant factor in its construction. Cooper reasoned “the ambiguity of ethnic designations made possible the redefinition of social identity in conjunction with economic change.”\(^10\) Definitions of the people living along the Swahili coast have been particularly slippery for scholars across time and disciplines.\(^11\) The debates over whether the language and people belong to Africa or Arabia have signaled

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\(^7\) Technically slavery was abolished in 1897, but that did not include concubines until 1909 on Zanzibar (1907 on the mainland).


the flexibility of identity along the coast. This study does not make pronouncements about the ethnic identity of people living on Pemba, but rather examines the critical juncture of social status and ways people attempted to change their standing in society.

The terminology of being elite changed from *unungwana* to *ustaarabu*, along the Swahili coast of East Africa in the nineteenth century, privileging the culture of the conquering Omani Arabs over the local coastal elite. Yet while the terminology changed, the essence of what it meant to be socially privileged did not wholly change. As one informant, Bi Asha, explained in 2004, *ustaarabu* meant, "to have good character and to respect everyone. Also someone who is *ustaarabu* is a person educated in things of the world and is generous, humble and follows Islam." Thus, being *ustaarabu* still centered on being Muslim, educated, and a good member of the community—all components of having *heshima*. Identifying one's self as belonging on the island gave a person *heshima*. A person's *heshima* showed their standing in the community, how fully they articulated the ideals of Islamic culture and society. People could be poor and not particularly well-educated, but if they maintained their *heshima* they still had a level of respect. *Heshima* became a critical component of Pemban society in the shift from a slave to a free society because it allowed former slaves to earn respect within the local context.

*Heshima* was used by former slaves and local elites as a method of social acculturation. Former slaves were able to use the attainment of *heshima* as a means to integrate into the free community. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff argued that belonging was the opposite of slavery—not freedom. This is a critical point to elaborate because *heshima* was one way that former slaves attempted to define themselves as "belonging" to the community. Although Frederick Cooper, Thomas Holt, and Rebecca Scott argue that belonging to the community could be equally as oppressive as freedom, I suggest that for a former

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13 I use “elite” in a general sense, as those people who are self-defined as being the “elite” of their communities, whether in a village or town. At each level, there is always an elite.


15 Bi Asha, Wete, interview by author, Pemba. December 18, 2004. All names of informants have been changed to protect the individuals.

16 Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, eds., *Slavery in Africa*, (Madison, 1977) 17.
slave gaining *heshima* allowed them to belong to and live within the community with respect from others rather than remain oppressed. Thus, *heshima* itself did not connote freedom, even slaves could have *heshima*, rather it was a route for building community acceptance. Communities used it as a control mechanism by idealizing the notion of *heshima* as a model for good citizenship. By being the arbiters of *heshima*, community leaders were able to ward off a social collapse from the abolition of slavery.

With the manifold changes of the nineteenth century (direct Omani political control, then British colonialism, and the abolition of slavery), local social hierarchies underwent changes in definition. No longer was lineage or ethnicity the final authority on social status; wealth became increasingly significant in defining social status. Wealth allowed a person to access *heshima*, through Islamic education and charity. Margaret Strobel’s example of Mwana Hidaya, a former slave who earned enough money and eventually built a mosque, shows how wealth could help lower status people access *heshima*. Wealth also allowed, in some cases, a person to “purchase” a new ethnic identity by adopting the trappings of the privileged “ethnicities.” These shifts in identity created concerns for the elite and the larger communities about *wageni* or outsiders.

Thus the increasing importance of *heshima*, the one criteria of social status that was completely accorded by the community, allowed community leaders to consider themselves the final judge of social status.

Unfortunately, the voices of most people living on Pemba in the early colonial period have been lost to posterity. Yet some incomplete narratives give insights into community expectations for the period between the beginning of the Protectorate in 1890 and the end of World War One in 1918. These narratives are fragmentary glimpses of how negotiation and integration into the local community worked, exploring the place of *heshima* in creating local identities and, as such, “belonging” in the communities of Pemba.

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18 Margaret Strobel, *Muslim Women in Mombasa* (New Haven, 1979), 73.

19 This could mean the clothing worn and retainers kept among other representations of elite identities. Jonathon Glassman’s story of Bwana Heri bin Juma al-Mafazii shows that with wealth a person could cloud their origins, allowing them to assert a new identity. See Glassman, *Feasts and Riots*, 65–66. For a discussion of outright “purchasing” of identity see Nathalie Arnold, “*Wazee Wakijua Mambo!* Elders Used to Know Things!: Occult Powers and Revolutionary History in Pemba, Zanzibar” (Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, 2003).

20 Technically *wageni* translates as “guests” (singular *mgeni*). Implicit in the term, however, is the notion of being an outsider or foreigner.
Defining *Heshima*

*Heshima* as defined in the present day means to have dignity, honor, and respect, as well as knowing how to properly extend courtesy and esteem to others.\(^{21}\) The term was (and still is) found among most Swahili-speaking people on the East African coast. It should be recognized, however, that there are subtle differences between regions and times; the meanings of the word are not monolithic.\(^{22}\) *Heshima* was a critical component of having *uungwana* or being *ustaarabt*, both concepts surrounding elite status.\(^{23}\) Thus, *heshima* has often been associated with the coastal elite. But this does not mean that people in the lower and even slave classes did not work to have *heshima*; they certainly did. As Laura Fair notes in her discussion of clothing in post-abolition Unguja, former slaves were excited about the possibilities of dressing with *heshima*\(^{24}\). Moreover, a British administrator wrote in 1905 that during Ramadan everything closed because, "Natives endeavour to follow the Arabs in their customs, not so much from religious convictions as from the *heshima* thus acquired."\(^{25}\) Having *heshima* allowed a person to fit themselves into the social hierarchy of the islands.\(^{26}\)

The terminology of *heshima* is critical to understanding coastal society, particularly during the pre- and post-abolition periods. In Frederick Johnson’s

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\(^{23}\) See Randall Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*: 72–73. Pouwels discusses how the terminology of “being civilized” shifted during the nineteenth century from the localized idea of *uungwana* to the replication of Arabness as civility in the meaning of *ustaarabu*.

\(^{24}\) Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 67–95.


\(^{26}\) Early ethnographers acknowledged the importance of *heshima* in the communities they studied. The Reverend Godfrey Dale of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa reported about the “customs with regard to eating and *heshima*” in “An Account of the Principal Customs and Habits of the Natives Inhabiting the Bondei Country, Compiled Mainly for the Use of European Missionaries in the Country,” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 25 (1896), 181–239.
1939 dictionary, *heshima* was defined as “honour, dignity, position, rank ... respect, reverence, modesty and courtesy.” William Harold Ingrams, a colonial official from 1919–1927, notes (in reference to Arabs):

Nothing ... is more important to the Arab than good manners and *heshima* ... *Heshima* is a very comprehensive and expressive word, which means not only respect, but the maintenance of that position to which respect is due.... I shall have further to say on the politeness and hospitality of the Arab when I speak of the same thing among the natives, for it is impossible entirely to dissociate the two.

Ingrams goes further when describing the “natives” that, “it is a great insult to say to anyone *hunu abadu* (You have no manners); in fact this often leads to blows and litigation.” Thus *heshima* was found among all levels of society and different ethnicities.

Definitions of *heshima* tend to revolve around ways to acquire it rather than a simplified meaning and are extremely gendered. For example, Middleton argued that on Lamu, men accessed *heshima* through “scholarship, business integrity and skill, and piety.” While Newbury pointed out that in nineteenth-century Zanzibar, *heshima* was “derived from a large number of dependents.... a value, perhaps more important to the Arab elite than the maximization of profits.” For women, *heshima* was displayed through their speech, children’s behavior, clothing, and most importantly, their sexual purity. Among the WaDigo, because *heshima* was associated with being free-born, “leisure, influence and authority” indicated *heshima*. Roger Gomm argued that to WaDigo, “being hardworking, bearing abuse without redress” were signs that someone was not free-born and as such lacked *heshima*. This interpretation of *heshima* hints at the contradictions apparent in the connection of *heshima* to leisure rather than to work.

The concept of *heshima* was all-encompassing in people’s lives; not only does it mean maintaining respect and purity (for women) but also having public “honor.” The notion of “honor” is one familiar to historians of Europe and Latin America, where honor was “more than a set of rules for governing behavior. It

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29 Ibid., 266.
was your very being. For in an honor-based culture there was no self-respect independent of the respect of others ... unless it was confirmed publicly." As Johnson and Lipsett-Rivera observe for Latin America, "honor" had two meanings, status and virtue. In many ways, this understanding of honor correlates with Swahili *heshima*: it was constructed in the public realm, it was a form of social status, and it represented social hierarchy. Marc Swartz also argues that for the Swahili living in Mombasa, honor was "one of the most significant—publicly, the most significant—parts of life for them."

While *heshima* may seem simply a cultural construction of local interactions, it was at the very heart of daily survival for many people living on Pemba. Just as Arlette Farge's work in Paris showed "honor" as a form of "community credit," *heshima* gave people a means to tap into local social and economic networks. Pembans were rural citizens and, as in small towns everywhere, people knew each other's business. If you did not have *heshima*, then people would be less likely to help you when you needed it. Especially in the early days of the colonial period, when few written records existed, government officials—both British and Islamic—could only take people on their word and the word of their supporters. *Heshima* was an important concept for if a person had *heshima* it meant they were respected in their communities and had more weight in the courts. Moreover, the courts were a significant way in which to contest and confirm *heshima*, as a public forum that allowed the community to speak to people's status in society.

The story of Binti Mabrooki recorded in February 1898 illustrates the role *heshima* played in gaining acceptance locally and with court officials. In August of 1897, Salim bin Abdullah, a man from the northern part of Pemba, was visiting Chake Chake when he saw a woman, Binti Mabrooki, whom he claimed was his former slave. Salim tried to convince Binti Mabrooki to return with him but she

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38 Arabic records existed but were limited in this period. Most mortgages and other contracts were verbal until the 1910s.

39 Certainly other ways of contesting and confirming *heshima* existed, however, the documentary record is extremely limited for this earlier period.

40 July 5th 1899, Vice-consul, AC 5/3, Zanzibar National Archives (hereafter ZNA).
refused. As it happened, another man named Tendeja saw them on the street and remembered witnessing the sale of Binti Mabrooki some seven or eight years earlier. The three of them went to the British port authority, Mr. Edib, who completely misunderstood what was being said to him. He understood Binti Mabrooki to claim that Tendeja was trying to sell her to Salim, thus Mr. Edib immediately sent them all to the liwali, a local judicial representative of the Sultan, as slave dealing was illegal by this time.

Once Salim and Tendeja were able to testify in front of the Swahili-speaking liwali, it became clear that Binti Mabrooki had indeed been sold to Salim, but she claimed that she had been illegally seized by the Tumbatu man who sold her to Salim. Arguing that she had run away from her original Tumbatu owner, a different man from the one who sold her to Salim, she asserted the sale to Salim was invalid. The liwali asked for the help of the British vice-consul, Dr. Sullivan-O'Beare, to find the two Tumbatu men to corroborate her story. While the case was being investigated, the vice-consul employed Binti Mabrooki on a construction job. During this time, Dr. Sullivan-O'Beare decided that Binti Mabrooki was not a trustworthy person. He could not find the two Tumbatu men and at one point he impugned her heshima by stating, "She herself told me that she was living with her 'husband,' but doubtless that was her euphemistic manner of describing what would seem to have been entirely a temporary alliance. So much then for the first part of Binti Mabrooki's story." Dr. Sullivan-O'Beare came to realize what others had suggested, that Binti Mabrooki did not have heshima and as such was open to condemnation from both British officials and the man Tendeja, who was probably a slave himself.

In 1898, heshima was enough of a concern that one concubine complained to Dr. Sullivan-O'Beare and requested her freedom because "she did not receive the amount of 'heshima' to which she considered herself entitled" from her master. While Dr. Sullivan-O'Beare did not record what she expected in terms of heshima, it was probably similar to concepts of maintenance within a marriage. The master/husband was expected to provide the necessities of the

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41 Tumbatu is the third largest island of the Zanzibar isles. A large population of Tumbatu people live in the southern part of Pemba island.

42 July 5th 1899, Vice-consul, AC 5/3, ZNA.

43 It is interesting that she is called "binti" since this tends to be a term of respect and is generally used with women whose fathers were known (usually not a slave). In neither of the later cases, discussed below, were Zuhura or Bahati addressed as binti. An older women would be addressed as bi or bibi. Perhaps the vice-consul used binti instead of bibi as a means to suggest her age. Tendeja was probably a slave because the vice-consul only used his first name.

44 February 16th 1898, Vice-consul, AC 5/2, ZNA

household. Perhaps this master did not bring her as much cloth as one of his other concubines, showing a lack of respect or some other occasion that made her feel disrespected. Nonetheless, the concept of *heshima* was important enough that early in the Protectorate period, British officials, such as Sullivan-O’Beare and Robert Lyne, recognized the term and specifically used it rather than the English equivalent “respect,” thus acknowledging its cultural significance in Pemban life.

*Heshima* was a core element during the post-abolition period and the integration of slaves into Pemban society. According to colonial officials and missionaries, two thirds of the people living on Pemba at emancipation were slaves.\(^{46}\) This means that after 1897, Pemban society saw the beginning of a transformation as a proportion of the population began efforts to shift their identity away from being slaves.\(^{47}\) To maintain the social hierarchy, notions of social credibility had to be imposed to differentiate the classes and *heshima* was a key element. As both Pouwels and Glassman note, people worked to gain status, whether through wealth, lineage, or piety; *heshima* was a means for coastal elite to impose their notions of social norms on the lower classes. Bravman has argued “community is built largely upon people’s efforts to develop and reproduce a domain of commonality, fellow-feeling, and shared beliefs and behaviors, and systems of controls and constraints over a group.”\(^{48}\) Not only was *heshima* a common ideal, worked toward by all communities, but it was also a control mechanism of the elite. A person gained *heshima* through the communal acknowledgement of others, it was an extremely public phenomenon and one that was negotiated within the community.

“A Solitary Tree Builds Not”

Mervyn Beech, the linguistic examiner in Kiswahili for the East African Protectorate in the 1910s, spent a number of years on the coast collecting stories,

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\(^{46}\) Timothy Welliver has criticized these numbers based on the number of slaves who actually applied for their emancipation papers. He suggests that the percentage was much lower. See “The Clove Factor in Colonial Zanzibar 1890–1950” (Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University, 1990).

\(^{47}\) For examples of slaves who continued to work for their masters on the Swahili coast, see Patricia Romero, “‘Where Have All the Slaves Gone?’ Emancipation and Post-Emancipation in Lamu, Kenya,” *Journal of African History* 27, 3 (1986), 497–512; and Strobel, *Muslim Women in Mombasa*. John Craster mentioned talking to a “little boy” on Pemba who claimed to be a slave. Since the 1897 emancipation decree automatically freed all children born after 1890, and Craster did not come to Pemba until 1912, unless the “little boy” was over 22 years old, he should have been free. And the final abolition decree of 1909 would also have made him free. Thus slavery continued to exist on Pemba beyond the emancipation. See J.E.E. Craster, *Pemba: The Spice Island of Zanzibar* (London, 1913).

parables, riddles, and proverbs in two dialects of Swahili. Swahili speakers are known for their usage of stories and aphorisms in everyday speech. In kanga cloth (worn by women), for example, each pattern had a name with a specific meaning. In the 1950s, when Wilfred Whiteley visited Pemba to record the poetry and dialect of the island, he noted that it had a long literary tradition and usage of poetics in everyday life.

While all of Beech’s informants lived in Mombasa, several were originally from Pemba. Beech was very careful to note his sources for each story and the proverbs were given with both Kimvita (Mombasan) and Kijizirat (Pemban) spellings and interpretations. While his collection is certainly limited in that it contains the knowledge of a few men, it is also a rare glimpse into the language used on Pemba. Moreover, because Beech’s informants were socially privileged, these proverbs help construct both the cultural ideals perpetuated by the upper classes and their fears about social disintegration in the post-abolition period. These proverbs suggest the ideals perpetuated by the elite of Pemban society: people should care for one another, work hard, and know one’s place. An undercurrent in the proverbs indicates the difficulty of dealing with “strangers,” known in Swahili as wageni, who did not “fit” and might disrupt local social mores. Both the “ideals” and the concerns about wageni point to an elite struggling with new social constructions. The opportunity to see the ideas used on Pemba in the 1910s is a fascinating indication of how people viewed community, heshima, and social hierarchy.

The proverbs show the communal ideals of Pemban society, where people were encouraged to help one another. They suggest that individuals could not exist without the help of others, reinforcing both the need for former slaves to integrate into local society and the need to maintain social constructions. Just as Trevor Getz pointed out in colonial Senegal, former slaves and masters were often dependent on one another in the post-emancipation period, so too were those on Pemba. To gain access to fertile land, former slaves often had to work within the connections they already had in the community—their former masters. Their former masters needed their help, however, since during the clove harvest all

49 Mervyn W. H. Beech, Aids to the Study of Ki-Swahili: Four Studies Compiled and Annotated (New York, 1918).

50 See Wilfred Howell Whiteley, The Dialects and Verse of Pemba (Kampala, 1958).

51 Beech used Kijizirat but Whitely used KiPemba to describe the dialect. Kijizirat references the Arab name for Pemba.

52 In general, Pembans call outsiders wageni (sing. mgeni) or guests. However, people without heshima, and especially slaves from the mainland, were washenzi (sing. mshenzi) or barbarians. Thus a person could graciously be called mgeni while people actually viewed them as mshenzi.

53 Getz, Slavery and Reform, 129–33.
hands were needed to get the cloves off the trees before they rotted. The Pemban proverbs reminded people that mti pweke haujengi (a solitary tree builds not) and it was best for everyone, not just the elite or slaves, to build a strong communal identity. 54

While building a strong community was important, how citizens should behave was also displayed in the aphorisms collected by Beech. The ideal ways people should live were embedded in the proverbs: humility, no gossiping, being respectful of others even if they are of a lower social status, and being gracious of spirit. John Middleton noted that “by behaving with courtesy, sensitivity, and goodness toward someone else, a person both acquires heshima and bestows it on the person addressed.” 55 Thus the proverb lebeka si utumwa (to respectfully answer is no sign of servitude) underscores the idea that all members of society could display heshima and that respect of others did not simply connote slave ancestry. 56

Discussion of work habits constituted a large number of Beech’s collection of proverbs. 57 These sayings point to the contradictory nature of how leisure was defined in contrast to “laziness” by Pembans. Shaaban bin Muhamad, one of Beech’s Pemban informants, explained that proverbs concerning work were said to “lazy people,” showing that earning heshima from neighbors did not come easily. If someone was viewed as “lazy” they would have less heshima than a hard worker. Yet leisure was associated with wealth and as such heshima, thus the elite proved their heshima by not working. Phyllis Martin’s definition of leisure as “more than play, for it is juxtaposed with work and it can involve both non-obligated activities ... and activities that involve fulfilling social obligations, such as membership of an association or visiting relatives,” shows that leisure was more than simply not working. 58 Laura Fair also noted that in Zanzibar Town leisure time spent in the baraza talking was “an essential element of community membership.” 59 Consequently, the way people spent their non-working time was critical to their development of heshima. If they participated in community

54 Beech, Aids to the Study of Ki-Swahili, 118.


56 Beech, Aids to the Study of Ki-Swahili, 123. Interestingly, the proverb kiburi si maungwana (pride is not the sign of a gentleman) reinforces the older terminology of unungwana versus ustaurabu, suggesting that the ideal of “Arabness” had not yet become hegemonic on Pemba by the turn of the century.

57 Beech’s book was designed to teach colonial administrators about coastal culture and language. It may be that the focus on “work” was his own conscious or subconscious effort to teach other officials how to spur on the workers.


obligations, then leisure was respectable rather than being "lazy," regardless of their economic or social status.

In post-emancipation African societies, few people trusted strangers (wageni) unless they needed their labor. The majority of former slaves living in small island situations often remained working, on some level, for their former masters because the alternatives were limited. On Pemba, there was not a large-scale exodus of former slaves at emancipation, although census records show that the number of people claiming to be former slaves diminished radically. The Pemban aphorisms collected by Beech highlight the concerns people had about trusting outsiders. For the pre-emancipation period, Pouwels argues that "the overriding predicament faced by these [coastal] societies, then was that of having to absorb strangers, Africans and Asians alike, into their midst, and to indigenize them in order to avoid potentially destabilizing changes." This suggests that being an outsider, even one with heshima, could be difficult for the individual as well as the community trying to absorb the stranger.

These fears were further underscored in the parable, "For whom God has no pity, have no pity." In the story, a husband repeatedly tells his wife, who wants to help a blind man, that if God had no pity on the blind man, then neither should she since he is probably a bad man anyway. The woman insists on helping the blind man, learning that he cannot walk, she gives up her place on the family donkey. Once the three reach a town, the husband and wife take the blind man to the market area so that he can beg. But as they begin to leave, the blind man calls out to the townspeople that he is being robbed. Eventually, the judge figures out that the blind man is the thief, but not before the three spend several nights in jail. While this story raises several concerns, it illuminates the social precariousness of being a "stranger," when even those with heshima could still be falsely accused by a beggar emphasizing the uncertainties of post-emancipation society.

Laura Fair also indicates these concerns, as well as illustrates the image of Pemba as different from Unguja, when she cites a Swahili adage from around 1900, "Proceed cautiously in Pemba" (Pemba peremba). It is worth citing the entire adage because it illuminates local perceptions of the social turmoil occurring on Pemba at that time. It states: Proceed cautiously in Pemba/If you come wearing a loincloth, you leave wearing a turban/If you come wearing a turban, you leaving wearing a loincloth. This saying indicates concerns about

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62 Beech, Aids to the Study of Ki-Swahili, 44–54.

63 Fair, Pastimes and Politics, 64. Pemba peremba/ukija na winda, hutoka na kilemba/Ukija na kilemba, hutoka na winda.
outsiders, fears that were quickly being realized. As one of my informants complained, “Mangas [Arabs] took away our wealth because they came here with nothing but later they became the biggest landowners”; at the same time Pemban plantation-owners were becoming more and more indebted to moneylenders. This adage also points to how wealth had become an arbiter of social status and that lineage was no longer the main definition of who had *heshima* and who did not.

Many of the aphorisms from Beech’s work revolve around notions of social hierarchy. Contrary to some arguments concerning the imposition of a racial hierarchy on Unguja by the British, locals already viewed people through a lens of social status. The main focus on Pemba was not on race per se, but in recognizing hierarchy and a person’s place in it. Although the proverb “mwenyi nguvu si mwenzio, usicheze na hakimu ujapokuwa moto” (a powerful man is no companion, don’t play with a judge even if he is a child) suggests that on some level ethnic hierarchy was also embedded in social status. The connection of a “powerful man” to being a “judge” implies that a person with status was Islamic and probably Arab, since the justices of the Sultanate, the *kadhi*, *mudir*, and *liwali* were almost always Arab. However, the proverbs are tantalizing in that one’s position in the social hierarchy was never specifically defined by ethnicity or wealth. Economic status was discussed only in terms of the “poor” (*masikini*), but then the term poor was never defined beyond “beggars;” specific degrees of wealth or status did not appear. The proverbs draw a picture of a non-egalitarian, stratified region where placement on local social ladders likely had as much to do with wealth and *heshima* as it did with ethnic identity.

As discussed in the next section, these proverbs reinforce the reality faced by the vice-consul, Dr. Sullivan-O’Beare as he sought to understand and adjudicate court cases. Pemba is a culture of indirect language usage. As Ingrams noted, while a person would not directly tell another person that they lacked manners (*humu abadit*) or risk conflict, they might tell a parable or proverb with this meaning. Also, women could wear a kanga with a suitable meaning when visiting a person’s house as a means to communicate their message. The core

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64 Mzee Said, interview by author, Masota, Pemba, October 30, 2002. Lineage certainly was important—it was “old money,” to use an American term, while the newly wealthy without lineage were “new money.” As happened in many cultures, however, “old money” often married “new money” in an effort to stay solvent, thus allowing “new money” to move into the social circles of the old.

65 In his work on “racial thought” on colonial Zanzibar, Glassman also explicitly argues that racial and ethnic identities were not fixed by British policies. See Jonathon Glassman, “Sorting Out the Tribes: The Creation of Racial Identities in Colonial Zanzibar’s Newspaper Wars,” *Journal of African History* 41, 3 (2000), 395-428 and “Slower Than a Massacre.”

66 Beech, *Aids to the Study of Ki-Swahili*, 120, 125.

67 Kanga were often gifts between friends and family, and a man was expected to give them to his wife several times a year. It was not uncommon for people to make a statement with their
implications found among all of the proverbs recorded by Beech stressed the need to "be known" in your community and to have *heshima*. However, these qualities also fit into models perpetuated by the elite as a means to maintain social hierarchy.

**Recognizing “Community”**

In 1895, the British Protectorate government of Zanzibar stationed a vice-consul on Pemba in order to protect the interests of British subjects, who consisted for the most part of Indians and British missionaries, and to implement British laws on the island. The enforcement of treaties concerning slavery meant that a free person could not be enslaved, although slavery itself was still allowed on the island. The vice-consul, Dr. Sullivan-O’Beare, had to use interpreters because he did not speak Kiswahili, Arabic, or Gujarati (the three main languages used on the island). This handicapped him in trying to understand complaints that he heard from individuals. Consequently, Sullivan-O’Beare relied on communities with local knowledge for matters brought to his court. Community knowledge, *heshima*, and local recognition were crucial for people brought to the consular courts.

Previous to the Protectorate period the British had an active consular court on the islands, but this only affected Indians and Arabs who were considered subjects of the Queen and were generally civil cases. At the beginning of the Protectorate, the Sultan had a system in place headed by a *liwali*, who acted as a governor of the island. Reporting to the *liwali*, *akida* were the government officials responsible for the maintenance of law and order on the island. The village *masheha* reported to the *akida* for their district and were responsible for maintaining order on the local level. Kadhi were responsible for the administration of civil law in accordance with Muslim law.

With the beginning of the Protectorate in the 1890s, a new legal hierarchy was created on Pemba. At the top of the hierarchy was the British vice-consul for

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68 Technically, slaves were emancipated in 1897, however the institution of slavery still existed until 1909.

69 Sullivan-O’Beare, AC9/2, ZNA requested extra salary to pay for all of the translation services necessary in his work.

70 *Annual Report for Zanzibar* (1882), 1167. For the years 1877–79, eighty-six percent of court cases were civil. Any Arab who was technically a resident of a crown colony (and as such NOT a resident of Zanzibar) was under the legal jurisdiction of the British consul, as well as all non-resident Indians from British colonies.

71 The vice-consul referred to the *liwali* incorrectly as the “Wali.”
Pemba. He was the main contact person for the British Resident on Unguja, as well as the adjudicator of all criminal offenses.\(^2\) The earlier system with a liwali, akida, kadhi, and masheha remained, but was subordinated under the vice-consul. In 1914, when the Protectorate was transferred to the Colonial Office from the Foreign Office, a new system with a district commissioner in charge of three district officers replaced the vice-consul and liwali positions.\(^3\) The akida (they became mudir in the 1920s), kadhi and masheha remained.\(^4\) In general it appears that in the pre-abolition period the vice-consul heard cases when local justices (the kadhi and akida) feared to rule against members of the elite, even when their behavior was atrocious and lacked heshima.\(^5\)

In 1895, the notorious case of Ali bin Abdulla was heard by the vice-consul. Abdulla had chained several runaway slaves (not all of whom belonged to him) to trees and left them to die of thirst and heatstroke. The local liwali absolutely refused to do anything about the case because Ali bin Abdulla, an Omani Arab, was extremely well-connected to the ruling Sultan. Moreover, Abdulla’s Arab and African neighbors had been complaining about him to the liwali for years and it was only after he broke British law that the Sultan was forced to punish his bad behavior. See ZNA AC2/19 for the voluminous correspondence concerning this case.

\(^2\) In the *Annual Report for 1914*, it was stated that, “No criminal cases are heard by native judges.” It is unclear if Arabs were considered “natives” or not because they were in the 1910 census data. Traditionally mudir were Arab, thus perhaps by the 1930s, when Arabs were no longer considered “natives,” their ability to adjudicate criminal offences was accepted.


\(^4\) According to the *Annual Report for 1931*, 24. There were masheha for each community/village with a mudir for each district on the island, and three kadhi (in Chake Chake, Wete, and Mkoani). Technically the mudir only had criminal jurisdiction but could resolve civil cases if all parties agreed. He could impose criminal sentences but only in cases involving 30 days or less of imprisonment. Kadhi only had jurisdiction over civil suits not exceeding Rs. 500/- in value. Anything above had to be handled by the district officer.

\(^5\) In 1895, the notorious case of Ali bin Abdulla was heard by the vice-consul. Abdulla had chained several runaway slaves (not all of whom belonged to him) to trees and left them to die of thirst and heatstroke. The local liwali absolutely refused to do anything about the case because Ali bin Abdulla, an Omani Arab, was extremely well-connected to the ruling Sultan. Moreover, Abdulla’s Arab and African neighbors had been complaining about him to the liwali for years and it was only after he broke British law that the Sultan was forced to punish his bad behavior. See ZNA AC2/19 for the voluminous correspondence concerning this case.

\(^6\) I can only assume that her sons were not of age and could not take on this role.
for the past twenty years, that she and her sons were free people.... I made
enquiries amongst the people living in the neighborhood of Bahati’s shamba, and
what I learned from them satisfied me that Bahati’s statements were true."77 Her
neighbors acknowledged that Bahati and her sons were indeed free and that she
was considered part of the local community. Her ownership of land—which was
uncontested when her husband died—as well as her children born to a free man,
were recognized as markers of her own status as a free woman. Bahati’s case is
interesting because it marks the way former slaves were integrated into a
community over time. No one questioned that Bahati had previously been a slave,
but her neighbors were able to vouch for her status as a free woman and a
respected member of their community.

In contrast to Bahati’s case, just ten years later, the vice-consul again
received a complaint concerning a widow who was a former slave. The story of
Zuhura, widow of Juma bin Hamis Mgunya, is particularly illustrative of the
necessity to have the support of the local community for survival. In 1906, Juma
bin Hamis died, leaving his property to his wife Zuhura. Juma’s other heirs, who
were his nephews (no children were mentioned) requested that the local kadhi
disinherit Zuhura because they claimed she was a slave when she married Juma
and should not inherit, according to Islamic law.

In March of 1906 the acting consular agent, Mr. H. Lister, was given the
complaint by the Friends’ missionary, Herbert Armitage. According to Lister, the
kadhi refused to make a final decision, referring the matter to a higher authority
(the British vice-consul), even though the kadhi had documentary proof that
Zuhura was free at the time of marriage. A few days later Zuhura’s former master,
Sultani bin Amri, and his son came to Chake Chake and testified that they had
witnessed the marriage after Amri had freed Zuhura. Yet, her case was still being
contested in July, when Armitage again complained that the kadhi was refusing to
resolve the case in Zuhura’s favor.78

Why did Zuhura have such a difficult time winning her case, even with her
former master vouching for her, while Bahati easily won against a powerful
Omani Arab? These cases illuminate two points: distinctions drawn among the
elite and efforts by the elite to maintain their status in post-abolition Pemba. First,
even though Bahati brought her case against an Omani family, they were Mazrui
and as such not from the ruling BuSaidi clan; this meant that Mohena may not
have been well connected. Moreover, Bahati was not making any effort to become
“part” of the local elite. In turn, by giving Zuhura recognition as Juma’s
legitimate wife, the kadhi would have been giving her status within the Mgunya
community, a group that fell within the Shirazi elite. Second, Bahati brought her
case in the pre-abolition period, when no real threat from a few former slaves

77 Outgoing letter from Dr. Sullivan-O’Beare, July 27, 1896, AC5/2, ZNA.
78 Letter from Friends Industrial Mission (Herbert Armitage), July 16, 1906, AC8/9, ZNA.
existed. Zuhura, on the other hand, was not only petitioning to be recognized as a legitimate member of the local elite, but she was doing this in the post-abolition period. As the proverbs discussed above suggest, the elite on Pemba felt threatened by emancipation; when potentially any mshenzi could become mstaarabu and as such a member of the elite, any public act to show social boundaries was used. Zuhura probably represented these fears of shifting social status among the elite. Consequently, the kadhi refused to rule on her case, even with overwhelming proof. These two cases indicate the awkward nature of the abolition process on Pemba; as colonial officials attempted to mediate a major social change, locals resisted the cultural and social implications inherent in the new British laws.

These two cases illustrate the ways in which people living on Pemba interpreted their identities—while an understanding of the slave/free dichotomy existed on the island in the pre- and post-abolition periods, a person’s identity was not self-defined. Identity was a socially created entity and required the allegiance of your neighbors. Bahati’s neighbors came out and spoke on her behalf; they were the witnesses who could convince both the British and the local kadhi that indeed Bahati was a free woman. Yet, Zuhura was not asking to be seen as just a free slave, she was asking for recognition as the wife of someone with status, recognition that the community was unwilling to give her. Part of this may have been her more recent acquisition of freedom; Bahati was a child when freed and Zuhura was an adult. Bahati and Zuhura’s cases are particularly good examples of court cases, but many others exist. Notably though, almost all of these cases were of women and children, suggesting the dynamics of gender and social weakness in shaping local identities.

**Gender and Social Vulnerability**

In most post-emancipation societies, slaves were outsiders to the society, marked as such by skin tone, religion, limited ownership of land, or lack of citizenship and political standing and on Pemba, often by gender. Numerous members of the community were socially vulnerable; particularly those deemed outsiders, ex-slaves, and especially women, who were often members of the first two categories. Heshima was the hardest to maintain for these groups of people and the most critical.

With the slave population on the Pemba at roughly 67 percent before abolition, a large proportion of the population was “integrated” into the island communities by 1924, when only 14 percent claimed an “ex-slave” status. It is

79 Her master had to travel to Chake Chake, suggesting that he did not live in the vicinity of Zuhura at the time of her husband’s death and was not an effective ally in the face of local community opposition.

80 For Pemba specifically see Newman, *Banani*. Also, internal Friends mission documents from the Friends House, Euston, London. For general estimates, see L. W. Hollingsworth,
likely that most former slaves remained on the island.\textsuperscript{81} The total number of people listing some form of mainland ethnicity was only 32 percent—still less than half of 67 percent of the population at the time of abolition. By the 1931 census, the numbers had dropped further, suggesting that the death rate was not the only reason for the changing statistics of identity.

Beyond ethnic identity there is the question of how and why former slaves were accepted in communities, especially on Pemba, where communities were small and people knew each other’s histories. If a person moved to another village as an outsider, they had to find ways to be accepted locally. As the proverbs suggested, \textit{wageni} were not immediately trusted or necessarily helped. People needed acceptance to get access to land to grow food, so survival generally depended on being connected to the community somehow. The example of Binti Mabrooki, who escaped from slavery only to be found several years later and “claimed,” suggests that permanently escaping from slavery was not an easy thing to do, much less hiding one’s “identity.” Needless to say, shifting identity meant having \textit{heshima}, which gave people membership in a local community. For former slaves and women, living life as an individual, separate from a family was virtually impossible. Those who were socially vulnerable, women, foreigners, and ex-slaves, struggled to build \textit{heshima} in their communities so their identity would be accepted. Although there were certainly a variety of ways for people, especially women, to confirm their status and \textit{heshima}, the courts were an avenue for redefining or validating identity. The story of Bahati shows the way a woman could use the vice-consul and \textit{kadhi} courts to prove her \textit{heshima}. However, in a time when men controlled the courts, their use by women was precarious, as the case involving Fatma binti Dadi el Bahansania shows.

The 1918 case of Fatma binti Dadi el Bahansania versus Seif bin Hassan bin Shame el Jaziri highlights the way identity and \textit{heshima} were mediated by gender.\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Heshima} was possessed by individuals but also by families as a whole. The reputation, the \textit{heshima}, of a family rested with all members, but particularly with the female members of a household.\textsuperscript{83} To preserve a family’s honor, the male relatives needed to keep their female members under control. The case of Fatma and Seif shows the use of the court system by women who wanted to

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\textsuperscript{82} When John Craster asked an elderly former slave in 1912 if he wanted to go back to Malawi, the man responded, “Go back to those savages? No.” Craster, Pemba, 95.

\textsuperscript{83} Zanzibar National Archives, Pemba branch (PNA) AK1/9, H.H. Sultan’s Court, Civil Case No.166 of 1918. I designate the branch of the Zanzibar National Archives on Pemba as PNA. The accession numbers in the Pemban archives have been changed since 2002, the files formerly classified as AK are now classified as Al.

\textsuperscript{83} Hirsch, Pronouncing and Persevering, Chapter 2.
escape the control of male relatives and men trying to reassert their familial power.

Seif, a cousin of Fatma, argued in court that he did not receive a share of Fatma’s sister’s estate, although later in the case it becomes apparent that indeed Seif had received his share. Why then did Seif bring Fatma to court? His purpose appears to be the public rebuke of Fatma by showing that she did not belong to the elite el Bahansani family and to bring her back under his control as the family head. This purpose is emphasized by the court’s first request: that Seif prove how he could be Fatma’s cousin, since she appeared to be of a noble lineage and he was not.

The first witness was asked to give evidence not on whether Seif received a share of the inheritance but on Fatma’s identity. The sheha (local government official) of Piki, testified that he learned that Fatma was not Bahasani because, “some Saareefs came to him and informed him that she is not Bahasania.” While the sheha admitted that, “he never heard this from anyone else, [he] was satisfied with this man’s statement [the Saareef].” The sheha cast immediate doubt over Fatma’s identity by stating that another member of this clan, Salim bin Hsabbah el Bahasani, declared that she had falsely taken on the el Bahasani identity. The next witness, Musa bin Ali Swahili stated “that Seif ... and Fatma binti Dadi bin Shame el Jaziri were cousins.” Musa noted that “the plaintiff, Mkongwe binti Dadi, is a Pemba woman.” He indicated that Fatma was known in her home community as Mkongwe. Musa continued to explain that he was neighbors with the el Jaziri family and remembered when Fatma/Mkongwe and her sister were orphaned and sent to live with Seif. It was Seif who arranged their first marriages when they left his home. Moreover, later witnesses threw out hints as to the disrepute of Fatma by stating they did not know “what happened to her husband.” Clearly, no husband would have let Fatma claim an identity to which she was not entitled. This set up the case that Fatma was a disorderly woman and without heshima. Seif was successful in publicly censuring Fatma’s efforts to remove herself from his control. Strobel and Hirsch suggest that around the turn of the century, the local courts generally protected the rights of men. However, with the advent of the British Protectorate, women began appealing to the British courts in an effort to win their cases.

The social vulnerability of women without male “protectors” (husbands, fathers, adult sons, masters) comes through the variety of cases brought before the vice-consul. From the cases discussed above to the many examples of free women

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84 Zanzibar National Archives, Pemba branch (PNA) AK1/9, H.H. Sultan’s Court, Civil Case No.166 of 1918.

85 Zanzibar National Archives, Pemba branch (PNA) AK1/9, H.H. Sultan’s Court, Civil Case No.166 of 1918.

kidnapped and sold into slavery, it is apparent that women were more vulnerable in a slave society. This vulnerability points to the need of women to integrate into communities as rapidly as possible. The women whose testimony was believed in the consular court had strong communal connections; the vice-consul was quick to dismiss women as liars if witnesses disputed their accounts. Moreover, Strobel hints at the difficulty of former slaves in escaping their slave identity and their former master's control. According to Strobel, until the 1920s, numerous *makadhi* in Mombasa would not conduct a marriage for a former slave without the permission of the former master. She notes that women's "appeals to British administrators consistently expressed the theme of vulnerability."*^*8

Gender also played an important role in how women integrated into the local communities. Some scholars highlight the ease with which women married into the local communities and took on the identity of their husbands.*^9* Yet, Zuhura's case gives other insights since the difficulties that plagued her were probably connected to her lack of children. Considering that some studies of coastal women show that almost twenty percent of all women were barren, Zuhura's plight could not have been all that uncommon either.*^9* Were women able to integrate more effectively than men? The numbers still affirm that women could move into the local community more easily. If the Quakers are to be believed, the majority of former slaves were women but by the census of 1924, the number of Christian men (who were usually former slaves) was double that of women; this suggests that indeed women were more likely to marry into local families and gain a new identity. But it certainly did not help all women re-

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88 In one letter concerning two different women who applied for his assistance in confirming that they were free women he noted, "The statements made by the woman Habiba appear to be equally untrue ... Both she and Raha are simply runaway slaves." January 7, 1897, AC2/24, ZNA. Also see Hirsch, *Pronouncing and Persevering*, 67, she notes that "women's speech is suspect, not to be counted on, and to be suppressed...."


90 Ibid., 59–60.

91 See Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*.

92 See reference to Young's Report in the *Medical Report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the Zanzibar Protectorate for the Year 1935*: 20. Young did his survey solely on Pemba and found that 260 of the 1,319 women he interviewed were barren.
identify, as both Bahati and Zuhura were known to be former slaves still, even if married to free men.\textsuperscript{93}

Islamic courts were gendered spaces: the judges were always men and male witnesses were privileged over females.\textsuperscript{94} However, women were often the petitioners in the \textit{kadhi}'s court, as it was one of the only places of recourse for women who claimed mistreatment or those seeking divorce. In the present-day, women have often been successful in the \textit{kadhi}'s courts, likely because they had learned from each other the language of how to negotiate the system.\textsuperscript{95} Zuhura’s case suggests that she did not have a female network of support from the community because she relied on the male missionaries and male witnesses to make her case, whereas Bahati relied on her neighbors to confirm her identity. It is possible that women could influence their spouses, who in turn were the male witnesses called before the \textit{kadhi} and the vice-consul, or there may have been other reasons.

The case of Zuhura is intriguing but there seems to be a piece missing—why did she go to the missionaries for help? She had male Muslim witnesses to support her case and yet the \textit{kadhi} was unwilling to rule in her favor. Was Zuhura particularly disliked in the community she lived in? Did her former master have questionable \textit{heshima}, or was he unknown in her husband’s community making him less trustworthy? Was her situation a test case, a line in the sand so to speak, concerning the place of former slaves in the social hierarchy in Pemba? There is no clear answer, but Zuhura’s case raises questions about the dynamics of female vulnerability, as well as the social hierarchies of Pemba.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Laura Fair noted that during the Protectorate period in urban Zanzibar Town, \textit{ujirani} or neighborliness, was critical to people’s daily survival. Siti binti Saad’s band regularly sang about the importance of being a good community member.\textsuperscript{96} The same situation pertained in rural Pemba where \textit{heshima} was a critical factor in communal participation. Not only did \textit{heshima} give former slaves an entrance into the free community, but it helped women negotiate the social vulnerability of a society in transition.

\textsuperscript{93} For a discussion of women shifting their ethnic identity see Elisabeth McMahon, “Becoming Pemban: Identity, Social Welfare, and Community during the Protectorate Period” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2005), 33–35.

\textsuperscript{94} In all of the cases that came before the vice-consul, it was regularly noted whether or not the women had male witnesses to corroborate their allegations.

\textsuperscript{95} See Barbara Cooper, \textit{Marriage in Maradi: Gender and Culture in a Hausa Society in Niger, 1900–1989} (Portsmouth, NH, 1997); Hirsch, \textit{Pronouncing and Persevering}; Stiles, “A Kadhi and His Court.”

\textsuperscript{96} Fair, \textit{Pastimes and Politics}, 25.
On Pemba, the collective identity of a local community was built on foundations of religion, familial memberships, *heshima*, and ethnicity. What the proverbs make clear about life on Pemba is that no one could survive on their own. Every person had to participate within community groups on some level, even unwillingly. While it was understood that not everyone fulfills the ideals all the time, it was important to appear to fit into a community. Individual identity came from membership in multiple communities, yet for Pembans the most important communities were at the familial and village level.97

My research indicates that ethnicity has been overemphasized in community building on Pemba. Perhaps in urban areas on Zanzibar or along the coast, where familial and village associations were limited, ethnicity played a larger role, but in rural Pemba ethnicity was less of an immediate factor. This is especially true given the multiplicity of ethnicities that could be found in one family. A woman who had three husbands in a lifetime, each of a different ethnicity, might have children of various ethnic identities. And while they inherited through their father's lines, they also inherited access to common lands from their mother. As one of my informants explained, "The number of local people was small and people used to live together in the villages as one community and they helped each other in different aspects; children upbringing and even personal emergencies."98 This Arab man was from the ruling Busaidi, yet he interpreted community cohesion as more important than an ethnic hierarchy.

For a society in transition, as was post-emancipation Pemba, identifying who belonged in the community and who did not was critical to maintaining social cohesion. As former slaves and outsiders, such as the manga Arabs, gained wealth and land, criteria to define a person's position in the community became crucial. For the most vulnerable members of the society, former slaves and women, gaining acceptance into local communities was critical to their day-to-day livelihood. While *heshima* was not a new concept to the Swahili coast, it began being used in new ways by both the elite of Pemba and those struggling to gain access to status and belonging in local communities.

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97 Mzee Hamad, Tumbe, Pemba, November 2, 2002; Binti Asha and Binti Jamila, Wete, Pemba, November 3, 2002. Interviews by the author. These informants explained that people chose to live near each other to help out their families, living as a community.

98 Mzee Sleiman, interview by author, Konde, Pemba, October 29, 2002.