



TALKING CITIES

Urban Narratives from
Dar es Salaam and Berlin

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<http://urbannarratives.org/en/>

 **SIMULIZI MIJINI**
URBAN NARRATIVES

Funded by the TURN Fund of the German Federal Cultural Foundation





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The texts and photographs collected in this book are the result of an exchange between Ardhi University, Dar es Salaam and TU Berlin. The involved students all participated in writing and editing the stories during two summer schools and a research studio, and the process was based on group work and collaboration. The book is a work of multi-authorship, created by the following contributors:

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INTRODUCTION

Gathered in a circle on the public terrace of an art centre, a group of students is exchanging stories about the two cities they have explored together: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Berlin, Germany. With a ball of blue wool in her hand, MinJi is reading a story about a migrant worker in Dar es Salaam. When she has finished her narration she throws the ball to Arnold, holding the loose yarn tight. He picks up on one of the themes from her tale – perhaps food, migration or street life – and begins recounting “Visual Guidance”, a thematically related story from Berlin, before transferring the wool to the next person: Dorothea with a story about the communicative power of kangas on a street in Uswazi. By juxtaposing facets of urban culture, the group is weaving together narratives of city lives, candid visions of how the urban environment grew and evolved. As the performance progresses and the ball of wool is passed around, the students and their tales of the two cities become intertwined, entangled in a web of people, practices, times and places – a web of urban heritage.

Based on interviews with local people in both cities, the stories the students are recounting were collaboratively written, exchanged and edited during two joint summer schools in Dar es Salaam and Berlin in 2016. This transcultural exploration provided multiple perspectives, empowered us to read our cities differently, and forced us to rethink our sometimes blinkered and biased views. Although some of the stories may seem naive or even banal at first glance, in aggregate they produce rich portraits of urban life and raise political questions about the right to the city and its histories as well as foregrounding shared themes such as migration, land ownership and development.

This book collects these stories and accompanying images of Dar es Salaam and Berlin between its covers, tracking one potential path of the unravelling ball of wool. However, rather than following the thread and reading the book from beginning to end, the reader is encouraged to dip in and out of the stories, developing new connections between the seemingly incompatible cities, multiplying associations and linkages. We hope the parallels and contradictions, similarities and differences contained in the narratives will provoke a new perspective on how to define urban heritage. Only through extended dialogues about the pasts, presents and futures of these and other cities, can we construct a broad people-centred definition of cultural values of cities beyond formalistic or bureaucratic approaches: a definition that includes the cultural practices of all citizens as well as an appreciation of specific physical places.

Duni

BAHARI YA
ARTIKI

BAHARI
YA
PASIFIKI

Amerika
ya
Kaskazini

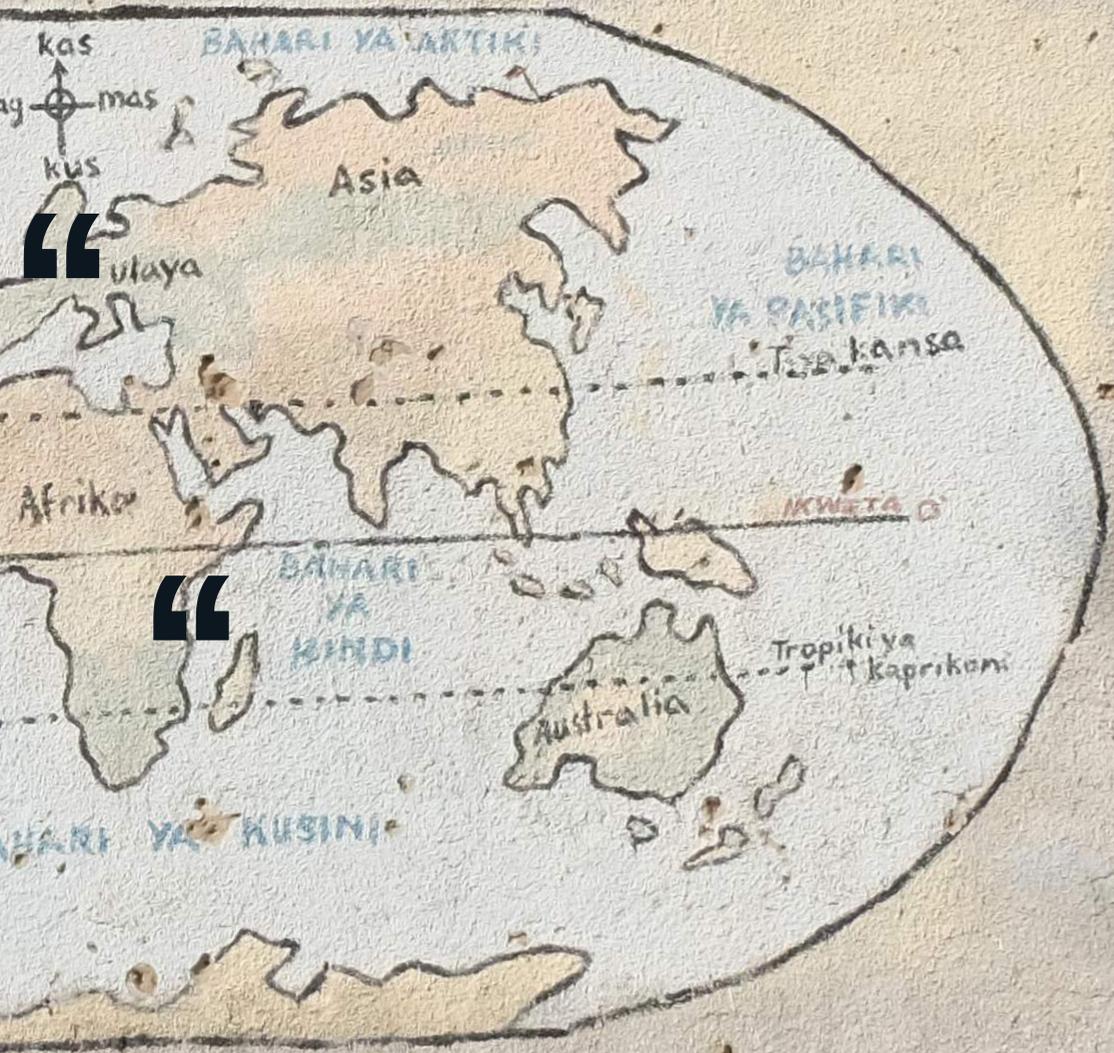
Greenland

BAHARI
YA
ATLANTIKI

kilimo kidogo
kilimo cha kujikimu
kilimo cha kibiashara
Ufugaji wa kuhamama

Amerika
ya
Kusini

nia-KILIMO



DAR ES SALAAM



“You see those towers, they are new, they are not so lovely, they are high but they don’t take up too much space.”

IN THE SHADOW OF THE BIG TOWERS

The Askari Monument is nearby; on Azikiwe Street, we see a building dating back to the 1950s, half in the process of being restructured and half used as a hotel. Further down, the German colonial Lutheran Church and more modern buildings view the rapid changes of Dar es Salaam from the edge of the ocean. This is the city centre, or “Posta”. In a square nearby, some benches are occupied, some are free. A young man strikes up a conversation:

“My name is Peter and I have lived in Dar for twenty years. I am a painter. I walk all day long, the city is very accessible. I think this is a good thing, no limits, only the side around the embassies and the government buildings is sometimes restricted. But most of the time you can go where you like. Everything is accessible and friendly. I walk all day, and yes the city is changing swiftly; many open spaces no longer exist and have been occupied by buildings. But this square remains the same. This place means a lot to me; it also has a historical value...” He is pointing towards the square, between Sokoine Drive, Maktaba Road and Kivukoni Road, with an ocean view, “Here you can meet people until 8pm, they come, they go, they sit on the benches; others sit under the trees, or play checkers, vendors sell water, fruits. There is always someone about!”

Peter continues to talk about how the city is changing, then he gets up and starts walking to show us exactly what he means: “You see those towers, they are new, they are not so lovely, they are high but they don’t take up too much space. Before this building did not exist, there was an empty space where people walked around. This building is also new, it is called Rita Tower. Most of the new buildings are hotels... they are building another one on the corner of Samora Street and Bridge Street.” As we continue along Bridge Street we arrive at a roundabout, on the left is a pink coloured building with 1928 inscribed at the top; it is surrounded by arcades.

“This is a library. It is full of Indian books, yes we are now in the Indian part of the city, but the building is now also used as a money exchange, only half is used as a library. This part of the city, where the ocean view is now blocked by the newer taller buildings, is the part of the town that has undergone less change. Here you can find the oldest buildings, the ones built around 1930 to 1940,” says Peter. He points out another building and tells us that it now used for apartments. Before, some public offices were there, but he does not remember what. We are now walking between Morogoro Road, India Street, Kitumbini Street. “There is a tight correlation between this part of the city and the colonial period,” he explains. Again our attention is drawn to the imposing towers, and the older buildings with their history and relationship to the colonial era are overshadowed.

BERLIN

I see a piece of paper. I see where it was ripped and I see lines and forms. I can assume the idea of letters and directions and I understand that there is an intention behind what I am holding in my hands. I see the obvious: paper and lines. I look up and recognize the look in his eyes, the impatience. For him it is not a ripped piece of paper with lines. It's an idea, a working process, an exercise for the bigger performance. When his fingers lead the pen to draw forms, the paper is not the screen. Instead the letters react to the imagined surface of trains, walls and other city surfaces. He doesn't only focus on colours and proportions but also on how to make that piece efficient. How to manage it under ten minutes, what's background, what's fill, which spray-head to use on which line when it comes down to the big moment. Is it pure vandalism? Is it riot and resistance against a system? Is it supposed to be a sign that no city-area can be kept from being modulated and used by the people?

The piece of paper I am holding might soon be a huge, colourful drawing on a train, hurtling through Berlin's districts, or it could be the flash of colours in a monochrome area. It might not have the chance to exist for long and most people probably won't even like it. But! There will be a short moment of noticing the act when they enter the carriage or walk by the firewall in a gap between two buildings. And if someone looks up precisely when the train drives by, their memory of Berlin's skyline will contain that piece of human intervention. And it will be relieving and dynamic proof of the impossibility of transforming the city into an obeying system.

“...their memory of Berlin's skyline will contain that piece of human intervention.”

ADDING UP TO A SKYLINE



BERLIN

The entire street corner between Turmstraße and Stromstraße is surrounded by a massive hoarding, blocking the view of what is happening behind the batten fence. Its is covered with large advertisement posters. The name 'Schultheiss Quartier' on the construction sign indicates that this was the site of the Berliner Schultheiss brewery. Above the fencing, a yellow brick-built industry chimney, two red spires and the arm of a crane stick up into the sky. A collage of coloured wallpaper catches our attention. The pieces are attached to a firewall. Most of the colours have become faded to pale shades of bordeaux, orange, olive-green, light blue and grey. The wallpaper is all that remains of the living units that were destroyed when the adjacent building was torn down. In contrast, the hoarding shows glossy renderings and advertising slogans promise a glamorous future for Moabit. The area is being turned into a 25,000-square-metre 'Idea Factory' with retail, hotels and art studios. The 19th century structures will be extended by new architecture by the Swiss architect Max Dudler. Only facades are left, their windows have been broken or removed. Some of the existing windows are still covered with labels from their former users, a car workshop, a repair shop for television and electronic devices, and a women's fitness studio offering a trial month 'without risk'. Where have all these shops gone? Were they integrated into the concept of the new 'glamorous' Moabit? Unlikely. The spaces have probably been rented out to chains like Kaufland, dm and MediaMarkt.

“The wallpaper is all that remains of the living units that were destroyed when the adjacent building was torn down.”

NEW GLAMOUR FOR MOABIT



DAR ES SALAAM

When Alex was a little boy, he played football with his friends in the Sinza Mori open space. Sometimes he would watch grown-ups chatting under the tree or count how many cars were being washed on the side of the field. This open space has been always Alex's favourite place in the neighbourhood. But things changed. One day, sudden news that a new gas station and supermarket was going to replace the Sinza Mori open space was spread. Alex, together with others residents were surprised and disappointed about this plan. They were worried about the future. So, they decided not to keep silent. An impressive demonstration was held by the locals to protest against the demolition of their common space, their social place, the playground for their children. The protest got into the newspapers and onto local TV. But the construction of the gas station finished with the help of the police.

Eventually, Alex found a job in the city centre decorating the nyumba ya Sanaa cultural centre, a large courtyard designed using a combination of local building materials – macuti, corrugated iron, cinderblocks. The space was used for local arts workshops, different exhibitions, sales of various traditional and handmade crafts during various events and occasions. Nyumba ya Sanaa had a really unique atmosphere, and Alex liked to meet with the artists who would come to work and show their pieces at the centre. But the good times don't last long – the cultural centre had the same fate as the Sinza Mori open space. It was torn down and replaced with the NMB bank building, which is typical bland corporate architecture, has no sense of history and caused the displacement of many vendors and shops in the area. The odd thing is, the place is still called nyumba ya Sanaa. Deep in Alex's heart he wishes the centre was still here, instead of the bank. "I really don't like the NMB building", he said.

After he got married and had two kids, Alex and his family decided to move to Tandale Uzuri to start their new life, and which he says is a place more peaceful for children to grow up in. But his habits and experience in Sinza make it the most ideal place for Alex to work. Every day from 10am to 6pm, you can find Alex busy selling clothes along Sinza Mori road near the big gas station. He doesn't have to pay rent for his stall but cleans the surrounding area after work. Alex has been selling clothes for two years; the money he makes from this job can support the family, so he's happy about this job. When we were about to leave Alex's stall, suddenly, he said: "I'm missing the old Sinza so much." And we wonder what could be done to help cultural centres and social spaces resist the pressures of development.

CHERISHING THE MEMORY OF THE PAST



“I’m missing the
old Sinza so much.”

BERLIN



BMX TRACKS AND BONFIRES

Things have changed for the better on Lehrter Straße since the early 1980s. In those days the houses were battered and dilapidated, there was only stove heating. In the winter it smelled like a coal furnace and the air was full of grey fog. Back then though the community spirit was actually better, mainly because of the insufficient infrastructure everyone had to deal with. If your toilet was frozen, you had to collaborate with your neighbour to get water. Some of those neighbourhood friendships are still strong today. A lot of small businesses had to close when people started shopping at local supermarkets rather than supporting the corner shops. When the Berlin Wall was still standing, separating the city, there were many more open spaces around here. When my son was still a little boy we would build informal BMX tracks and have huge bonfires. Over time these urban spaces were lost to investment forces. I sometimes do fear the gentrification of this area. Years ago I thought that at least the housing projects from the 1950s would be safe from redevelopment. Boy, was I wrong! I mean, this is now the city centre, what do you expect?

“If your toilet was frozen,
you had to collaborate
with your neighbour
to get water.”



“It’s a typical ‘Swahili house’, with a courtyard in front and one in the back, and a hallway inside, ...”

DAVID, THE PROF.

In Sinza, the houses are of similar shape and height: one storey with a rectangular floor plan. David, a botanics professor at the University of Dar es Salaam, was renovating the interior and exterior of the house he built in 1985. It's a typical 'Swahili house', with a courtyard in front and one in the back, and a hallway inside which divides the house into 2 sections. Around 14m x 8.8m in size, the dwelling has four rooms and three bathrooms – as customary, one is outside of the house in the courtyard for the guests. During the work he didn't preserve any materials, instead installing new ones: wooden window frames were replaced by aluminium for a more modern feel. He changed the structure of the house, making the windows bigger and elevating the floor a little from the ground because of the rain. After that, he had to change the ceiling too because he said there should always be at least a three-metre height difference between the floor and the ceiling.

David doesn't live here; he moved out ten years ago to a "better district" called Tegeta. How is it better? He explained that there his house is "really big with five bathrooms inside and one outside for the watchman." The Sinza house was being renovated so that he could rent it at a high price, probably to a large family of six to nine people. This means the grandparents and grandchildren could live under the same roof.

David leased the plot from the government back in the 1980s – he signed for 99 years, and it is a hereditary leasehold meaning for a certain fee again after that period of time he can keep his land or the government can take it back and give him a piece of land in another location. He is now willing to sell it for 600,000,000 TZ shillings or rent the renovated house for around 800,000 TZ shillings per month depending on who wants to rent: the price would be different for a Tanzanian or a foreigner.

DAR ES SALAAM



“I have good memories about those days; I met many friends there, and it helped make me the person I am today.”

LOST ACCESS

I remember the parking space where my father left his car when he came from work. It is where I would wait for him, also where all the kids around learned how to ride their bikes. I remember the open field in which we used to play, picnic and just relax with our families. Today, the field has been enclosed by fences and a taller building has been erected on the site. A place for public gathering, with a small vegetable garden, has been lost. Just now, I realise how important this space was for me, growing up, and for my whole family. I have good memories about those days; I met many friends there, and it helped make me the person I am today. I can't help but wonder how different my story would be, without the experience of this place in my childhood.

I am referring to the Muhimbili Hospital staff quarters in Upanga and Sinza neighbourhood where I spent my childhood. Such changes are common to almost all neighbourhoods around the city – the proclaimed growth of the city is accompanied by a shrinkage of public spaces, where the neighbourhood intersects, meets and lives. In Dar es Salaam, everything seems to move faster; even the simple evening strolls seem pointless and quite dangerous. If you ask me what is in the streets today, I will tell you: cars, not people.

I wonder about the story of urban growth, the story about buildings mushrooming – the higher the better. Today I struggle to accept the enormous transformation. Where there was once a path through a block there is now a new building where no one can go. To describe how easy it is to move around, we say “Uswazi”. In more informal neighbourhoods, like the ones in Tandale, there are fewer walls and fences but that's because they still share the habit of solidarity, of hospitality. I wonder if we can review this tradition and interweave it back into the city of Dar. The city has changed, fences have grown taller, open spaces are smaller and/or out of range. A huge wave of development, expanding out from the city centre that is seemingly catching up too fast. As a result, like a silent parade, people keep moving to the outskirts further away from the wave. Maybe to seek the life they recognise and hold dear to their hearts.

Away goes the old and in comes the new. To foster any change (development of the city in this case), we have to compromise and sacrifice alright. But there is minimal regard for what once was. Are the people fully aware of how much is at stake?

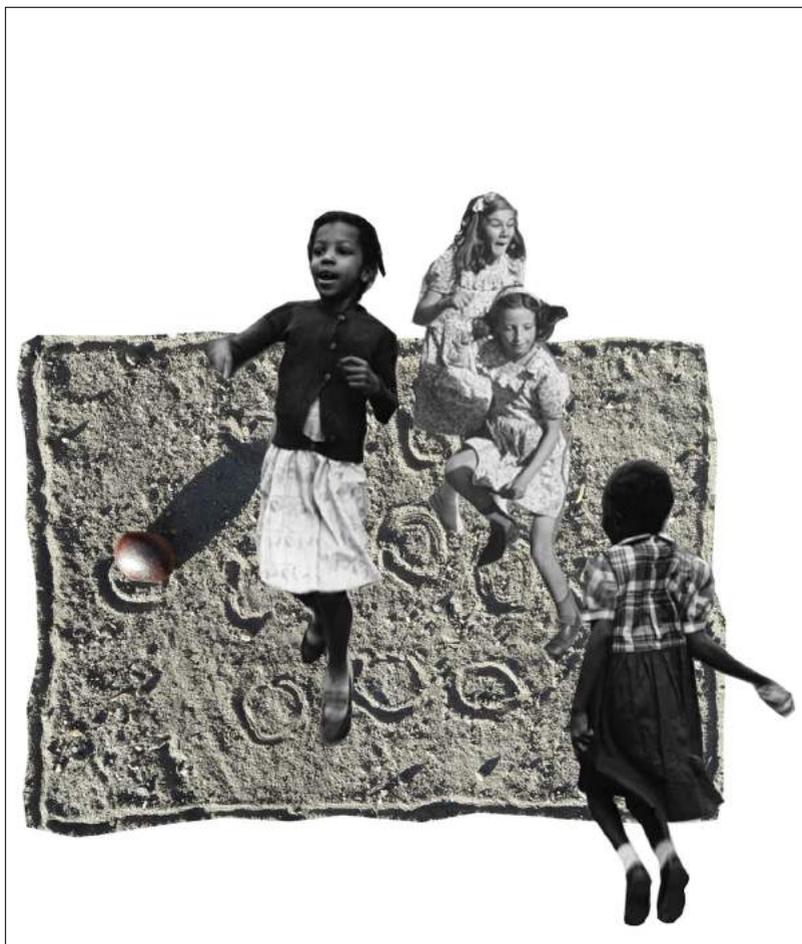
I was told that less open spaces are not unconditionally disadvantageous for urban growth. Some public spaces provide hideouts for criminals and sites for unauthorised activities. Formalising “all spaces” is an effort to increase security, privacy and environmental hygiene which is also currently of increasing importance. Yet I can't help but wonder where the kids in my neighbourhood will go play, where the mamas will chat and cook, now that the field of my childhood is gone. We might want to slow down, and think about the life of the city that we are about to lose. Maybe bring back some Uswazi along with all the good characteristics that come with it? Something we solely recognize.

BERLIN

I dictate the slow rhythm of lazy Sunday afternoons in Weißensee, northeast of central Berlin. One by one, a few men of African descent try to aim and hit opponents' seeds in great concentration, skilfully drawing a series of pirouettes on sand – a seasoned player can make a marble tree seed spin to hit multiple seeds. This impromptu ballet is also known as Akhue [tomorrow], traditionally played by each Oba during coronation to the Edo throne in central Nigeria. Folk tales say that the game freed the voice of a boy who could not speak, allowing him to become Oba, king of the Edo kingdom. Today, 7000 km away from home, Akhue gives a voice to the Western African community in Berlin, bringing the players' wishes and blessings to their curious ancestors.

“... skilfully drawing a
series of pirouettes
on sand...”

SPINNING WITH THE ROYALS



BERLIN



MADE OF BRICKS

Moabit's traffic floats by on grey asphalt. Loud, stinky scooters, cars, yellow double-decker buses, cyclists. People rush on the paved sidewalk engaged in their business. A man walks his dog, two old tourists take pictures. Behind an iron fence stands an impressive old church surrounded by trees and a green lawn, watching its flock from a distance. After so many years it still attracts people's attention. It was built in 1857 before most of the surrounding buildings, when Berlin was growing fast. The Borsigwerke, Schumann's porcelain factory, the prison and the military barracks were built then, all with the same building material: red and yellow clay bricks, mostly hidden behind plaster. Here you can see them, and how time has structured their surfaces, making them a bit rough and dirty. There are bullet holes next to the new stones that were added when the partly destroyed building was re-erected after World War II. You can see and feel the history.

“... time has structured their surfaces, making them a bit rough and dirty.”

BERLIN

An old brick church is a quiet oasis this Thursday morning, opening itself towards the Hansaviertel. Newer administration buildings stand next to 19th century residential complexes. Most facades have been nicely renovated; one is hidden behind scaffolding. Not many cars are driving by. Many people are on the pavements, walking towards their destinations, enjoying the early spring weather. Policemen are taking their smoking break in front of the administrative court; young mothers are carrying their children. An elderly lady with blond, hip-long dreadlocks and a yoga mat walks next to hurrying businessmen in suits. On the other side of the road, huge trees are shadowing the pavement. At street level the buildings are dominated by different kinds of commercial and gastronomic uses. A café appears new and trendy, serving every imaginable type of coffee and food-blogy sandwiches. On the left is a vacant bakery, still displaying its 1980s shop sign. Adjacent to it is a closed plumbing supply shop with a handwritten sign and water taps in the window. It's a relic from another time and a rarity in fast changing areas of the city. At an old bridge that crosses the River Spree we look back down the street. Huge pipes carrying groundwater from a nearby construction site frame the final picture - a picture of a changing street.

“On the left is a vacant bakery, still displaying its 1980s shop sign.”

CHANGE IS IN THE AIR



DAR ES SALAAM



A NEW MORNING GLORY

The Azania Front Church is the oldest in Dar es Salaam: it was built in 1898 by the Germans, in the Bavarian style of the time – and today, it still has a lively community. Festos, the accountant of the Church, describes a morning service that reflects recent social changes in the city. As religious diversity has grown recently, influential pastors from different confessions are invited to share prayers with the mixed community. It is new, vibrant and exciting, nothing like the normal Sunday service. One Sunday morning everyone was invited. Even some Muslims came. Festos seems to be really proud when he talks about people coming from far away to join the mass before they have to go back to their day to day routine: “They all park their cars here in the very early morning to attend the mass and then head out back to their lives.” It is a great achievement for the people of Dar, to have this common goal to get together regardless of their differences and despite the fact that everybody always seems to be busy in the city centre.

“It is new, vibrant and exciting, nothing like the normal Sunday service.”

BERLIN



THE ROOTED

They grow and grow and get bigger and bigger: Trees are like kids. Now as I walk on the cobblestone path, enjoying the shade of the mature trees and the view of the newly renovated Wilhelminian buildings, it comes to me that it's like it used to be in the 70s, when we moved to Emdener Straße in Moabit. And for a few moments I am transported back. Years elapse like months, hours elapse like minutes. My personal idea of beauty has changed. It has matured like everything around me. I need calm. Now I am old, but happy - the children are adults, Emdener Straße is greener, but at the end it's good to know: this is my place. And I am rooted here – like these old trees.

“Trees are like kids.”



“In the northern part of the park, big neem trees stretch out their branches and provide shade to people.”

FRIENDSHIP THROUGH DRAUGHTS

Bustani ya Posta Park is a good place for people to take a rest: it is located in the centre of the city, close to Askari moment – a landmark which everyone knows, the perfect rendez-vous place. But I suspect that people enjoy the park also for its beautiful views and rich historical background. It has been there since the colonial times but is currently under the care of the NBC bank which is just on the opposite side of the road. The park is famous to the people in Dar since it is where the post office was originally located, giving the nickname ‘Posta’ to the central area. Sometimes they also call it the German garden, because it is so close to Azania Front, the Bavarian-looking church on the waterfront. In the northern part of the park, big neem trees stretch out their branches and provide shade to people. It is said the neem tree offers protection against malaria – the sap can repel mosquitoes, and the leaves can be infused to treat the sickness. Under the trees, there are street vendors and people resting. Sometimes, when the sea breeze blows over, the park really becomes a wonderful place where people can find peace in the boisterous city.

Under the trees, a group of people is especially eye-catching. A group formed by men, playing draughts together. “We are from everywhere, some of us are taxi drivers, some are working around the corner and are taking a rest outside, some are waiting for the court hearing, because the court is nearby, and some are unemployed and want to find a job in city centre,” said a tall man carrying a backpack. “We all became friends here, none of us knew each other before and we are all living in different places in the city,” explains a man who is playing draughts. Nobody knows who was the first person to put the checkerboard on this place. The draughts player has been coming here for eight years already: it’s a good way to meet people. Within fifteen minutes, two people have left, and one person has joined the game. “This is how it works, we come, we leave, but there is always someone around this checkerboard,” he says, “the checkerboard is always there, all of us share custody of it. If it gets lost, we raise money together and buy a new one. The chess pieces are bottle caps, so no worries about those.”

BERLIN

Mandy and Jaquelin are holding Berliner Kindl beers in their hands. They are standing on a square with very worn down paving and six ping pong tables whose best times are long behind them. One of the tables is in noticeably good condition. Mandy and Jaquelin tell us that they have been coming here for 30 years. Almost as long as the ping pong tables have been there. The tables are not only used to park their beers - a group of around ten people regularly meets here to play ping pong, chat, barbeque and enjoy a couple of beers. If the weather is good up to 25 people join the group. Both Mandy and Jaquelin complain that the urban renewal projects have not reached their area. Dilapidation is taking over. Which is why Mandy, Jaquelin and their companions sometimes take action themselves. With growing concerns about modernization processes and the construction plans taking place in Moabit, Mandy doubts that socially acceptable rents will stay as they are.

But apart from 'Schlitzer' and 'Klinke' who have moved away for family reasons, the old circle of friends still lives here. They mention 'Icke Alli', an immigrant from Turkey who has a Berlin accent, and people from Poland and Persia who are part of their ping pong group. On sunny summer days they sometimes play until eleven o'clock at night. They rarely visit other places. In earlier days they sunbathed on the riverbanks of the Spree opposite Bellevue Castle. And since they don't go to pubs, they remain faithful to the ping pong tables of Carl von Ossietzky Park. Mandy went to Switzerland for love, but came back after five years. "Lieber fünf Schritte nach hinten und dann acht nach vorn" she says [Better five steps back, then eight forward]. Jaquelin nods empathetically and adds that if the Jobcenter advises her to go to Bavaria for to find work she answers: "Wat soll ick in Bayern? Nur wegen de Arbeit? Berlin bleibt halt Berlin!" [What am I supposed to do in Bavaria? Just for work? Berlin stays Berlin!]

PING PONG MORBID?



“In earlier days they sunbathed on the riverbanks of the Spree opposite Castle.”

DAR ES SALAAM

In a dusty, barren square, hidden behind the busy Sam Nujoma Road, is the Mwenge Woodcarvers Market of Dar es Salaam. Stall upon stall displays the tribal masks, totem poles and gigantic Maasai busts carved carefully on site out of rich, black ebony wood. A chorus of jovial greetings echo across the clearing as tourists stroll leisurely past the displays, haggling for wares to be distributed across the continents as mementos of the foreign and the exotic. Caroline looks up at us through the shadowy depths of her stall and invites us in to browse through her offerings. Densely packed with ebony sculptures, beaded jewellery, colourful kangas and assorted souvenirs, the stall is simple but curated with love. Caroline enjoys working here - bartering with travellers and chatting with the other women from the marketplace whom she describes as a large, makeshift family. Caroline's story is long and complex, and the woodcarvers market was never a place where she expected to find happiness. Having started her career working in a regional governmental office in Moshi, she moved to Dar after finding a husband. She was young, and wanted to further her education, but pregnancy and moving to the city meant that her direction in life shifted. In the colourful metropolis she began to notice different ways of balancing work, life and culture, and started to crave a simpler, more wholesome idea of work. Inspired by a neighbour who was simultaneously an Air Tanzania employee and a pig farmer, Caroline decided to try her hand at cattle rearing with the help of her veterinarian husband.

She regales us with a tale of a particularly proud time in her life when she won a USAID (US Agency for International Development) scholarship to travel across the United States and learn about business management, marketing, sales, and the ethics behind the promotion of traditional craft wares. Initially being deeply interested in applying for the scholarship, she was held back by personal insecurities, and a fear of the ramifications of leaving her home to go to a foreign land on her own. She muses on the topic and attributes finally summoning the courage to go ahead with the tour to words of encouragement from her husband and the reassurance that it would set her on a path to finding a new chapter of happiness and direction for her life.

After a lesson on African basket weaving traditions, discussions turn to the topic of cultural heritage, and Caroline sadly mourns the loss of cultural identity in modern day Dar. She speaks of a once proud, morally upright, forward-thinking city. A city with good schools, ample healthcare, community awareness, integrity and a connection to individual traditional cultures. She laments that now, through rapid urbanisation, uncontrolled rising populations, and selfish governments, the richness of the myriad of Tanzanian cultures has been lost to greed, competition and cultural isolation of newcomers to the city. And it is clear as we speak to many of these newcomers that it is hard for people to find a binding connection to the city, or to create emotional ties to the ever-changing fabric of the city.

AN UNLIKELY STORY



“... the richness of the myriad of Tanzanian cultures has been lost to greed, competition and cultural isolation of newcomers to the city.”

BERLIN



“Berlin is not what people expect it to be. We don’t party every day.”

SWEET BARBARA

In the middle of Emdener Straße, on the other side of the kindergarten, is the Freudenberg Foundation. It strives for the social, linguistic and educational integration of future generations, and bears the striking tagline 'One square kilometre of education', which seems to be in complete contradiction to the austere architecture design of the building. The ground floor serves as a meeting point for the association. An elderly gentleman is smoking on the bench in front. Children are playing in the middle of a big room. A few volunteer caregivers are watching over them. Barbara, a red-haired elderly caregiver invites us to the kitchen:

"Here we can talk better." She makes herself comfortable in a chair and begins: "So you are interested in our Moabit? I'm an Ur-Berliner. We have to thank the SPD government for what is happening now. The mayor has made a 'party capital' out of Berlin. But the fact is, people get nothing out of it. The people here just want to enjoy a quiet neighbourhood. The E-car racing is such a crazy example! The roads were closed and of course no local residents were happy about it! Rents are also getting higher and higher because everyone wants to come and live in the city. But actually Berlin is not what people expect it to be. We don't party every day. In fact, there is a lot of poverty. I'm working part-time as a teacher in the Märkisches Viertel where the atmosphere is something completely different. Here in Moabit we also know a lot of nationalities living together and we know poverty. I see children who just want to be left alone - they need some space for themselves, they just want to have their own room. This breaks my heart. What is important for me is that the rents stay the same. This is a legacy that we must protect! I heard that this street became the most beautiful street of Germany. Even though I don't live here, it concerns me. I can't understand this! Let's alone consider the casino here in the street. The poorest people squander all their money there. Out of frustration, annoyance, dissatisfaction. These kind of places should not exist in residential areas... Would you like some coffee? Definitely, right?"



“She is a lone woman in a world of men but she feels safe.”

THE INVISIBLE NETWORK

In the searing morning heat a truck rolls down Sam Nujoma Road, sending a spiral of dust and debris into the air. On the shoulder of the road sit seven Bajaji drivers, sheltering from the sun, waiting for a customer to approach. Across the road men carry paving stones, stacking them neatly in towers to showcase their wares. Mariam sits in the dust, stoking the fire, and setting the water to boil. She is 26. She is new in Sinza, and she is alone, working here in the sun and dust to take care of her family. Her three children are young and she must keep them sheltered, fed and educated without any support from a partner, family, or the state. Every day she comes here to the edge of the highway in Sinza and cooks her cuisine from Shinyanga for the drivers, the carpenters and the warehouse workers in the area. She is a lone woman in a world of men but she feels safe. For her, independence is her drive, and whilst she doesn't feel physically safe here, she knows this is temporary. She wants her own restaurant, away from the traffic and the pollution, and she is formulating her plan for expansion. She will join a community of women in the locality who meet to discuss business issues, crowd-fund, and support one another: a Vicoba, or Village Community Bank. As soon as she can afford the monthly fees, she will reach out, but for now she works for herself, humbly, but proudly.

Conversations with women across Sinza and Mwenje illustrate just how widely the concept of the Vicoba has spread since its introduction in Niger by Care International as a means of equipping rural communities with tools for independent financial management. With so many cultural and political expectations for women in Tanzania it is clear that the Vicoba stands as a symbol of female empowerment, self-sufficiency and community for women looking for independence in a shifting modern world. Group Three of the Mwenje Vinyago Group, centred in the Mwenje woodcarvers' village, was formed by a woman called Flora in 2012 with 40 members. The group has rapidly exploded to include over 300 members in a network of eleven interconnected Vicoba groups. Each differentiated by their chosen amount of monthly instalments and benefit schemes, the eleven Vicobas are coordinated and streamlined by a central governing committee that deals with conflict management, discipline, community support and events organisation. The group is currently putting together funds to create a community carnival. It is clear that the Vicoba is a force to be reckoned with in the community sphere. A force which is unstoppable once it sets its goals on something. It is evident why women strive to join these organisations which promise brighter futures, bigger dreams, and healthier communities.

DAR ES SALAAM

Ahead of us on Mojanuktatano Street, carrying a baby on her back in a beautiful kanga, a woman is walking peacefully towards her house. She opens a big black metal door and enters a courtyard, bordered by a small building on the right side. A narrow balcony leading to the entrance door also serves as a meeting place – where we sit on plastic chairs and begin to chat.

Coletha was born in 1964 in Mwanza, a port-city on the southern shores of Lake Victoria. She married Benjamin and moved to Dar with him in 1982, where they bought land in Sinza A: “When we built our house here, there were only five houses in the whole of Sinza A. The area was farmland; rice farms, cashew farms, and potato farms. We also had a small farm on which I used to grow potatoes. But then one farm after another turned into houses and now you cannot find a single farm in the whole neighbourhood. The buildings around us were planned by the government, dividing Sinza into different areas. They were mostly sold to low income families. Many things have changed here; back in the 1980s there was just one bus that connected us to the city centre. It was called UDA bus: Usafiri Dar es Salaam. It only came two or three times a day and if you missed one you had to wait hours to take the next the bus. Today the buses run every five minutes!”

From buses, the conversation turns to garbage trucks: “There is a truck that comes once or twice a week and is supposed to collect the garbage from every house. Every household should pay a small fee for that, but some people try to skip the payment and throw out their garbage during the night! That is why you wake up in the morning and see garbage everywhere! We recently formed Umaja Wafaraji, a local, self-organised committee responsible for garbage and parking issues in Sinza A. All our members are women. Men don’t care about these issues and don’t like to participate in our activities. We meet once a month on a Sunday and discuss the issues and plan our next steps. We have no leader and every opinion matters equally. You are welcome to our next meeting. There, you can see for yourself. Our committee is not the only one; there are many different committees dealing with different issues, and it is not just in Sinza A, every area has its own committees!”

Despite her engagement in improving the neighbourhood, she is not interested in preserving any buildings there: “It is just houses in Sinza and I wouldn’t mind if they are demolished for a better goal!” Her response reminds me of our interviews with other locals in Sinza; no one really cared about old buildings. They all wanted “modern buildings for a modern Sinza”. I try to imagine a modern Sinza with high-rise buildings and try to find Coletha and her Umaja Wafaraji in it. Would there be a place in these new developments for a group of women who have learned to rely only on each other to solve neighbourhood issues?



“The area was farmland;
rice farms, cashew farms,
and potato farms.”

DAR ES SALAAM

In the interior part of Mlalakuwa, near the Mwenge village, a wind carrying a variety of voices led us to a group of women telling stories. One of the women, Anna, was wearing a CCM kanga. CCM is the acronym of Chama Cha Mapinduzi, Tanzania's dominant political party, known in English as Party of the Revolution. Anna has been working as a political leader for more than 20 years and has also been a force in the women's association Umoja Wa Wanawake Tanzania. Due to her political influence and her involvement in different development projects, she is a well-known figure in her neighbourhood. Anna, whose leadership number is 52 Mlalakuwa, welcomed us to her house where we sat in the shade of a tree. Enjoying the sea breeze, she told us that she was born in Mbeya region but later on shifted to Dar es Salaam to start a business. In 1995 she was appointed to be a political leader and played a big role as campaign manager during that general election.

Despite the variety of kangas available it is unusual to see a woman on the street wearing one with a political message: CHAGUA CCM, CHAGUA MKAPA [vote for CCM, vote for Mkapa]. Anna wears CCM kangas to political events without caring too much about the message. They are simply part of the dress code. Laughing, she tells us a story: "During the last general election in 2015, there was a group of women wearing CCM kangas with the message 'MTAISOMA NAMBA CCM USHINDI MBELE KWA MBELE' [you will just keep observing, for CCM victory is our motto!]. In Mwenge a group of Bajaji drivers had gathered around them, shouting and provoking them with abusive words. They felt oppressed and looked for a way to escape. Afterwards, they were afraid to wear any clothes adorned with political colours and messages." Anna, however, persists.

“Despite the variety of kangas available it is unusual to see a woman on the street wearing one with a political message.”

ANNA: THE POLITICIAN



BERLIN



AFRICA IN THE TRAIN STATION

Underneath the intersecting web of tarmac roads and paved pathways; beneath the deafening noise of planes, honking vehicles and hasty cyclists clanging their bells. Below the pacing pedestrians and the trotting dogs; underneath all this chaos, rests the Afrikanische Straße train station. Togostraße, Kongostraße, Kameruner Straße and other streets nearby were named by the German officials in the late 19th century to manifest their colonial occupation of Africa in an urban context. The station was recently renovated. Images of nature from Africa were used to supposedly enhance the African theme – to synchronize the station's image with the neighbourhood's name. But, why is Africa always only represented by savannah lands and wildlife? As much as these efforts should be applauded, a more sundry presentation of Africa featuring its complex history, unique architecture and diverse people could provide a better insight and hence create a more tangible heritage of the continent to the public.

“But, why is Africa
always only represented
by savannah lands and
wildlife?”

BERLIN

Bodies in distance. Bodies scrutinizing one another in the clear reflection of a U-Bahn window, bodies looking. Suspicious bodies. Tense bodies. Bodies separated. Bodies passing. Silent bodies. Indifferent bodies. Bodies longing for another body. I am looking towards the back seats of the night bus, line N94, now passing through the empty Köpenicker Straße. How different it is from the memory of the overcrowded daladadas in Dar es Salaam lazily moving through the swarm of the other vehicles. Inside, body on body, loud conversations in the background, Nay Wa Mitego's latest single booming from the loudspeakers. Back in the N94 bus, overwhelming silence. There are 3 bodies separated by 10 rows of seats each. "Zurückbleiben, bitte!" is taken seriously here. Bodies unaware of the Others in Africa dreaming of their empty buses – for many of the new migrants, the land of silence and distance is the promised soil. For the distanced bodies – often a curse. Now I find myself fantasizing, becoming a cold body seduced by the promise of beautiful closeness in the global Afropolis.

“There are 3 bodies
separated by 10 rows
of seats each.”

DREAMING BODIES





“Many of the colonial stone houses are left empty – the owners wait for them to deteriorate, so they can tear them down more easily.”

THE PERISHING CITY

In the heat of a sunny afternoon people conduct their business in Posta in the centre of Dar es Salaam. Most of them commute to work, as part of their daily routine. Strolling around the areas planned by the German colonial administration one century ago, we meet an elderly shop owner. Although he didn't always live in Posta, Akbar identifies himself as a resident of the district. He is a Muslim of Indian origin, and used to live in Aggrey Street in a house that was built in 1913 during the colonial period. Akbar used to be a skilled farmer with a farm in the Mbagala district on Kilwa Road. His father bought it from Germans when they left in 1918. They had 300 cows, 300 goats and thousands of chickens before the land was taken over by the government after independence. Under the provision of the National Housing Corporation, apartment blocks were built on the plot and Akbar received a small lump sum as compensation for the land.

Fifteen years ago he moved to the house in Posta, which his father also purchased from Germans. It's a three-storey building with a little courtyard, which he does not use, as there are too many mosquitos around: "In Posta they do not spray, so there are more than in other neighbourhoods." Akbar shares the house with one of his sons and his extended family. His three other children have settled in the USA. The four residents of the spacious house share three bedrooms with attached bathrooms, one sitting room and one extra bathroom. Further rooms are empty. Akbar does not know how many exactly and cannot count them as the house has to remain closed this morning. The city council has ordered an inspection in Posta, a revision process to evaluate the state of the houses and to survey the residents. Akbar explains they will always find something wrong and ask for money. To circumvent the 'charge' he leaves the house and locks the door early in the morning. Posta is changing rapidly. Plots are being sold and houses demolished. Akbar explains: "People like the area, because it is a promising business area". Free plots have not been available for a long time and the pressure on the real estate market is increasing. Many of the colonial stone houses are left empty – the owners wait for them to deteriorate, so they can tear them down more easily. Since plot prices are increasing, taller and taller buildings replace the old structures.

The residents of Posta have changed as well. In the past, there was a truly connected community in each street, but today everyone is only interested in their own business. Because of these developments Akbar wants to sell his house. He is expecting \$700,000 for it, and knows that the sale will lead to its demolition. This is likely to happen although the house is nearly 100 years old – at which point it would become protected by law. For Akbar the demolition of historic buildings is part of the regular run of events and he does not feel sad about the loss. His only wish is that the new architecture would be of higher quality.

DAR ES SALAAM



GERMAN TREASURE

On Samora Avenue, close to the Askari monument, is a small door, hidden between the street vendors selling their goods under the arcades. It leads to a long, narrow hallway, stuffed full of traditional statues, paintings and clothes. Upstairs is another long, narrow room space, packed with paintings of different themes: nature, indigenous people, African animals. Between the depictions of rural Tanzania are a few impressions of Dar's commercial centre Kariakoo, showing the bustling activity and crowds at the market. It's a treasure trove that would make a tourist's heart beat faster. According to the 'Karibu' art store's current manager, the building used to be German, "There was a big pole with a German flag," he says before telling us about a different kind of treasure, "They say there is a conspiracy around. When the Germans used to live here, they put their treasures in a special place. It's a secret. And after they left, the British didn't know about it, but the Germans still know. That's why they're around – just to check their heritage."

“It leads to a long, narrow hallway, stuffed full of traditional statues, paintings and clothes.”

BERLIN

“The exhibition is the city, the city is the exhibition.” In 1896, Berlin competed with Paris by hosting the Great Industrial Exposition in Treptower Park. One of its 23 themes was the German colonial exhibition, including a ‘Negro Village’ next to the artificial carp pond. The main task of the people who had been brought from Africa was to wear exotic costumes for seven months from morning to evening, just waiting for visitors. However, this urban heritage is nowhere to be seen in today’s park, although it has been designated as a heritage park. Only the ten-metre-high trees and the carp pond have witnessed everything since this park was completed in 1888 to provide recreational space to the rapidly growing population of Berlin. Along the way in the park, there is a clearing with fresh air, birds chirping and warm sunshine under the blue skies. Could the ‘village’ have been built here? It reminded me of the Makumbusho Village in Dar. Was that what it was like? Is it a mere guess? Did it really happen here?

“The exhibition is the city,
the city is the exhibition.”

DID ANYTHING HAPPEN HERE?



DAR ES SALAAM

In the heat of the sunny days, people in Dar seek a cool, shady spot underneath the roadside trees or on the landscaped avenues. At any time of day they relax with friends or colleagues under the foliage. Others set up small businesses, no matter where in town, or under what kind of tree – the ideal, of course, being a lush and leafy space with benches to sit on and food stalls to grab a snack. In the city centre the neighbours and merchants spend their days on the streets, under the colonnades. There are not many public parks in the city centre. Mnazi Mmoja Mashujaa Park [Hero Grounds Park] is an exception. Between the Kariakoo and Kisutu districts, it is surrounded by the dense network of Bibi Titi Mohammed Street, Uhuru Street and Lumumba Street. With the 'African' area on one side, the 'Indian' neighbourhood on the other, the park is a witness to the colonial past of the city. The area was delimited during the British protectorate period as a physical border of open space between the 'native settlements' and the 'European' and 'Asian' town; a racial divide.

In 1961, the Uhuru Torch Monument was erected in the lower portion of the park, redefining the area as a celebration of the country's independence and opening it for social meetings and leisure. Today, entering the parks seems challenging. It appears like an island, surrounded by high fences with only one or two open entrances, somehow recalling the segregation patterns of the past. Inside the park, only a few people are enjoying the generous open space with its big old trees and neatly trimmed hedges. Visitors to the park are controlled. While they are allowed to admire the monument they are asked to leave the park afterwards.

According to the Environmental Head Officer, this restriction was introduced in response to people who were destroying and littering the park landscape more and more by passing through it. As a solution, the Department of Environment is planning an improvement strategy, like providing furniture to revitalise the space. Tanzania's new president recently promised to provide more open spaces within the rapidly growing built environment of Dar es Salaam. Another interesting idea is being discussed: turning the many flood-prone areas into new recreational spaces for the inhabitants – but sufficient funding and efficient planning strategies are lacking. In Dar es Salaam, the question remains: how to design open and inclusive spaces, perceived by the community as a common good and a commemoration of collective history?

GREEN CONTRADICTIONS



“In the city centre the neighbours and merchants spend their days on the streets, under the colonnades.”

BERLIN

As most would hesitate at the chain fence that guards what was once a public park, the movements of the past are ever present. Though Mettmann Platz is a shadow of his former self many still frequent his grounds, retracing the steps so familiar to them. He even still entertains his more permanent guests shrouded in one of the remaining green patches that hug the S-Bahn viaduct. Though, with this in mind, much of him is left barren, muddy and stripped of landscaping for one to lie on, as they once had on a warm August afternoon. That said, Mettmann still had visitors, and now offered new interest. For those more daring it was now a space of trespassing. Off road bikes conquered his foothills and the large dirt pile was often championed by Moabitian teens. Small bits of scaffolding coddle the monolithic overpass and offer attraction to passers by to test the thin structure. Mettmann could carry resentment for the overpass, it remains strong as he is excavated, rearranged and reconstituted for unknown ends.

For now however, he offers an invaluable informal escape from the city into an industrial wilderness, shifting back and forth between the occupation of redevelopment advocates and benefactors and the hands of the anonymous. What remains of Mett is now a large dirt bed that stretches between the viaduct and Fennstraße, this acts as the main axis in his current state. Offshoots of small shrubs, cusps that lean over towards the river, a minor dock projects forth but is not often graced by vessels. From the bed there is a slight climb upwards towards what is becoming the foundation for a new development, a dirt mound and thoughts of trees on either side. One side concealing his permanent guests, the other still in the public domain but only a small portion of what once was. He hopes with what little he has Moabit will still visit now and then.

“Offshoots of small shrubs,
cusps that lean over towards
the river, a minor dock
projects forth but is not
often graced by vessels.”

STRIPPED BUT NOT BARE



BERLIN

There is a fascinating and relaxed atmosphere at Yaam. The front area is surrounded by different food points that fill the air with irresistible African food flavours. Wooden chairs and benches are scattered under shady trees. Warm beach sand pathways, walls decorated with African style paintings and graffiti define the path to the backyard. Is it also just African food points in the back? Well, it's like bringing the beach surroundings to the middle of Berlin. There is a different mix of people chilling while enjoying the river view, listening to Afro music, dancing and others playing football. For Africans and immigrants, it's more than a memory lane to them, it is home.

Hams is on the beach. He has travelled a lot and is finally here in Berlin, living in Wedding. He is originally from Guinea but had to stay in Senegal and Algeria for some time in order to reach Europe. Before Germany he was in Spain and Italy too, but his absolute favourite country is Germany and he has been calling it home for the past eight years. He loves the multicultural character of Berlin. He doesn't have an official job but loves to hang out with his friends and listen to music, especially reggae music. He loves the atmosphere in Yaam, it feels like home to him and has been his favourite joint since 2008, shortly after he arrived. He sits on the wooden bench by the river, takes off his shoes and digs his feet into the sands of the fake beach, listens to the reggae music that always seems to be playing, chills, drinks and smokes. He finds cigarettes really unhealthy though! All this thinking about migration is stressful and is spoiling his day. He has to smoke a spliff in order to cool down!

“He sits on the wooden bench by the river, takes off his shoes and digs his feet into the sands of the fake beach...”

YAAM, MY HOME



DAR ES SALAAM



SLEEPING BEAUTY

An elderly man is quietly raking the sandy footpaths that might once have been surrounded by a fine lawn. There are no visitors today. The nursery is a neglected patch of plants, and, like the other remaining plants and trees on the grounds, unlabelled. When the Botanical Gardens of Dar es Salaam were established by German colonisers in 1893, they were the largest on the African continent. Today, however, rather than a majestic garden with established species of plants from all over the world, the botanical gardens are like a sleeping beauty. Once used as a trial plot for testing different types of plantation crops and tree species, the botanical gardens seem to have been disappearing from the urban fabric over the course of time. Reduced to only a fraction of their former spatial dimension, it does not look like the secret garden will wake up any time soon. As the city grows frenetically, building higher and higher, the gardens have changed. They are a vestigial artefact of the past, neither a celebration of the lush tropical climate, nor a green oasis and valuable public space; nor even a conscious reminder of the imperial town planning that shaped Dar es Salaam in its beginnings, over a century ago.

“As the city grows
frenetically, building higher
and higher, the gardens
have changed.”

BERLIN



AFRICAN, NON-AFRICAN QUARTER

Near Togostraße a collection of flat-roofed, symmetrical, rectilinear buildings embodies the aesthetics typical of the residential developments of the late 1920s that are still visible in many districts in Berlin today. The area appears clean, dotted with repetitive small patches of green. It takes a minute until you notice the German flags displayed in the windows. Surprisingly there is no explanation of the area's history – neither of the architectural background nor of the intentions behind giving the streets in the neighbourhood names associated with Africa. On Sansibarstraße a German woman walks by. When asked about African culture she replies that there is none to be found here. Standing in the settlement, adoring its architectural heritage you are confused by its ignorance. The modernist buildings seem to say, “I stand here, representing my era! I choose to ignore my surroundings!”

“It takes a minute until you notice the German flags displayed in the windows.”

BERLIN

After pinning a label on my t-shirt, she said "Welcome!" while pointing to the direction I must follow. It was hot, mid-day; I had to rest for a bit before starting the indoor tour. Old architecture, statues and the arrangement of objects kept my eyes busy, scanning the history and power of Germany. Amazing sculptures forced my legs into action. In the very rich, awesome and exciting museum I did not spend a lot of time on one object because the next one always seemed more interesting. 3D pictures, videos and audio recordings kept me walking and enjoying the stories connected and chronologically ordered on two floors. Some areas are like time machines taking us back to the old days. The objects that caught my attention were the grenades that were used to bomb cities in WWI. In the early years of the war, they could fit in a soldier's hand, but as the war progressed the gunpowder also increased and grenades weighing more than 50kg were used.

It left me wondering how much destruction one big grenade could cause. For a moment I paid tribute to the victims of the war and moved on with the tour. I was concerned to know about the African soldiers who fought the whites' war. I wanted to know how they felt about fighting for what they were not a part of, but I left without finding anything. Digging through the displays for the colonial era, I found only one object relating to the African context. I thought maybe I was just tired, so I went on looking for more but I found nothing. Why are they not displayed here? I went back to the introduction note German Historical Museum, 1500 years... It's the most intellectual of the museums I have visited in Berlin but I am missing something. I wanted to go back and ask about the African colonies ruled by Germany.

BEST INDOOR TOUR



“Digging through the displays for the colonial era, I found only one object relating to the African context.”

DAR ES SALAAM



HERITAGE GRINDER

I was about 6 years old when I began to understand the use of my grandmother's burrstone chaki. Before that, it was just another big stone. Every time I went to her place I sat next to her and watched her turning the big stone. She used the chaki to earn money, grinding green lentils, black lentils and chickpeas. I used to dance to the sound: the faster she ground, the faster I danced. Slowly I began asking her questions to understand the stone machine properly: Why is it round? Why does it have a tapered wooden handle? Can I do it? Once I asked her why she used such a heavy thing for this work. She told me that the food tastes delicious when it is ground manually and it is the most common grinding method in town. I asked her where she got the stones from. Did she carve them herself? No, she said, she brought the chaki from India on a ship when she first came to Tanzania in 1942. She was amazed when she saw the Tanzanians also had the same idea of grinding using kinu and mtwangio [mortar and pestle] made out of wood or stones. Grinding gadgets have been evolving but the old stone machines hold their position in the kitchen. The stone grinder symbolizes women's space, it is mostly used by women and it shows how strong women can be when it comes to serving the society or family and providing the nutritional essentials.

“I used to dance to the sound: the faster she ground, the faster I danced.”



VISUAL GUIDANCE

Red. Yellow. Green. These colours come to mind when thinking about Africa. And it is actually not that misguided, since 52 out of 54 African countries have at least one of these colours in their national flag. If one searches for visual traces of Africa in Berlin, then colours are the perfect tool. It is quite surprising how many flags one can actually find. Flags exhibited in shop windows, glued next to shop signs and within shops themselves. Posters and flyers in parks display the national colours of Tanzania, Kenya or Congo. They are a tool of identification to visualize a territory, a property, or the strength to conquer it. Nowadays, flags serve as a way for people to identify themselves. African communities present their flags in their shops and restaurants to proudly show where their roots lie. But the purpose is also pragmatic: fellow citizens from the same former home country can join and merge the expanded communities in the city. The flags code the streets and make some spaces secret, like a trail game for insiders, a closed invitation for those who can read the colours of the city. Not only the colours, but the shop signs and names can be coded too.

A big sign at the entrance to a shop on Genter Straße in Wedding reads 'Salone Market'. So what is it?! Just past the entrance door is a big open space, surrounded by towering shelves and a set of dining chairs and tables. Taking a proper look around there were all sorts of things! African food products, fruits, drinks, cereals, spices, cooking oil, cosmetics and African clothes. Welcomed by the jovial voice of an African gentleman behind a counter, he quickly asks if we need any help. Out of curiosity, we had to ask about the name. He said Salone stands for Sierra Leone - a way they call their country back home. The meaning is clear to anyone who comes from there. A secret call maybe?

“Nowadays, flags serve as a way for people to identify themselves.”

BERLIN

A shop on a street called Alt-Moabit. From the outside the place looks rather unremarkable. A foodstore like others. The sign above the door gives a first hint. It tells you that Pakistani, Indian, Iranian, Arab, Afghan and African food is sold here. Inside you are thrown into a world of things quite unfamiliar in Europe. People from different countries are standing in the narrow spaces between the shelves looking for specific products. Rice is sold in packs of 5 or 10 kilos, you can buy palm oil from Ghana and even Fanta lemonade in bottles imported from Africa. It smells of unknown herbs and freshly baked African style cookies. The Pakistani owner sits smiling behind the counter. He established the store in 2010 because of the mixed community he found here.

“Inside you are thrown into a world of things quite unfamiliar in Europe.”

FRESHLY BAKED



DAR ES SALAAM



“I’m a fusion of African heritage, Indian birth and Muslim upbringing. Spicy, bitter and sour. A true mix of Dar!”

A TRUE MIX OF DAR

Lost in the maze of the streets of Kisutu, a part of the old centre on the border of two contrasting worlds – Muslim and Hindu – suddenly we find our minds and feet confused. On one side, the call to prayer echoes across the streets from the minarets of the Ngazija Mosque, on the other Indian men gather in small groups on the street to watch the annual edition of the Cricket World Cup. A bit uncertain, we approach a young Indian woman dressed in a bright orange rida to show us the way to the Krishna temple. Her dress reveals she is a Muslim, but she is also certainly a part of the Indian community – will she be able to help us? Luckily, soon enough, Tasneem leads us through the colourful streets that smell of sweet cardamom and with window displays full of Indian garlands, telling us her story of the city – as we suspected, as complex as her own. Seeing our confused faces, she explains laughing, “I’m a fusion of African heritage, Indian birth and Muslim upbringing. Spicy, bitter and sour. A true mix of Dar!”

“All the threads of these identities have led me to where I am now – working at TMJ Hospital in Mikocheni,” she passionately explains to us as we pass more and more women dressed in shiny saris and fewer in the typical East African kanga cloth – a sign we’re now in the heart of Kisutu. Tasneem is a medical assistant, but she would also make a great city healer. In one breath, she recites a whole list of Dar’s symptoms: lack of privacy due to the small distance between the buildings, street noise, large billboards on residential buildings, non-existing drainage and lighting systems. It’s no surprise she finds her peace in the serene surroundings of the oldest Muslim temple, the Upanga Mosque – Masjid Maamur. Men and women congregate here to pray and play traditional Indian sports – cricket, squash and badminton. A truly inclusive space where she feels safe and socializes with other women in the neighborhood. Tikka masala with couscous. Where is the Tanzanian chili sauce? Surprisingly, Tasneem finds the African element in kangas. “While we don’t communicate through kangas like women in different city areas, we use it as a veil during prayers. The meaning of its ornaments is more important than the words, which are often vulgar and offensive,” she says, pointing at the colourful cape of her rida made out of pieces of kanga fabrics.

As we approach the Krishna temple in the afternoon we see more women moving along the streets, but always rushing to another destination - safe interiors of home, office, car? We wonder why women are so invisible in the urban space and why their presence is so temporary. Tasneem explains that in this areas women usually work as housemaids. The African practice of early marriage also influences the spatial presence of women in the city. While the women are busy with domestic duties from an early age, the realm of open space seems to be ruled and appropriated by men. For the women of Dar – even Tasneem who walks around Kisutu with confidence – the open urban environment remains terra incognita. A burning mix of inaccessibility, lack of infrastructure and tribal traditions – a true mix of Dar?

DAR ES SALAAM



FROM LAND TO LAND

In a chamber under the Shree Sanatan Dharma Sabah temple, you can find Bena sitting at her desk, hurriedly planning decorations for the impending Holi festival. She works as hard as she can to please Shiva, who is her guide and her whole world. She has two more days to prepare the temple and arrange for celebrations, but she is not worried. She has been doing this for a while. She is a second generation Indian living in Dar, and her family has been here since the time of the Germans. This city is her home, and she feels no need to ever leave. Here she runs her furniture store, her temple and that keeps her busy and satisfied. She tells us that for her, the fabric of the city is more or less irrelevant. All she cares for is her faith and the vessels that carry it – the Shiva temple, the Krishna temple, and the local neighbourhood which houses the Hindu community of Dar. She does divulge however, that sometimes, when the weather is nice and she has some spare time, she slips out with some of her fellow ladies of the temple to picnic, chant, sing, and share ginger tea in the shade of the Christmas trees. She takes us around the various temples, carefully explaining the sculptures, altars and iconography. She tells us of the gatherings they have here, the festivals and the religious ceremonies. She tells us about the significance of food in her faith, and other faiths also. We are warmly invited to join in the Holi celebrations and we promise to return, and be introduced to the Hindu practices which have been passed from generation to generation, from land to land.

“This city is her home,
and she feels no need
to ever leave.”

BERLIN

Edo wives of Hermannplatz in Neukölln have been looking forward to Tuesday for the whole weekend. “A united family eats from the same plate,” says a Nigerian proverb – and today everyone, aunts, husbands, children and wives will be united through yams with egusi soup. It’s a busy morning in one of the many Afro-Shops on Sonnenallee, owned by the Edo descendants - four big boxes of cocoyam in, tens of yams out. Housewives have to be ready by 5pm when their tired husbands return from work. Their bodies pushing one another, screaming. As a part of this scene, I immediately recall the bustle of the streets of Dar – Kariakoo and Mwenge. Then I look at the postcards on display in the shop in great concentration. Snapshots of beautiful post-colonial architectures of Benin City with no people, just walls and barren landscapes. It was the African owner, seduced by distance and emptiness, who displayed them. I am now a body longing for the warmth I remember from Dar – warmth of the Other body. The distance between the shop owner and me shrinks - we are all one family dreaming of the Afropolis, but eating from two different plates.

“... and today everyone,
aunts, husbands, children
and wives will be united
through yams with egusi
soup.”

TWO PLATES, ONE FAMILY



DAR ES SALAAM

It's late evening, my sister is preparing the rice for dinner. The sound of rice splashing against the dry leaves at a specific pace creates a subtle beat. A beat that so easily blends into the sound of wind and singing birds composing some sort of music like a sound from nature, a soft intro to the fast setting sun. Like an alarm, it's time to get up and out to go play before it gets dark. Even though I don't hear it as often as I used to, something about this sound still manages to puts a smirk on to my face. That homely feeling, the cooking and the promise of a 'proper meal for the night.' Unlike other modern day kitchen utensils the ungo seems to have been there through the course of time: irreplaceable and multifunctional. A reigning champion, still found handy as a mobile worktop in the typical Swahili kitchen where the entire meal is cooked on the floor.

“The sound of rice
splashing against the dry
leaves at a specific pace
creates a subtle beat.”

WAKING UP TO THE RICE MUSIC





“... the slogans started to become much more reflective of the everyday.”

TALKATIVE VESSELS

Good Friday is a quiet affair in Mwenge. The stores are dark and quiet, the streets somewhat subdued. Most of the sales people and craftsmen have taken time off work to visit church and prepare Easter celebrations. As we pass, the few remaining woodcarvers in the work shed joke and tease their friend about preparing a goat stew on this holy day. He laughs and shakes his head, looking down at the ebony he is carefully shaping. Nearby, Scola is watching her store, but in the back of her mind is a list of all the things she needs to do after work. After all, a woman's work does not end at the close of business. We ask her about her wares and she tells us about kangas. The colourful, intricately decorated fabrics hold a valued place in the hearts of the women of Tanzania. Although seemingly simple stretches of cloth, the pieces have long been used to carry a woman's history and identity and act as a public expression of her story.

Although originally a symbol of the ruling classes, the wraps have become much more democratic, and through this modernisation, the messages they bear have also shifted and morphed to reflect the changing identity and role of women in this land. Originally the wraps were used on formal occasions, carrying slogans of celebration or sympathy, to coincide with the mood of the event at hand. Through the introduction of more economic modes of production, the fabrics became much more accessible, and as the target audience spread to wider ethnic and class groups, the slogans started to become much more reflective of the everyday. Religious and political alliances, personal narratives, even aggressive attacks were widely printed and distributed. A culture of communication grew around the kangas as women started to become more outspoken and independent. Scola is a modern woman, so to her the kanga is kept as a personal item, worn at home around the family, but not for public display. She has a large collection of kangas but she instantly beams when we ask her about her favourites.

'A mother shares the baby's pain'

'Mother's love never ends'

These she received when her first born was welcomed to the world. For Scola, the messages on gifted kangas are the most powerful and are symbols of solidarity between women. Those passed on from her mother hold a further significance, as she also wants to pass these messages on to her daughter, when she is of age. Before she was married, her mother held a 'Kitchen Party' for her. She tells us that these acts of domestic congregation are entirely women's spaces and the kanga is intricately woven into the social dynamics at play. Each of the participating women brought a kanga bearing messages of support, blessings, and – most importantly – advice for the prospective bride on how to please her future husband. They are vessels for the distribution and preservation of culture, morality and identity, and when a woman's space in the city is restricted and controlled, they become a tool for voicing the answers to questions that women are never directly asked. What can they tell us about this city?

DAR ES SALAAM

Magomeni is one of the oldest Swahili streets in Dar es Salaam. Here you can still find a vast variety of the typical Swahili house mostly roofed with corrugated iron sheets and equipped with a baraza, a platform outside the entrance of the house where people sit during their leisure time. From dawn to dusk life is satisfied in Magomeni. The Swahili dances - coastal dances such as Segere and Taarab - are the locals' joy and pleasure. The air in this neighbourhood is full of music. The radio broadcasts Taarab music, which blends local traditions with influences from the Arab world, India, Indonesia and the West, into the streets. Contemporary Taarab songs mix classic Swahili poetry with local rhythms and melodies. The kangas worn by women are the transmitters of different messages too. The performance begins when one woman turns up the volume of a Taarab song on the radio that embodies her message. Soon others reply by playing different music from their radios. When the radio is not enough kangas are used. A famous Swahili saying says, "Kizuri hakikosi kasoro" meaning "nothing is always perfect".

“The performance begins when one woman turns up the volume of a Taarab song on the radio that embodies her message.”

MY HOME IN USWAZI



BERLIN



INTO THE MYSTIC

It's an early and still quite cold Saturday morning on the most beautiful street in Germany. This weekend the Carnival of Cultures takes place – a good business event for the Getränke Adler shop on the corner of Wiciefstraße. Men are busy unloading the truck that just arrived. Loud music echoes from across the street, where a man, probably in his sixties, his life traced into his smile and friendly eyes, is standing. This is his favourite spot. "I put my speakers on the window ledge and act as DJ to entertain the people with my music." Van Morrison's 'Someone like you' is playing. He sips his beer and thinks about the good old days... "I love to play music for people. Anyone can hear what I feel. And the best part is – I can just forget. Just forget the past. I owned everything and achieved a lot. I used to drive a BMW 7 Series. This success was only possible because I was willing to be part of the competition. I have seen a lot in my life – but I've always known that Berlin with all its beautiful and simple areas is my hometown. I know all these places and they all know me. I know the smell of success! Yes, I have previously owned a lot. I've experienced how quickly everything can go downhill after a period of great success. To know where you come from is the foundation of your life – like they say 'heaven is a place on earth'. For me this heaven on earth is Moabit. It's my place, but it has become more and more elegant. They try to gentrify this neighbourhood and in order to achieve this, rents have increased. I don't have anything against a more pleasant street, but what often bothers me is that the trees are not properly tended. There is still so much left to be done. This place has a lot of potential, but one must identify this and take responsibility. But anyway... It's really nice here." Smiling, Helmut starts the next song on his playlist:

Van Morrison - 'Wild Children'.
Tennessee, Tennessee, Tennessee, Tennessee Williams
Let your inspiration go
Will you be around to hear the sound?

“For me this heaven
on earth is Moabit.”

DAR ES SALAAM



“Message sent and delivered!”

HUJUI KITU - YOU KNOW NOTHING

Like a lioness watching over her territory, Evernice is closely observing the area of her open pedicure salon on the outskirts of the Mwenge market. It's hot late afternoon in the city and it seems all the feet in Mwenge have been already scrubbed, massaged, painted with henna - well-prepared for the craziness of Dar's summer Saturday nights and the lively local vidogoro dance. We don't let the apparent peace of the salon deceive us - soon Evernice tells us of all the wars she has fought in her seemingly calm open-space office. Beautiful wars - battles of words written on kangas, often used as a communication tool between local women to express what cannot be spoken out loud.

"There once was a young chicken, a girl called Mosi, working in the shop on the opposite side. She was circling around my husband like a crazy bee attracted to a beautiful flower," Evernice begins her story with a grin. "Immediately when I noticed, I put my special kanga on - it said 'Hujui Kitu' [You know nothing]". Instead of direct confrontation Evernice and Mosi danced with their kangas on between the open hair weaving salons, small shoe shops and impromptu music stages of Mwenge for weeks. Was the kanga ball successful? Evernice smiles with satisfaction. "Message sent and delivered!" She quickly points out that Dar's urban space is full of such invisible conflicts and body architectures sending out meaningful messages onto open public spaces - with many women still fighting their kanga battles in the bustling areas of Buruguni, Manzense and Magomeni.

While kangas can be used for communication between women – to resolve the conflicts or spice up the arguments – Evernice wears her most special kangas in the quiet of her home. 'God is good', 'God's laws are always there' and 'Mama is everything' are her favourite kangas. Like the one she received from her mother and would later pass onto her daughters 'No one compares to your mama'. These pieces of clothing, when exposed to the family circle often bring the family members closer together, giving consolation and strength. Evernice still remembers the time when kangas used to be formal, like during the ceremony of Tanganyika's and Zanzibar's Union in 1964 – since then, over the years they became an irreplaceable element of Swahili popular culture, a text rewritten again and again as the time moves forward.

While the landscape of Swahili sayings on kangas is mind-boggling, if Evernice was to point out one crucial change from the times when she was a teenage girl wearing her first kanga in Tabata: "They certainly became more religious!" she says with the confidence of a kanga professor. Moses, Allah and Paulo Coelho next to one another? The imagination of kanga's designers is limitless. What kanga is Evernice wearing today? Hesitant to show us, she finally reveals the message on her upper thigh: 'Don't follow me'. yOne thing is sure. When it comes to fighting word battles with kanga - we know nothing.

DAR ES SALAAM

We arrive in Tandale by bus. Tarred roads and orderly white-walled buildings are progressively substituted by dirt roads, and the houses now appear to be organised in a casual, spontaneous manner. We go over a small bridge, and now the beginnings and the ends of the buildings seem difficult to work out, the corrugated roofs seem to form a continuous canopy over the neighbourhood. The bus leaves us in front of the church. We begin to walk around. There are no walls, no boundaries; stalls full of multi-coloured fruits and vegetables, bundles of bananas laid on towels, and big sacks spilling beans and rice. We are in the Tandale market. Turning a corner, we are surrounded by clothing behind which we glimpse domestic activities. We continue to stroll, and as we do so, we enter a private space...no wall, no fence!

“We have no boundaries, we all live together, we know each other, we respect each other, we help each other out. Normally no one from the outside comes here. We spend our time on the streets, at the market or in front of our houses. We don’t travel out of the settlement; everything we need is here, we move from house to house or from house to market...” explains 23-year-old Abu, who was born in Tandale. And at this point it becomes more apparent that we are strangers, because for us it is hard to orient ourselves. “Yes, for strangers it can be complicated to get around and find the right places. Before we had a numerical system in place to identify the houses, but the government did away with it; but we never get lost, we know the safe places and the ones that get risky during the evening. By day we move with no worry, and during the afternoons also”. Abu explains the use of open spaces in the neighbourhood: “We spend time playing soccer or simply getting together at the soccer field, under the shade offered by the trees, sitting on the boundary lines marked by old truck tyres, and if they are stolen, we take the trouble to find other tyres and put them in place.” I recall what others in Tandale have told me: “Nobody is worried” and “We care about our neighbourhood”: here in Tandale, social spaces, hospitality, recreation and the practice of sharing continue to exist and they are apparent to all.

FIND THE RIGHT WAY



“... everything we need is here, we move from house to house or from house to market...”

BERLIN



“We follow the path towards the left, leave the jungle and suddenly find ourselves in a small glade with old trees.”

INTRUDING INTO PRIVATE SPACE

We enter a small street off Lehrterstraße and walk past a large housing block made of bricks, possibly former workers-housing from the beginning of the 20th century. The street ends in a thicket of small trees and bushes, which is fenced off from both sides. A small entry is left open, giving access to a narrow track. We follow this track and pass an old, strange looking construction machine. Suddenly we find ourselves in the middle of a small jungle. The track is sandy and grey, used and formed by routine footsteps. After several metres, the track forks. The right track follows a wall of graffiti-covered bricks, leading towards Hauptbahnhof. We follow the path towards the left, leave the jungle and suddenly find ourselves in a small glade with old trees. We stop there for a moment and discover an armchair carefully placed below one of the trees. Who is using this chair? We walk towards the tree and discover an altar like arrangement of colourful snail shells, stones and dry grass at the bottom of the trunk. Who arranged this ritual place?

Turning towards the right, we see four tents placed under a roof of several trees and bushes. We approach them. Suddenly we spot a foot, jutting out of the first tent. Is there somebody sleeping? The toes slowly move. It is very silent. We only hear the wind blowing through trees and bushes, maybe mixed with some human voices, but we cannot tell from which direction they are coming. In front of us, next to the tents, an extensive construction site opens up. An endless desert of construction machines and sand hills. It is fenced off. Following the path towards the left, we pass a platform of concrete and stones. Another tent, covered with blankets and plastic sheets, is on the platform. We go on. After a bend, we spot human relics, shoes, clothes, which are randomly placed around some bushes. Who lives here?

Following the track, the trees and bushes become thicker again. Behind every bend, a new shelter appears: Camping mats, sleeping bags, mattresses, tents or small huts. They seem in use, some of them are carefully covered, others look more like occasional accommodations. Some are placed in isolation, almost hidden, others are arranged in groups of two or three. We do not encounter any human being but feel we are intruding into private spaces, beds and living rooms. This small strip of land is bound by the rail tracks on the right and the old apartment block on the left. The railway forms a physical border towards the construction site, where diggers drive back and forth. The apartment block is fenced off and almost invisible due to thick trees and bushes. Then, suddenly, the block ends and a large construction site opens up. The pathway stops there. We climb up the fence, cross the construction site and find ourselves back at Lehrterstraße.



A ROAD

We are on Samora Avenue and Peter has an invitation! “This place has a special meaning for me; I rest here, I eat here – you can only eat local foods.” In the shadow of the towers, away from the bigger roads, an array of intricate alleys lies before us, hidden between buildings. Entry is for those who have local knowledge; to a stranger they are almost invisible. It feels like we are trespassing into someone’s home. But once you enter, the feeling of being in a forbidden space disappears; the alley becomes wider. The air is full of sounds and smells. “Everyone can come here and eat, but it is more than just eating, it is sharing. I’m always happy to come here, I feel at home. And maybe I am at home.” He smiles, greets, nods, gestures to passing people; strangers to us, family to him. “There are big pots, a lot of women cook together, someone cuts the potatoes, others get the water. I feel good here. There are no barriers here, no visible obstacles between those who sell, those who eat; there is no hierarchy, everyone sits at the same table.”

Beyond the last table, the alley closes again. We exit, and cross Makunganya Street. A few metres on, the same phenomenon repeats. Again Peter smiles and greets passers-by. This area is bigger and some chickens stray amongst the two or three tables. Peter laughs as he points towards the chickens: “Yes, the food is local here.” Then he points out a canopy. “This is where I sit and paint! This is a very important place for me...I have a bond with this place. The atmosphere makes me come back each day.” Once more, the maze closes up, and we are about to leave the area. “I used to live in this building. On the first floor there are offices, stores...but the higher levels are empty, so when I want to see Dar from above, I go up those stairs.”

I find it curious that the places that are most meaningful for Peter lie in the narrow alleys between the buildings, places shielded from superficial glances and hurried eyes; places that, seen from the outside, seem anything but accessible...

“Entry is for those who
have local knowledge; to
a stranger they are almost
invisible.”

DAR ES SALAAM

According to Promota Kimata, it was in Dar es Salaam region, Manzese district, Tandale ward, in his famous bar known as Manyara Park Pool Corner where Singeli was born. Musicians rehearsing at different hours attracted people from the neighbourhood and beyond. The freedom of expression led them to create the style of dancing and playing music in an informal way, which is where the Singeli style started. Singeli is a contemporary informal urban narrative. It involves the beats produced by a DJ and a person singing to the beats while others dance. The words sung by the singer are prompt words that are expressed at that particular moment. Singeli dancing involves energetic, high-speed leg movements and clapping the hands. This type of dancing may have started at Manyara Park Pool Corner four years back, but now popular artists such as Athuman have caused it to spread to other neighbourhoods such as Mbagala, Kigogo, Magomeni and even out of Dar es Salaam to the Tanga region.

“Singeli is a contemporary informal urban narrative.”

DANCE OF THE SPECTATORS



DAR ES SALAAM

Yusuph was born on Aggrey Street in 1963, and has been living there ever since. He now owns a white nine storey building with balconies protruding from all sides in this famous Kariakoo street. The building is surrounded by commercial-residential buildings of five to six stories that appear to be new. Yusuph's building holds both residential spaces and quite a number of businesses (furniture, Muslim clothes, a tailor shop). It's a busy street: many people in and about the building. Yusuph likes to rent to locals, who own businesses in Kariakoo. A lot has changed in the area, in Kariakoo and in Dar in general, Yusuph claims. "There were not many buildings back then," he says, "and they were made of timber or stone; even the mosque was constructed from timber." Since then, the government renovated most of the houses and put tarmac on the roads.

One thing in particular that has made Aggrey Street stand out from most of the other streets in Kariakoo, is how much it changes depending on the time of the day. It is famous for its evening activities: "This whole street completely transforms in the evening; and the various food stalls, fruit and vegetable vendors creep out into the area like a cancer" Yusuph says. These businesses normally start immediately when the usual commercial activities of the day close (at around 6pm); and go on past midnight. Although the neighbourhood and surrounding buildings kept changing, the evening food market has always been there, reinforcing the community and enabling local residents to share a long-standing habit of open-air dining. Yusuph however remembers the days when he could swim across the ocean to Kigamboni at Feri, where the Tanganyika swimming club used to be. "We used to swim across to Kigamboni back then; we did not need the ferry," he said laughing. Back in the old days, this place was well known in Dar, a large swimming pool and sports centre were constructed during the British protectorate. He also recalls the soccer pitch at Kidongo Chekundu that has now changed to a basketball court where he used to play and relax as a young boy. The question remains: how to ensure that communities have the space to live, work and socialise in the city centre?

TRANSFORMER STREET



“We used to swim across to Kigamboni back then; we did not need the ferry.”

BERLIN



THE DÖNER

Strolling through Berlin with a growling stomach. You are hungry. Pressed for time you are looking around for a tasty, inexpensive, fast solution - but still fresh and healthy. You don't want a restaurant with waiting time - you need something to eat now! It is likely that there is a Turkish Döner store nearby. After all it is not only the most popular fast food in Germany, but you are also in the city with the highest number of Döner stores. With over 1300 stores, you have higher chances of getting the dish in Berlin than in Istanbul. Already existing as a meat dish on a plate in Turkey, Turkish guest workers in Germany put the meat into bread back in the 1970s. Later salad and sauces were added and a new food was invented in Germany which spread all over Europe - also back to Turkey. Variations with different kind of meats, salads and spices depend on the cultural influences of producers and store owners. You buy one of the 1.15 million Döners sold every day in Germany.

You have food history in your hands - if only briefly since you are hungry. You watched the meat being cut, the bread grilled, and salad and sauces added according to your wishes. No onions or garlic sauce today since you've still got appointments. You bite into your individually crafted food saviour. This tangible heritage of a German-Turkish hybrid cuisine will be intangible in the next few minutes. Only memories of good food, recommendations for friends and the happy, satiated feeling will remain.

“You have food history in
your hands - if only briefly
since you are hungry.”

DAR ES SALAAM

It was 5pm in the evening, Posta, the city centre of Dar es Salaam. The streets were crowded with people. Whilst getting acquainted with the area, four children were roaming around: Samweli, Sabayo, Chacha and Leonard. They recently migrated from the countryside to the inner city and are making a living as beggars. Although they are surrounded by civilians and police who do not like their presence downtown, female food vendors and the Mnazi Mmoja Hospital support them by providing food and basic medication. During the night, they search for temporary shelter in dilapidated buildings or sleep near the rapid bus transit station. Their sense of social community is strong. Occasionally they meet at the Azania football grounds or Coco Beach, which is north of the city centre. These are more welcoming but rare places where they feel safe and part of a neighbourhood.

“Their sense of social
community is strong.”

YOUNG SOLDIERS



BERLIN

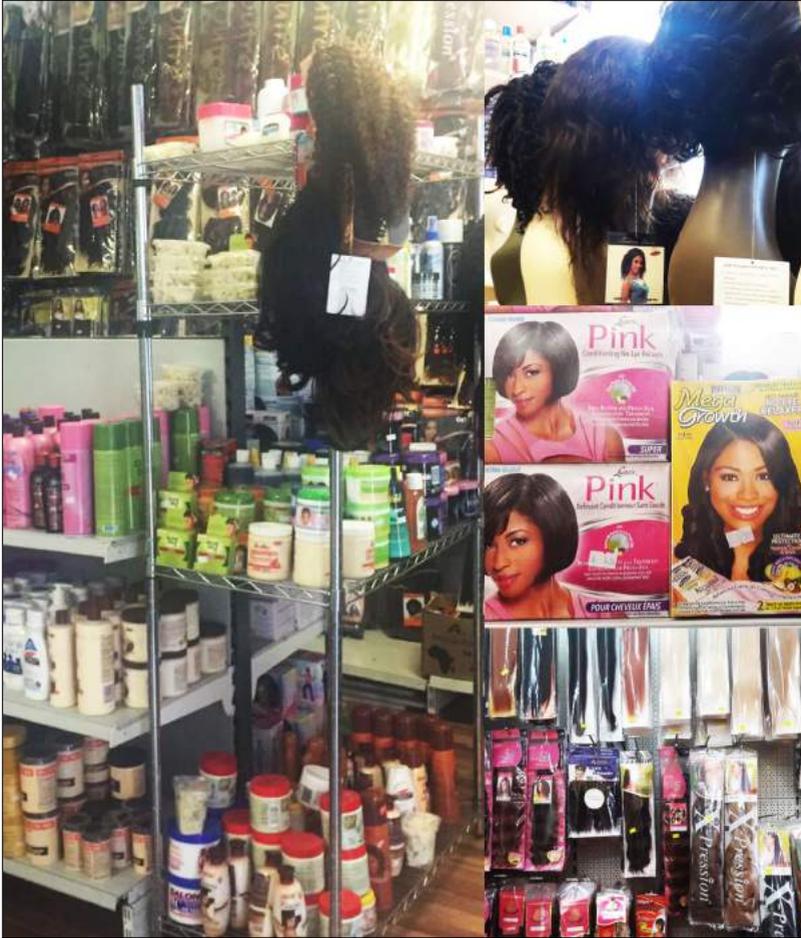


CALISTHENICS INTO SPACE

At around 6pm at the Post Stadium the group is already training, accompanied by cool hip hop tunes from a ghetto blaster. The scene is like a public fitness event in California where you can watch people displaying and working out their muscles. Igor founded this Calisthenics group three years ago. Originating in New York, Calisthenics enthusiasts work out in public places using only their own bodyweight and some racks. In the beginning the group met in different places in Berlin. But because of the group's growing size and some conflicts over space, they contacted the mayor of the Mitte district who told them to ask the authorities responsible for renovating the Post Stadium. Their request for a permanent workout place was accepted and they became involved in the planning process. A brand new place with racks adapted to their needs was built for €32,000. Igor is visibly proud of the group's achievement and he talks with expertise about the building processes and the connected costs. This Calisthenics space is unique in Berlin, which is why his long trip from Kreuzberg is worth it. Others even come from Spandau or Reinickendorf to work out. Sometimes 50 people turn up, which is a little too many for the space. However the Calisthenics group includes other areas of the Post Stadium in their workouts, like the steps, the climbing wall or the grass sports field. Even in winter the motivated group keeps on training. And because it gets dark early flood-lighting is going to be installed. Igor trains five to six times a week, simultaneously helping out as a voluntary supervisor. Together with his parents Igor moved to East Berlin from Kirow, a small town in Russia close to the Ural Mountains. The gymnastics training he enjoyed there as a child probably triggered his Calisthenics passion.

“Even in winter
the group keeps
on training.”

BERLIN



“Now, I need my skin to be lightened.”

HELLO ARTIFICIAL BEAUTY

Neukölln. I have been on these streets before, but today, upon seeing the very colourful wigs on white dummies and the various African hairstyles and cosmetic products displayed in the windows of this Afro-Shop, my heart wants to jump out of my chest: The temptations! Inside there's a small space at the back where women can dress their hair in various styles from wigs to braids. My blood is pumping faster: 'I need to fix my hair and skin!' is a common cry for most African women. Light skinned girls with shining, straight, blonde hair represent beauty in Africa. This particular shop like many others in Berlin has everything I need: wigs, extensions and cosmetics. My heart decides! Now, I need my skin to be lightened. Bleaching cosmetics would suit me well, says Google in my mobile phone. The shopkeeper behind the counter tells me that they are illegal. Walking around the shop with a sad face. The image of 'Goodbye to being dark skinned' is fading.

BERLIN

I have met very few people in Berlin that were born and raised here. “Where do they go?”, I ask reluctantly. Why are you still here? Everyone has ended up here through a long-winded journey, I can’t imagine Moabit being any different. “Melbourne,” I whisper reluctantly. Moabit was formerly a destination for refugees, it is only fitting that such an interaction would take place here. This city is a concoction of different cultures and Moabit is fertile. It is still eerily familiar but, sporadically, the culture shock pinches me. I’ve done this a million times before. There is a single thing that unites us, a queerness that charts its rise with the rise of cities. We are in the midst of an exchange, no longer an exchange of cultures or languages – they are now filters to discern our desires. This exchange is far more primal, utterly political.

What do we have in common and does it really matter? Together, we have built the intangible terrain that we are about to embark on. They show me around and I put down my roots. Berlin can be a difficult city to integrate in and it takes a while to construct these heterotopias. Now I know how to create these spaces that validate my identities, I am at ease. Ease is in the liquid we take, to elevate. I am not interested in language barriers but oppressive structures, how can I simultaneously dismantle both? I still get the curious glances. I look and I see. The conditions change around me, the sun descends through the foliage, tensely kissing the contoured landscape. I look to her – her rays barely illuminating the act, nurturing the fertile soil that we are on. I look to him, casting a swift embracing glance. This terrain smells of suspicious pear blossoms. How critical is the context to us, if at all? The act itself could take place within any context at any time. The context, however, instigates the interaction. This is a space of immense liberation, created by us to appreciate our own beauties.

I’m not here, I’m at Post Stadium but I could be anywhere else.

DESPERATELY SEEKING



“... the sun descends
through the foliage,
tensely kissing the
contoured landscape.”

DAR ES SALAAM

Hakeem, a self-proclaimed businessman from Nigeria, has been living in Kariakoo for the past five years. Asked why he left Nigeria, he explained: “I am an adventurer and always wanted to see different places while looking for economic opportunities”. He chose Dar es Salaam because it is the capital city. Being a migrant is not easy – his illegal status in Tanzania is a source of constant fear. His Kiswahili is, according to him, very good and having travelled extensively, so is his English. Hakeem believes that contemporary Dar es Salaam is the best city to be in, not only for Tanzanians but also for foreigners like him.

For him, Dar es Salaam is a place of opportunities. Hakeem lives in the Maskani part of Kariakoo: a vibrant neighbourhood with a mix of cultures and ethnicities. His neighbours and closest friends are Nigerian, Rwandan and Malawi. There are even specific musical and cultural hotspots for the Nigerian community. “It is tricky to point them out or even to describe, because all of these clubs and social centres temporarily pop up around Kariakoo without having any kind of permission”. He tells us about a place in Mbezi Musho behind the police station with extraordinary colourful paintings on the walls, where newcomers can meet local residents, relax and learn about the city. It seems that Dar still has the ability to integrate new people easily, like most of the dynamic arrival cities. Behind the quite formal urban fabric, it has a hidden system of intercultural networks embedded in the backstreets. Kariakoo, it seems, offers space for migrant subcultures even though it is now undergoing massive redevelopment.

“For him, Dar es Salaam
is a place of opportunities.”

AFRICANS IN AN AFRICAN CITY



BERLIN



FALAFEL HUMBABA

Kind of hip for a falafel place. No food pictures. The menu above the counter handwritten with white chalk. Fancy oriental-looking tiles, vegan sauce. Ahmad and Ezzo work behind the counter of Falafel Humbaba. They work without pause, one of them cool and a little grumpy, the other rather shy but friendly. It is already getting dark, the bakery next to Humbaba is closing, the big rush is over. At one of the tables in front of the restaurant, Ezzo tells his story – in almost flawless English. Ezzo comes from the Lebanese city of Saida. He is 25 and has been in Berlin for nine months. Arriving in Berlin, he first moved to Lankwitz. He describes his discomfort there and how he had to cope with racist comments about his Arab appearance. For five months now, Ezzo has been living in Moabit in an apartment nearby. He paid €5000 for it. “For what?” “You have to do that, to get it.” In this part of the city he feels better: “Moabit is a world in one place. We are all humans, so we have to respect each other.” In Moabit he lives in a close family circle, between the shop, Mohamad’s and Hussein’s shisha bar, and his apartment. For Ezzo, Europe in general, and also the Turmstraße are fascinating, because they are loaded with history. The whole cityscape refers to historic events.

“They work without pause, one of them cool and a little grumpy, the other rather shy but friendly.”

DAR ES SALAAM

It's Monday, in the middle of the afternoon, late March. Abbas is sitting outside his small restaurant, in the shade, chatting with a friend. His friend is a mullah with a sharp look, probably works at the mosque down the street. Abbas seems to have Indian origins, but he is Muslim. It's kind of obvious from his name.

He moved to Dar es Salaam in the 1970s with his wife and two children, a daughter and a son, who are currently living in the United Kingdom. When Abbas moved to Kisumu back then, he rented this restaurant and an apartment from the National Housing Corporation. He is pretty satisfied with his situation and the rent is decent. His apartment has 2 bedrooms, a dining room and 2 bathrooms. The best part is that it's located just by his restaurant. For Abbas, the fact that in this area everything you need is within walking distance is great, especially at his age. He thinks now that he has retired he just has to wait for his time ... God has a plan and will take him when the time is right. He is only in his late 60s but maybe he has an older soul.

Pondering the development of the city, he realises that he is not sad about all the changes in his surroundings and his area; the new buildings don't bother him, and neither does the idea of demolishing the older ones. After all he believes that the government doesn't care about the opinion of the public and what the people want in this case doesn't matter, so why even bother to get sad about it? No sir! Not at his age! He knows better than to get worked up about such stuff! Let them make their changes and build their tall buildings, but maybe it would be nice to preserve the buildings and the houses by the shoreline, he has a softer spot for them, they remind him of his youth.

ABBAS THE RESTAURANT OWNER



“He is only in his late 60s but maybe he has an older soul.”

BERLIN

Paolo is from Italy. He has been in Germany with his family for 34 years. Making ice cream is part of his heritage and in 1992 he opened 'Eis Macron' on Turmstraße in Moabit. Back in the 1970s, Turmstraße was beautiful. There were lots of families and clothing shops, like Schlossstraße in Steglitz. However, many of the families moved away and the area changed: "Around 2000, it was the worst. Today, again, the area is developing in a good way, because many young people move here. I have a large number of regulars, but also always new customers." Like other immigrants who run food businesses in Moabit he has been developing the original recipes by adding some local Berlin touches: "I have adapted my recipe very much over the years, but I always keep my three important ingredients: sugar, milk, and cream." This also creates the unique atmosphere in an intangible way in Moabit. Because his business is seasonal Paolo is based in Berlin for eight months in Berlin a year, spending the other four in Italy. While he does this for economic reasons, it also allows him to develop even more delicious recipes.

"I have adapted my recipe very much over the years, but I always keep my three important ingredients: sugar, milk, and cream."

ICH BIN EIN ITALIENER



DAR ES SALAAM

Didas decided to leave a life of brick-making in Morogoro two years ago and try his luck in Dar. He was fortunate enough to get a spot for his business right in the city centre, at the park along Sam Nujoma Road. There he sells coffee to a wide range of customers - from taxi drivers at the taxi stop to fellow petty traders conducting other commercial activities in the area, to students and corporate workers. The park plays a huge role in Didas' coffee business: "Most of the people come to the park to relax and hang out or play draughts or chess. Others are just passing by, probably on their way to or from work." Because most of his business is done in the morning and evening hours, he arrives at the park at 5am from his home in Tandika – a 40 minute bus journey – and leaves a little after 7pm. The large branches sprouting from the neem trees found in the park ensure that the place is always shaded and cool. The breeze and the view of the Indian Ocean may be another reason for people to sit in the park, especially after a day's work in the office as a banker, or after a long afternoon in the sunny streets as a candy vendor. Although this popular park is well established, the city has recently witnessed the disappearance of quite a number of open spaces, the plots now occupied by buildings. Valuable open spaces and the livelihoods of those that served them have been lost. "Instead of demolishing such places, they could be properly maintained and allowed to host various petty trading activities. Maybe the government could even earn some revenue," Didas concluded..

“The large branches sprouting from the neem trees found in the park ensure that the place is always shaded and cool.”

THE COFFEE MAN



BERLIN

Saturday morning, almost ten o'clock – the weekend is in full swing. Only tradesmen and a few other people are in the street. A woman is sitting on the bench in the little park near Wiciefstraße. She seems to enjoy the balmy morning atmosphere. Helmut's music is in the air and she introduces herself as Gabriele. "The area used to be a bit run down, but now it has become more beautiful. I'm happy here, I always have been. I do not know what else to say..?! Oh, Germany's most beautiful street? I heard about it. Children painted power distribution boxes, you can see one right over there." She points in the direction of Turmstraße where we can see a power box painted light blue. "In this neighbourhood, I somehow feel, let's call it, 'anonymously accepted'. I've lived here since 1982. Back then, this area was still known for its aggression. I have actually never seen it. Well, of course, there are still many problems related to drugs, but that's mostly during evening and night-time. I now live a few blocks away, near the Bundesratufer and Hansaviertel and come here often to visit.

I've lived in several places in Berlin before my time here in Moabit and I can certainly say that Moabit is the most diverse district. With diverse I do not mean the cultural diversity, but more the variety of green spaces, the proximity to water and other beautiful areas that make Moabit as a whole. I don't think you can describe Moabit with only one specific word, simply because there is so much to experience. People are now waiting in line in order to rent an apartment. This is totally new. It is still a bit of an unusual reality. Soon after the Wall came down, so many houses were abandoned - even in the West. We sometimes can see this past and I like that. Of course, it's clear that the houses are renovated, they look brand new. Moabit is now associated with words like 'change' and 'future development'. It is true that this area has a lot of potential. I mean, look at the Turmstraße. This is for me the best example to describe 'change'. There used to be just a few conservative stores as Böldicke or Ebbinghaus. That was it. And then of course many bakeries and pastry shops, but they were all typical German. Look at the variety of shops now! I like going out there to explore. The Turkish bakeries for example, I find them great. Everything they make tastes wonderful. I remember being a teen. We would have dreamed of getting fresh white bread from the bakery on a Saturday afternoon. Shops would close at one o'clock in the afternoon. Today you can get whatever you want, whenever you want."

THE VISITOR



“In this neighbourhood,
I somehow feel, let’s call it,
‘anonymously accepted’.”

DAR ES SALAAM



“I have seen the city
change around me,
from dust to asphalt,
macuti to corrugated metal,
mud to cement.”

THE MIGRANT

Originally, I am not from Dar es Salaam. But this place is not all new to me. I have quite a few things in common with the people in this city. We share certain habits and spaces. My ancestors, who made the long, tiring journey from Madagascar, tell me that around the Indian Ocean the Bantus, Arabs, Persians and Asians traded everything: spices, languages, people. Migrants like me bring new words and blur differences in origin. People here are welcoming to newcomers. They showed me around and I put down my roots. Now that I know where to stay and how to get food and water, everything is easier, but I am still struggling with the urban landscape. I look and act differently from others here. Sometimes they give me curious glances or whisper. Although I've been here for decades they can tell that I came from another coast. I have seen the city change around me, from dust to asphalt, macuti to corrugated metal, mud to cement. These days, the pollution and garbage give me a hard time. I depend on my own space and habitat and wish they would not use me to produce charcoal but rather enjoy my beauty and the space I offer to them. I provide intense shade and coolness during the long hot and humid days. This is how I return the favour of being allowed to make this place my home.

Over the years I have become increasingly respected in town and my family is growing. People sometimes stop and smile. They enjoy my flowers the most. Once a year, for Christmas, I host a big party and wear my most colourful dress – blossoms in vibrant shades of red. This is where my nickname comes from – a word that shows my hybrid nature as a resident of Dar es Salaam: they call me Christmas or flamboyant tree. Together with the neem tree and plumeria (frangipani), we define the cultural landscape of this migrant city.

BERLIN



OVER THE ICE

Refugee, says his wife. In the end that is what he was – a refugee. Searching for work he left his homeland. First he went to Slubice. But he didn't want to stay there. His destination was on the other side of the river, across a national border. He wanted to come to Berlin. He had heard so many good things from other Turkish people that went before him. He could stay in Poland, but Germany didn't want him to make the crossing. He decided to wait. When the River Oder was frozen during the winter he knew his chance had come. During the night he slid across the frozen waters using a coat, afraid of making any noise. Unfortunately the border police was waiting for him. After one fearful night he was brought back to Poland. Ultimately he landed in Lodz, where he worked his way up to become owner of a textile factory. Business activities brought him to Berlin where he met his wife Hanim. She moved to Poland with him and they lived there for four more years. When the situation became unbearable for Hanim the family moved to Berlin. The second child was already on its way and Poland had become part of the European Union. Now they live in Spandau with their children because it is quiet but they come to Moabit to eat. The food is good. Sometimes it is even better than in Turkey. Having a meal at the Osmanya restaurant in Birkenstraße is always like a short holiday in Turkey.

“When the River Oder was frozen during the winter he knew his chance had come.”

DAR ES SALAAM

Owning a house had always been Mr. Babu's dream. Working as a gateman at the Sinza Palestina hospital, he decided by to start a maize stall by the Sinza Palestina bus stop to earn extra income. Next to the bus stop, street vendors arrange themselves in a line along the south part of the road, some sell fruits, some sell drinks and some sell accessories. It's a busy transport hub: good for business. With years of hard work and savings, Mr. Babu managed to buy a plot in Mbezi kwa Msuguli, which is eleven kilometres away from Sinza and more affordable than living in Sinza today. His daily routine is to wake early in the morning and head to the Tandale market where he stocks up on maize on his way to work. "Every day I reach my workplace around 10 am in the morning, and leave around 8 pm in the evening," Mr. Babu explains. He rarely has any time to go out and explore the city.

Time flies: it has been almost 30 years since the young man first came to Sinza – the earliest planned area in the city. Grey hair has already started to grow on his head. These days, Mr. Babu no longer works at the hospital; selling corn has become his main occupation. Having worked in Sinza for such a long time and as he is used to living in the neighbourhood, the Sinza Palestina bus stop is Mr. Babu's most treasured and familiar place. He knows the surroundings very well and when we ask him about information on open spaces in Sinza, he immediately leads us to a public open space which is currently being used as parking lot. It hosts a number of other functions, according to the time of the year: political meetings, religious gatherings and community events. It has been used for a long time, as long as Mr. Babu can remember.

For Mr. Babu, Sinza is a place which is both near and far. It seems like Mr. Babu's story is shared by many people of Sinza – who used to live and work in Sinza, but have now moved away. During the day, they come back to work and meet with old friends.

“It's a busy transport hub:
good for business.”

THIRTY YEARS



DAR ES SALAAM

From under a tree in Sinza Mori a tricolour line caught my eyes: red, blue, green. Bajajis parked in a row on the street. It turned out to be a garage. I asked a Bajaji owner who was waiting while his vehicle was being serviced: “How often do you come to the garage? Is this the only garage you come to? What happens to your business when you are in the garage?”

“Dah! That’s a lot of questions at once,” he replied, laughing, “Ok, I usually come once a month to service my Bajaji, and yes it is the only garage I come to because I know the mechanics personally, and they are good at their work, and they’re quite reasonable with their prices. My business stops when I’m here but I don’t regret it because if I don’t service my Bajaji then it would cost me more than the business I lose when I wait at the garage.” Imma, the mechanic who was working on the Bajaji, couldn’t resist joining the conversation.

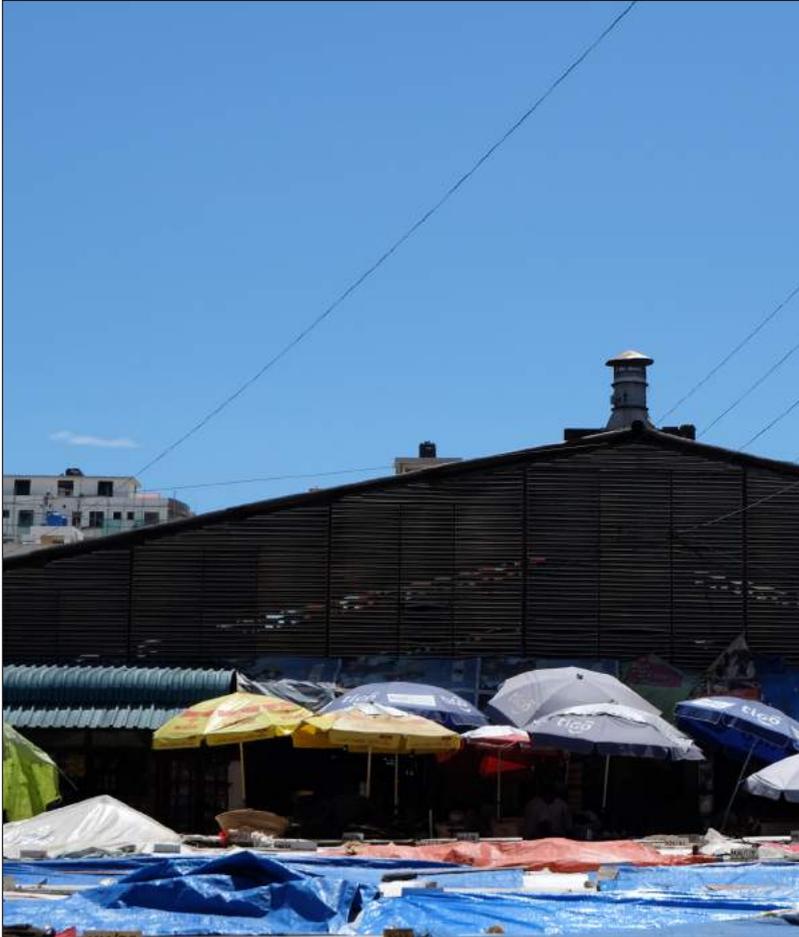
“You can ask any questions you want,” he said. “How old are you? You look young to be a mechanic,” I said. “I am 18 years old, and I have been working in this garage for the past two years,” replied Imma. “Is this your permanent place of work?” I inquired. Imma explained, “Yes, this is my permanent place of work but we don’t have a permit for running a garage here. We are not authorized. This is a ‘Gereji Bubu’ – a silent garage. We face a lot of problems, one of them is the government: they come to ask for a permit and, if we can’t provide one, they take all the Bajajis away until we pay the fine of 180,000 shillings. This is more like an informal garage, and we choose to work here because we find it to be the hotspot for Bajajis. Many Bajajis pass by and see the garage. We have spare shops which makes it easier for us to get the spares and equipment for repairs.” One last question: “Are there women driving Bajajis?” The mechanic and owner debated for a while and then resumed the conversation, “YES! There are some,” Imma told us with a smile, “I work here so I come to know many drivers and some of them are women.” I wanted to know more about the Bajajis – How do you become a driver? Are there teachers, experts who can explain to us the complex world of transportation in Dar es Salaam? – but it was time for Imma to get back to work.

GEREJI BUBU



“This is a ‘Gereji Bubu’
– a silent garage.”

DAR ES SALAAM



“At the time, the area was filled with houses with thatched roofs, surrounded by beautiful trees, mostly coconut trees.”

SMALL KARIAKOO MARKET

Kariakoo Market... the noise, the smell, vendors shouting out their merchandise, crowds moving, heavy traffic...but as you walk through the main market, passing the fruit and vegetable stands, and you enter a small metal shed, all the hustle and bustle stops. Soko Dogo la Kariakoo, the small market at Kariakoo, with its narrow aisles, bordered by what seem to be mountains of spices...Spices everywhere. In bags, in sachets, in the air and ...atchiii!... in every visitor's nose and lungs... Sitting on a woven basket is Mzee...

"I came to Kariakoo in 1949, when I was only twelve years old. My father had passed away and the family couldn't afford to send me to school, so I learned business from my mother. She used to sell bananas, avocados and all that. I came here to start my business. At the time, the area was filled with houses with thatched roofs, surrounded by beautiful trees, mostly coconut trees. The market manager had bought tree seeds from Morogoro and asked every vendor to grow a tree in front of his shop. Nyerere, the first president of Tanganyika, had this market built for 25 million Tanzanian shillings. He later had a meeting in the Kilimanjaro Hotel with each of the market's 45 vendors. That's when I met him. It was then that they decided that each vendor needs to pay rent. He taught us how to do business and took care that every shop owner had a farm where he could grow his own products. I used to sell rice, corn and onions that I got from Morogoro by bus. The bus used to stop in a station on the site of the current Kariakoo market.

I beg your forgiveness. I need to have a sip of water. Forgive me, for not being able to offer you, my guests, something first, as our culture requires traditionally. The new president is taking care of us. Before there was no water supply, now there is always running water. But there are all these electric cables hanging freely from the ceiling. If you want to know the real Tanzania, from Dar you should go to Morogoro, Miringa, Mbea, Sumbawanga and you would understand the system of our local markets.

Have you ever heard the rumour that a German official dug a hole into the ground, when the British took over, and hid all his canons and bombs? I know where it is. On the bottom of a lake, now... But if you go there, chances are high than you wouldn't come back. Many haven't. It's in Rungwe, where I come from.

The best thing about Tanganyika was that the people were nice. They wouldn't even swear. But that changed after the colonisation, the new colonisation of the brands. Azam. Azam ice cream. Azam everything. I used to know the owner. One upon the time he was a shoe shiner, here, in the market. My six children are not interested in the shop, since they are now married and have their own life. Thank you for talking to me. This makes me very happy. And please forgive me for not offering you food or drinks. I love this place and if I had have to leave, I would rather leave for good." As I walk away, I wonder what will happen to the old man and his beloved market if the rumours of the market manager's plans for a multi storey building on the site of the soko dogo become reality...

BERLIN



“Her second coming happened in 1949, when she fed all of Berlin with oil for two months until the end of the Blockade.”

EXOTICALLY EXCESSIVE, EXCESSIVELY EXOTIC

The single most important event to happen along the calm edges of today's Westhafen canal was the 1945 Soviet Blockade of the City. Home to a serene Berlin park for almost two centuries, it was only then when her enthusiastic mission to load, stack and deliver came to completion. Before any custom goods could reach Berlin's bars, hospitals, schools and private apartments they first arrived at her redbrick monumental gates. "A wild excess of goods, boxes of pure American lard, African coffee, Brazilian tobacco, barrels of wine from Bordeaux and Italy, the spectacle of unpacking the containers with Californian raisins, sugar, almonds and rice pleased the eyes of all Berliners, taste buds of a few. Everyone knew Berlin started and finished here," she says proudly, but in a melancholic tone. For over ten years she kept mystery and promise and became a projection of a far away land. She wasn't looking for all this glory and came into the city life almost unnoticed. In 1923, when she opened her gates, her sister at the eastern end of Berlin, the port of Osthafen, perplexed her with her scale and grandeur. Her second coming happened in 1949, when she fed all of Berlin with oil for two months until the end of the Blockade. The wartime menu, brown potatoes with pickles, Kartoffelpuffer, potatoes in herb sauce and potatoes with lentils could all brown and broil in Behala's Speiseöl. The old housewives of Berlin are still thankful.

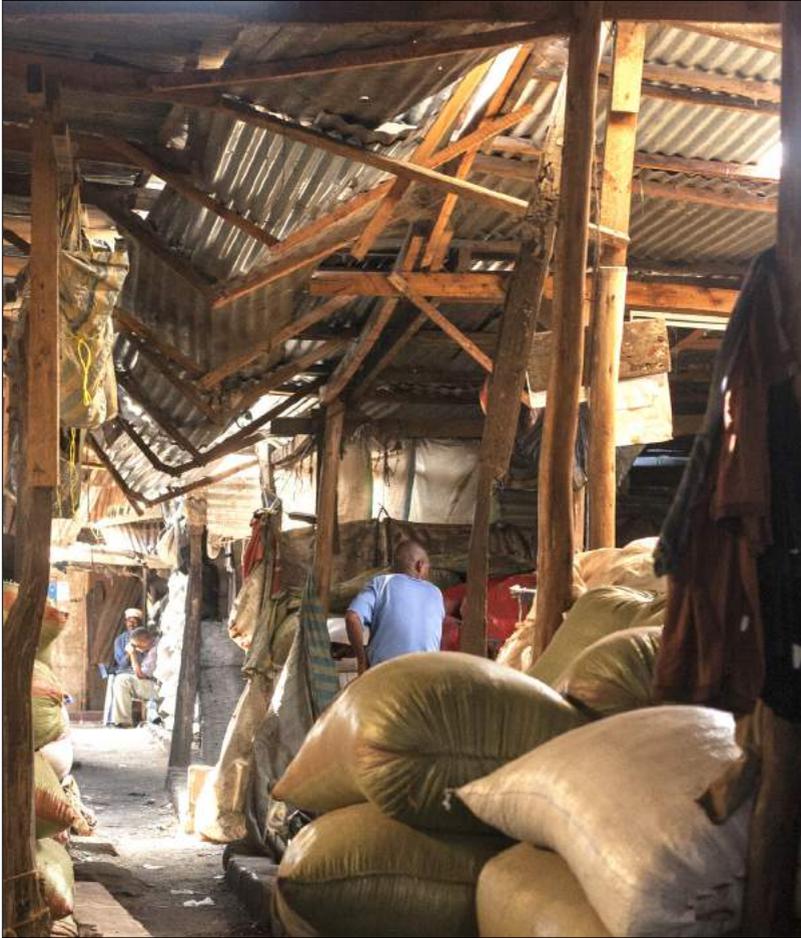
Today, she is still a symbolic authority of the city, proud and monumental, but it is a different kind of excess she animates now. Rubble, sand, coal, iron – anything you need to build higher and better can be found inside her colourful containers. "Don't let the international names on them deceive you," she warns, "The sand is used for foundation work in Mitte's future hotels, and rubble in the many residential projects in Spandau". Ordered flow on display, visual excess and a language of repetition still dictate her appearance and intimidate as much as almost a century ago. Is she looking forward into the future of excess? Protected under the Heritage Act from 1995, she feels secure. From the other edge of the canal passers-by can barely read the signs fixed to her tall fences – 'Do not cross', 'Access prohibited'. She doesn't look back at them. Yet they still come in the evening to sit in the wild and enjoy the spectacle of exchange - containers tossed back and forth, sand loaded onto barrels to build the new Berlin. Unlike her monumental Osthafen sister, she didn't become a set of architectures fixed in time, but rather herself an animated architecture. A true urban space in the state of becoming.

BERLIN

On a street of closely built, one-storey houses with cool, shady verandas is Tandale Market. It is the dimly lit heart of Tandale, the place locals identify with the most. The wooden structure is roofed with corrugated aluminium sheets. The construction seems unfinished. In fact, parts of the market have been appropriated to fix the roofs of houses nearby. There are narrow pathways and men sitting in small groups. Young boys carry water canisters and small sacks of grains on their heads. In his market shop Mr. Nanja is sitting on a sack of beans, surrounded by dozens of other sacks of beans. He is 29 years old and has been selling beans for almost four years. His job affords a decent life for his family. "I live in Tandika, it is far from here! Every morning I have to leave the house at 7am to be at work at 9am. I have to take daladals every day. On the bus I sit next to the window, take out my drink, relax, and try not to think about the long and frustrating trip. Sometimes, I find some interesting people, and talk with them on the way, but if not, I would prefer to stay silent and just relax. But, I always have to ask the driver to turn down the volume. They always play the music so loud that no one can hear anything else!" The market must be quite significant if he is willing to travel so long to reach it.

“There are narrow
pathways and men
sitting in small groups.”

TANDALE MARKET





“People use the little footpaths through my nursery to walk in the shade and be surrounded by the colourful plants.”

CLEMENTINE'S DIARY

It has been another long, hot day at my nursery next to Coca Cola Road in Mwenge. For seven years I have been located in this generous space. Walking through the nursery takes at least five minutes: it offers enough space for all my beautiful plants. It is directly connected to the water canal, which is the most important feature of this location. The rainy season will begin shortly. These days there are only a few customers, so I'm spending most of the time sitting in the shade of the trees thinking and sharing my thoughts with my colleagues. I have got so many questions on my mind. All these uncertainties about how my situation in this neighbourhood will develop because of the big new construction site just behind my nursery and other developments in the area. I really got settled here: I have my contacts and a strong bond with the other nursery owners – we help each other and share advice. Even though the competition in the city has got stronger, I still feel comfortable in my neighbourhood. I am positive about the future. I have been doing this job for 35 years now and have lots of professional skills.

People use the little footpaths through my nursery to walk in the shade and be surrounded by the colourful plants. They say they enjoy it very much, because it feels like walking through a park and the air is so much better than walking just next to the street. People have become more and more interested in plants. Especially in the neighbourhood of Mwenge where people have enough space and a garden surrounding their house. It feels like people are not that interested in growing their own vegetables anymore, which accounts for the many ornamental plants with beautiful leaves and colourful flowers I have on offer. My customers are thankful for my plants and they tell me so. I enjoy their positive feedback. In general, I am really happy to see and feel the shift in interest towards plants. It is my passion to work with plants and I want to share it with customers and make a living from it. It is therefore not a big problem for me to make the long two-hour journey from my home in Mbozi Makabe to my lovely nursery every day.

BERLIN

It was better in the old days. Even the Post Stadium. A couple of years ago it was really wild. The whole area was abandoned and overgrown. It was like an oasis right in the middle of the city. So mesmerising and enchanting. Oh, I really enjoyed being here. But that does not exist anymore. Now they have reconstructed just about everything. A lot of soccer fields and an outdoor gym and a huge, expensive spa. But you know, beside the spa there is a little hole in the fence where one can slip through. And behind it, you can still find this feeling of mesmerising wilderness. A completely different and mystical atmosphere appears near the old steps. It is like years ago, everything is overgrown and you can feel exceptional, like you are in a totally different world. It is overwhelming. There I can liberate my soul from all the suffering.

“A completely different
and mystical atmosphere
appears near the old steps.”

WILD LIFE



DAR ES SALAAM

The alarm clock rings at exactly 5am. Shamte, a 38-year-old man living in Bonyokwa, Dar es Salaam, has to leave his home for his place of work. “A walk would be quite convenient,” Shamte states, “most of my customers’ gardens are nearby.” On his way to work he encounters a man who is interested in his services. Unfortunately he is unable to communicate with him because of the Songea accent he inherited. This saddens him as he has been living in Dar es Salaam for ten years. When he arrives at work he is greeted by the “maua ya saa nne” jasmine flowers, their blossom and aroma make checking his watch unnecessary. He knows exactly what time it is: 10 am.

For Shamte socialization skills are the main component of his work. He recalls the housemaid who approached him with an offer of breakfast while he was in the midst of the watering process. Sadly he couldn’t accept as he had precisely timed his working hours in that particular garden and any slight delay would have meant arriving late at the next customer’s garden.

During the breakfast session he visits a plot of approximately 400 square metres, quite a small area for a garden compared to his other customers. He is familiar with his client’s strong desire for shade and knows exactly what types of trees he would recommend purchasing from the nurseries. The mikole trees would not damage the wall his client uses to demarcate his property. Palm trees (golden, royal or American palm tree), with their unique character and vertical shading, would cover his client’s two story house very well.

He continues his work with an insight into how gardening has changed his life. Coming from a background of an individual gardener and being able to employ two boys aged 18 years who are working in his other clients’ gardens he sees himself as a survivor who has worked in residential gardens and hotel gardens. This is a kind of personal victory and it would be a disappointment if the gardens and parks in Dar es Salaam are not improved in the future.

A DAY AS A GARDENER



“He continues his work with an insight into how gardening has changed his life.”



“Questions are being asked, answers are being exchanged. What about the past, what about your past?”

THE VIEW FROM AFAR

There is this place you need to find. You are getting closer to it. You don't exactly know what the place looks like and you keep asking for directions. When you get there, someone asks you to come in. On a huge map there are points marked and linked to short texts. It feels like you were standing in the map. The map is simply too big not to get lost in it. There are old images printed on large boards, probably to show them to other people. You are not asked to sit down. This place is simply not made to get comfortable in a chair. The atmosphere is made for that only person in here. She is sitting behind a computer screen and you are wondering what her task is actually about. Why would you actually want to know, though? Your questions are of a different kind and therefore leading towards a different direction. Questions are being asked, answers are being exchanged. What about the past, what about your past? What happened then? Do you remember? It is all about that particular space but not hers. The room starts growing since you start looking around and there are details you only notice now. And then you realize how small it actually is. There is hardly any space to move around although there aren't too many things occupying it. So this small room is the lady's working environment. She obviously does not spend too much time in it nor tries to improve it. She sits in there for three hours per week, sometimes sneaking out to have a cigarette. What does this role mean to her? It is hard to tell since there's again no conversation on this. Some anecdotes and short stories on her time in Moabit but that's about it. She wants to keep it simple, keep it precise, nothing about what might have happened. But has seriously nothing spectacular ever happened? Maybe it is a boring place?

Details, over and over again traces only. Only questions on certain aspects. The overall image, the bigger picture is missing. Bits and pieces are coming together, yet there are links missing. She seems to be ok with it. Maybe she doesn't want to tell more about herself. Why would she? So she sticks to Fritz-Schloss-Park as requested. She used to live right next to it for about ten years. She saw the wall come down and Berlin becoming the capital again. She followed the debates on where parliamentarians could have their running route and then she moved away, keeping Moabit an historical aspect just like what her role seems to be about, not part of her daily life. Telling me how little she actually used the park herself. The whole time one person is standing while the other is seated. You can see the door and the room in total once more. One person thanks the other and then the door opens. You might think she doesn't care too much but she's running, shouting out loud your name. She's got one last hint. Moabit seems close and yet so far away. Who knows?

GLOSSARY

A

Afro-Shop: shop that sells a diverse variety of goods and services mainly for the African diaspora, such as food, cosmetics, games and clothes. They also serve as places to meet, hang out, and network. In Berlin the majority of Afro-Shops are found around Sonnenallee in Neukölln and in the Wedding area.

Akhue: open air game originally from West Africa, played on Sundays in the parks of Weißensee. The marble tree seeds can be bought in many of the Afro-Shops of Berlin. The game is played in a large square area, with the seed placed in the middle. One side is earth, the other is sky.

B

Bajaji: small, three-wheeled motorised taxis in Dar, named after Bajaj, the Indian company that manufactures some of them. Drivers tend to enjoy a bit of off-road action to beat the traffic. Painted in shiny red, green, blue or yellow, Bajajis can be decorated with flags, soccer stickers, spiritual phrases and quotes.

Baraza: raised and shaded veranda or front porch, practical for escaping the Tanzanian sun.

C

Chaki: Indian stone grinder for rice and grains.

D

Daladala: medium-sized buses which make up the most common public transport in Dar es Salaam. They are manned by a conductor who, hanging out of the middle door, gives information about the route and collects the fare when passengers leave the bus, each according to their travel time.

Döner: warm pita-bread sandwich filled with grilled meat, sliced vegetables, and different sauces, adapted from a Turkish dish. A very common streetfood in Berlin, it is cheap and accessible anywhere, at any time.

K

Kanga (also spelled khanga): 1.5 x 3 metre rectangular piece of fabric, printed with patterns, illustrations and proverbs, which is used as a piece of clothing in various combinations: skirts, headscarves, shirts, dresses, etc.

Karibu (pl. Karibuni): 'welcome', one of the most heard Kiswahili words around Dar, exchanged when meeting up, entering a shop, starting a conversation, after saying thank you ('Asante') and many other occasions.

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M

Makumbusho: 'memory' (in the intangible sense). The Makumbusho Village in Dar es Salaam is an open air museum dedicated to traditional houses and rural ways of living in the many different areas of Tanzania.

R

Rida: traditional clothing worn by Bohra Muslim women.

S

Singeli: street dance which originated from the inner districts of Dar es Salaam, where the dancers stomp their feet and jump to the fast beats of the music.

Soko: from the Arabic, Sukh or Souk, meaning market (traditionally for foods and spices).

T

Taarab: Sometimes considered the 'sound of Zanzibar', Taarab is a musical style inspired from different African traditions mixed with Middle-Eastern influences, through the use of the qanun instrument (a type of zither). According to legend, in the 1870s Sultan Bargash sent a Zanzibari to Cairo to learn to play the qanun, and brought back new melodies to the island.

U

Uhuru: 'independence' in Kiswahili.

Ungo: hand-woven flat basket, staple of a Tanzanian kitchen. A versatile instrument, it is traditionally used for sorting the rice or fanning hot foods.

Urithi: 'Inheritance', material heritage, transmitted from generation to generation.

Uswazi: (usually about a street or a neighborhood) active, crowded, messy, 'informal'.

V

VICOBA: Village Community Bank (originally established in West Africa), community level savings and micro-financing model where members contribute a certain amount every month and loans are made towards business investments, housing construction, etc.

Where is the link between an immigrant from Lebanon opening a falafel shop in Berlin, and a man who has lived in Dar es Salaam for thirty years, selling maize and snacks next to the bus stop for a living? What connects the anecdote of a woman recalling the wastelands of the Moabit district of Berlin, and a young man describing his memories of childhood games in the sandy fields of Sinza?

This book presents urban narratives from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Berlin, Germany and, juxtaposing the stories to provoke associations, explore contradictions and draw parallels between the seemingly dissimilar cities. Based on interviews with local people in a variety of neighbourhoods in both cities, the stories consider urban heritage 'from below'. They address the cultural or spatial practices that contribute to a sense of community, the buildings that people identify with, and the places that make a neighbourhood special.

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