National – Local – Ethnic or Religious Identity?

A study of identity formation and cultural integration between language groups in the town Babati, Tanzania.

By: Jonna Wijk
Supervisor: Clas Lindberg
Abstract

Tanzania is amongst other things known for its ethnic diversity. In 1987 it was established that Tanzania had 130 different African ethnic groups. Despite the ethnic diversity Tanzania is successful in acceptance and famous for being a country in peace. Peoples identity creation is a constantly evolving process and is therefore difficult to define and categorize. Despite that this essay aims to get an understanding of Tanzanians cultural integration. How do people define themselves in terms of their own identity? What matter the most, is it religion, the local or national community? How important is the ethnic inheritance in the urban society? Is it one or more of these categorizations that people have a stronger connection to. How important is the language and the ability to communicate with each other to maintain a peaceful stability? These questions where asked to inhabitants of the town Babati which is situated in the northern parts of Tanzania. The interviews took place during a three week long field study February – March 2010.

Keywords : Identity, Ethnicity, Babati, Tanzania, Identity creation.
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1. Introduction

What is identity? How do we define our selves and each other? Is it possible that a single person can have multiple identities? The authors Stephen castles & Mark J Miller believe in the idea of multiple identities, especially in our increasingly multicultural world. The aforementioned authors wrote the book “The Age of Migration” which discusses our modern world migration flows. To define identities you need categorizations such as Social roles, that can mean a female or male role and ethnic roles. These social roles changes trough time and we have trouble to define what for example is a female role. It is also important to realize that people interpret things differently and are coloured by their own experiences. So not only is it hard to define categorizations due to the constant transience but we also experience the categorizations differently. On this you ad Stephen Castles & Mark J Millers theory on multiple identities and it becomes very difficult to define a persons identity. Tanzania is a country consisting of a large number of different African language groups. Every language group have their own history and traditions that make them unique. Social anthropologists have studied around the term ethnic identity, what it is and how it is created and if it is possible to even talk about ethnic identity because it defines one shared culture and is there by collective and no space is given to individuality. In the urban cities Tanzanians gets use to compromise and accept each other and communicate trough the national language Swahili. The interviews that are displayed later in this essay come to discuss this subject, how Tanzanians are able to live in peace and how people relate to their own ethnic inheritance.

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2. Problem definition

In sociological and ethnological studies you often can find research about how identities are created on different levels and what kind of identity that is strongest in different population groups – is it national, local, ethnic or religious identity that means the most? Other studies focus on how cultural and social activities can break up earlier strong identities, with greater integration and better understanding between communities as a result. The scope area have a rare contemporary history of no major internal conflicts, despite numerous different ethnicities and religions amongst the inhabitants. A question that started the process of this essay is, how has the country developed this peaceful stability?

Questions that are analysed in the essay are following:

- Is the national identity strong amongst people, if so why and how?
- How about the local identity? Does it exist? Is it important?
- What happens to the ethnic identity when the society shifts from rural to urban? Does the ethnic identity becomes stronger or weaker in a society that contains high ethnic diversity?
- What about religion and peoples religious identity? Strong? Acceptance between different religions?

2.1 Purpose

The overall purpose of this study is to examine the local identity creation and see if the impact of urbanisation is affecting peoples identity, in the area of Babati, and to which extent people perceive their primary identity as national, ethnic or religious.
3. Method and delimitations

The chosen method for this essay is a qualitative method that is based on interviews gathered in the town Babati during a field study and secondary data. The secondary data contains of earlier research, and literature. The method of selecting secondary sources was done with the purpose to clarify the subject and bring a meaningfulness to the essay. The selection of secondary sources was carefully chosen to fit the essay. The purpose of the secondary sources was to apply conceptualisation in the essay. The secondary sources were necessary to apply in order to understand the interviews meaning in the essay. The chosen method for the interviews were to collect raw data in the form of semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interviews means that the questions do not strictly follow a list of order, to enable a discussion with the respondent. The interviews were conducted during a period of three weeks, with the result of eleven interviews. The interviews were conducted with the help of an field assistant that both selected the respondents and was the interpreter. A selection of quotes from the interviews will be presented in the Analysis chapter.

3.1 Criticism of sources

All interviews were made with a local interpreter and in some cases the respondents talked English. The respondents represent a broad selection of ages, ethnic groups, gender and religion. It was important for the essay that the respondents represent a widespread selection. These eleven interviews are not sufficient to make a generalization, this was however never the intent. The interviews represent eleven peoples discussion about the subject. It is only possible to compare the interviews with each other. It is important to take the language dilemma into consideration when reading the interviews. The language dilemma in this context means that neither the interviewer or the informants speak English as their first language. Also the short time for the interviewer to conduct the interviews also need to be taken in consideration.

3.2 Disposition

The essays disposition is from an idea about simplifying for the reader. First an interesting introduction that makes the reader want to continue reading. Then a background section to understand the subject and the history background on the scope area. The background on the scope area is important to understand the reason for Babati’s multiethnic society. The
background section about identity creation and different types of identity is important to understand the complicity of the subject. The interview analyse and the conclusion becomes more understanding if the background is read first. The questions that are asked in the beginning will be discussed in the end of the essay, in analyse and conclusion chapter.
4. Background

4.1 Tanzania and the people
Tanzania’s population is considered to have a high diversity when it comes to ethnicity. In 1987 the national census established that within Tanzania, 130 different African ethnic groups exist. In addition to the 99% African ethnic groups, there are also Asians, Europeans and Arabs. In the northern part of Tanzania it is possible to find Nilotes, Cushites and Khoisan people. But 95 % of the African ethnic groups are Bantu people. Early In the first millennium the coastal trade between the people that lived in todays Tanzania and the Middle East begun. The trade between Tanzania, the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf can be traced back to the ninth century. The Swahili speaking culture was an outcome of the mixture of Persians, Arabs and the indigenous people that converge along the East African coast. The Island Zanzibar became a centre of the culture mix. In 1961 Tanganyika (Tanzania’s former name) became independent and Nyerere became president. In April 1964 Zanzibar, Pemba and Tanganyika joined together and became The Republic of Tanzania with Nyerere as president.

Figure 1 below shows Tanzania’s many different language groups, the map is from 1999.

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4. 2 Tanzania and Swahili

Tanzania has been famously peaceful since its independence. This is probably a result from president Nyerere policy called Ujamaa, which is the Swahili word for “extended family”. Nyerere developed the country by focusing on the people and encourage them to feel that everyone was part of a big family. This brought peace in the country but unfortunately Nyerere didn’t make the economy flourish. Nyerere conducted Swahili as Tanzania’s official language so that everyone would be able to understand each other. Swahili became a unifying factor for Tanzania, in 1960 Tanzania had one of the highest literacy rate in Africa.6

4. 3 Babati

In the map below the town Babati is enlarged, Babati belongs to the Manyara region in Northern Tanzania. Babati has many different cultures and language groups, in Figure 3 an example of that is given. One reason for Babati´s multiethnic population is the big crossroad, which runs through the city, it leads to high migration and important trade. Babati´s crossroad is part of the Great North Road (from Cairo to Cape Town) the west Singida road crosses the road that leads to Arusha and further to the capital Dodoma.7

8 Figure 2, http://www.districthealthservice.com/district.php

8 Tanzania District Health Service: http://www.districthealthservice.com/district.php 2010-06-15
4.2.1 Language groups

What is a language group? How can the definition be explained? According to the authors that wrote the book *African History – From earliest times to independence* a language group is people which have a strong language resemblance, they all belong to the same origin when ancestors in some distance time in the past developed a language and a culture. Languages change over time but can still be linked to a language family that have a origin from the past. The original languages are called proto-languages, during time people that speak the proto-language gets separated and a diverge of the language occurs and new languages are created. Then the different languages belongs and have their origin in the same language family. In Africa there exists five independent language families; Afro-Asiatic, Khoisan, Niger/Congo-Kordofanian, Nilo-Saharan and Malayo-Polynesian.

4. 2. 2 Bantu language

The Bantu language group origins from the Niger/Congo-Kordofanian language family, which is displayed in the Family tree above, Figure 3.\(^9\)

Bantu speaking people was the first major group of people in East Africa, after 500 years they reached Tanzania and by 1000 CE they occupied almost whole south Africa. The Bantus killed some of the original inhabitants and dominated a large part of east Africa. The modern descendents groups from Bantu is for example Ganda, Kikuyu, Nyoro, Hutu and Tutsi.\(^10\)

The Bantu speaking people introduced ironwork and settled in Tanzania about 2000 years ago. Swahili language have the Bantu language structure, the vocabulary however is influenced by Arabic and English.\(^11\) Most of the Bantu people in Tanzania are working in the agricultural sector, just as many other language groups. Examples of languages in Tanzania that originates from Bantu is Nyamwezi, Sukuma, Chaga, Makonde, Haya, Gogo and Hehe.\(^12\)

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\(^12\)National Encyclopedia, Tanzania – Befolkning. [http://www.ne.se.till.biblextern.sh.se/tanzania/befolkning-och-etnografi](http://www.ne.se.till.biblextern.sh.se/tanzania/befolkning-och-etnografi) 2010-05-11
4. 2. 3. Nilotic language

Nilotic language originates from the language family Nilo-Saharan. This is demonstrated in the family tree above, see Figure 4. The branch probably started in Sudan, the southern parts. About 2000 years ago migration from Sudan into Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya began. As the migration moved the Nilotic languages became three branches, Western, Eastern and Maa group. The Maasai language origins from the Maa group. It is common that people with the origin from Nilo-Saharan are farmers and earn their living by agriculture, herding cattle and goats.  

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4. 2. 4. Cushitic language

The Cushites are famous for being the first food producers in East Africa. They originates from Ethiopia and belong to the Afro-Asiatic Language family as is displayed in Figure 5, the branches from this family is common in North and East Africa and in Arabia. Iraqw language is a descendent from the Cushitic language.\textsuperscript{16}

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4. 2. 5 Khoisan language

In northwestern Tanzania it is possible to find people that speak the languages Hadza or Sandawe, research show that these language probably is origin from the Khoisan family. The Khoisan family might be the oldest African language family existed. Sandawe and Hadza are so called “click” language and are not easy to learn from a outsiders point of view.18

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The Figure 6, below shows Tanzanias languages groups and their location in 1890. In the middle of the contested area lies Babati, see Figure 2.


5. Identity

To talk about the definition identity is a complex subject. Our identities are created when we are born and changes through time. To describe your identity you have to involve many aspect of your life. Even in the present time a person have different alternative identities that they use in different situations. A persons own identity perception is rarely the same perception for a stranger. If you look at a person and you tries to determine his or her identity the result has much to due with your own identity. You are very influenced of your own identity, example age, gender, cultural, social and biological characteristics. The things you draw to your attention about a stranger is coloured by your own experiences.  

5.1. Social identity

Social identity is a creation of different categorizations, all people are categorizing others and them self. According to Erving Goffman (1963) every society creates its own manual of social categorizations and those categorizations have different values and norms that the society knows how to interpret. The construction of the social identities are much affected of the current social relations. The prevailing social relations maintains and changes the social categorizations. There are also historical and structural frames which creates boundaries for people when it comes to interpreting and categorizing them self. The social constructionist perspective challenges the theory that identity is something you “are” in a non changeable way, it refers to the theory essentialist approach. Both ethnic and cultural identities are examples of social identities. All identities that are created as an effect of social categorizations are called social identities.  

In the book Identity by Nils Hammarén and Thomas Johansson, they use the word role theory instead of categorizations. In society we have different identity roles for examples police, judge and criminals. The historical structural frames mentioned earlier gives people a space for interpretation, called role distance. The role theory have always been popular and easy for people to apply in everyday life. But, there are definitely problems with simplifying the identity concept. If the identity roles are clear and distinct it is easy to simplify, but the

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problems accrue when the clear lines get smeared and diffuse. During the emergence of the industrial society, the role identity played a present and significant part. It’s a time when the society have clear lines such as the “male role” and the “female role”. Today we can’t talk in those terms, it is much more complex. In today’s modern society, the role theory have no function. Society development, floating positions and the strong criticism against stereotype categorizations and descriptions have diminished the role theory. The sociologist Peter Berger attempted to define the concept “modern identity” in 1974. His version of the modern identity is still valid and usable today. In the same time the historical era called “post-industrial society” accord. His modern identity have four foundations.

- **Relative openness** – the identity is not unambiguous defined by ethnic inherence, gender or parents social class. The identity is created by individuals by themselves.
- **Differentiation** – when the individual is moving in different social environments the result is a creation of a multifaceted identity.
- **Reflexivity** – personal views and the pressure from society to have opinions forms our identities. The large information flow about new perspectives and new attitudes changes the identity.
- **Individuality** – the individual personality is in focus and question the collective membership. New alternative ways of collective belongings is created. 

### 5. 2. Ethnic identity

Since the end of 1960 the subject “ethnicity” have been popular to study. In previous years the focus was on the distinctions between “us” and “them”. Today these boundaries between the opposing forces is smeared, researchers today don’t talk about “us and “them” it is an outdated expression. Today the subject is more complex and the past natural boundaries have become unclear. A significant proof of this change is the language, in the past people used the word tribe frequently but now the word ethnic group is more common to use.

Many social anthropologists have studied around the term ethnic identity, what it is and how it creates. There is a broad perception by people with in an ethnic group that ethnicity creation have a lot to do with objective cultural differences. Anthropologists have proven that strong

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ethnicity feeling don’t creates by groups of people being isolated from each other. You could think that with larger cultural differences between people this would create a stronger ethnicity feeling. It has been shown that ethnicity has a profound meaning in groups that are close in terms of language, practices and conventions. Cultural differences gets smaller in many aspects by interaction between separated groups but paradoxically ethnicity becomes more important in politic, identity and social interaction. It is trough contact whit other people you discover who you are.

The term ethnicity refers to a social and cultural phenomenon, it could be for example religion, language, appearance, clothing, occupation etc. the term ethnicity varies from different places in the world. For example in Northern Ireland the ethnic belonging is based on religion, in Kenya the language have a profound meaning in the terms of ethnic belonging. Ethnicity occurs when cultural differences is brought to the attention in interaction between people. It is about what’s socially relevant.

Ethnic identity is always an aspect of a social process and it is constantly inconstant. Ethnic identity is expressed in many different ways, it could be for example a situational ethnicity. often people that are in the ethnic groups periphery are most interested in holding on to the group identity. For example if a person live amongst others who belongs to another ethnic identity that person will constantly be reminded of his ethnic identity. If a person is in a cultural stigmatisation it is common that the person in a public situation minimizes his or her ethnic identity. Then in private situations express his/her ethnic identity. Then in private situations express his/her ethnic identity. Then in private situations express his/her ethnic identity. 23

In social anthropology you talk about segment identity, it means that people have many different alternative identities. It is the coherence that decide which of the alternative identities you use. A persons ethnic identity can not be determined by the persons social identity because not every social aspect have a connection to ethnicity. A persons ethnic identity can be important in some situations, for example in marriage and politics. But in some social context it don’t have to be important at all. To describe a persons identity is therefore very difficult because people tend to be members of different groups. 24

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5. 3. **National and collective identity**

Collective identities are often build on the foundation of a strong community feeling with solidarity and similarity in thinking. The collective feeling is important, to have the same goals, strive in the same direction. Also resembling interests and experiences is valued high. A problem that occurs when people build their identities on collective foundations is that they might aligned does people that doesn’t fit the pattern. What happens with the people who aren’t suited for this system? Are they supposed to be excluded? A strong national and collective identity doesn’t naturally lead to a willingness to exclude people. Despite that it is a fact that a lot of people around the world live in alienation. It is not uncommon that a city has a segregation pattern due to high immigration and rapid expansion.\(^2\)

The ideology nationalism like to perceived as a traditional ideology that glorifies a traditional culture. A fundamental feature in nationalism is the cultural unit between city and country. To demonstrate the differences between the nations people and the outsiders is also a part of a nationalistic ideology.\(^3\)

6. Theory

The essays theoretical framework is based on earlier studies that contains different theoretical analyses. The theoretical facets have been a guiding instrument throughout the essay and is also discussed in the conclusion.

Stuart Hall – identity and Diaspora

Stuart Hall is a professor in Sociology, he thinks we should look at the identity as a “production”, a process that is always active and never complete. To put labels on the identity it make us see the identity as an already complete fact. Stuart Hall tries to problematise terms as for example “cultural identity”. He believes that first of all the term “cultural identity” defines one shared culture and is there by collective. The label gives no space for the individual identity. Stuart hall also writes about Diaspora and the problems with a “loss of identity”.

Quote: “Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of “becoming” as well as of “being”. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation.”

Stephen Castles & Mark J Miller

The authors Stephen Castles & Mark J Miller have written the book “The age of Migration” it is concentrated on the subjects ; Globalization, the modern world, population movements and migration.

Multiple identities is a term Castle and Miller use to highlight our multicultural reality. Peoples identities consist of multiple social and cultural layers, that are constantly changing and adjusting in relation to the context.

Quote:

“Immigrants and their descendants do not have a static, closed and homogeneous ethnic identity, but rather dynamic multiple identities, influenced by a variety of cultural, social and other factors.”

Benedict Andersson

Benedict Andersson have written a book called (Den föreställda gemenskapen) *(The imagined community)* its about nationalism and the collective identity. In Anderssons attempt to describe nationalism he uses a definition that says; the nation is both limited and sovereign. with limitation he means that outside the nations borders lies other nations and therefore it is limited.

Quote “den är föreställd eftersom medlemmarna av även den minsta nation aldrig kommer att känna, träffa eller ens höra talas om mer än en minoritet av övriga medlemmar, och ändå lever i var och ens medvetande bilden av deras gemenskap.”

*Quote “(It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know, meet or even hear of more then a minority of other members, but still in everyone’s consciousness live the image of their community.)”*

* Translation from the author of this essay.

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8. Analysis

In this chapter I will highlight excerpts from the 11 interviews that was made in Babati during a three week long field study. The interviews were made with the help of a local interpreter, the interpreter translated into English. The interviews were conducted by a semi-structured interview technique, it thereby made it possible to have a discussion with the respondent. By using this interview method the interviews unfolded differently and the respondents were able to talk about what he or she experienced to be most interesting within the topic. The most relevant and interesting topics is demonstrated below, first an analysing impression of the situation is given and then follows a few extracts from the interviews. The eleven peoples answers was not homogeneous, therefore a selection of different views is displayed.

In Swahili they use the word *Kabila* as ethnic group, therefore this word is used in the interviews.

**How important is the ethnic group? And how does the urbanization affect ethnic relations?**

In Tanzania people are born into a *kabila*, generally the inheritance goes by the father. The perception from the interviews is that everyone knows which *kabila* they belong to and why. But the influence the *kabila* have in peoples lives is varied, for some its just a name and for other it’s a big part of there identity.

Most of the informant experienced that they did not have a strong connection towards the *kabila*, other things in life were more important. Many also felt that the connection towards the *kabila* faded more and more due to the complicated situation to maintain traditions in the city. Some felt that they would like to make the *kabila* a bigger part of their life but that it was to difficult. Some of the informants where happy about the lost connection towards their *kabila*. Some women claimed that after marriage their husbands *kabila* means more to them then their own. In discussion about this the explanation often was that it was because of the children, they belong to their fathers *kabila* so they become the majority. In discussion about inheritance the answer often was that it wasn’t a problem just a tradition and it had always been this way.
How is your relation towards the kabila today?
I don’t have any contact with my kabila and I don’t want any contact either. Now I live in the city and I have no desire to move back to my birthplace. I feel that my husbands kabila means more to me now then my own.

Did you preserve anything from your kabila?
I chose traditional Barbaig names for my children because I think they are beautiful, that’s the only thing I took with me from my kabila.

How do you feel about Babati´s big diversity?
A problem that increases due to many kabilas in the same area, is that its hard to maintain close connections to your culture. All cultures is melting together here, it would be very difficult to practise the Iraq culture here in Babati for me. I would like to practise the Iraq culture, I feel it is of importance not to forget my inheritance.

How are your relation towards the kabila today?
I’m Chaga just like both my parents. My kabila and my inheritance means a lot for me because the Chaga reputation is positive amongst people in Tanzania and therefore it gives me high status in the society. I’m proud of being Chaga, we are known to be hard workers.

Do you feel that there are any conflicts between different kabilas?
No I wouldn’t say that it exist conflicts, but some people would claim that some kabilas has a higher status than others. Here in Babati people that comes from the Kilimanjaro region have high status. I would say about 45% of the urban population is from that region, they are often called Chagga or Mapare and they often work with trade.
How you describe the differences to live in the city compare to the rural society?

Oh, I’m so happy to live in the city, there are so many opportunities here. When I grow up I had to have a boy to escort me everywhere, as a girl you were not allowed to walk alone. To have sex before marriage was very taboo, if a girl became pregnant because of non-marital sexual contact they often ran away and got married quickly. Otherwise they got punished by being sent to the jungle, often that leads to death because of dangerous animals. Here in Babati I learned English and I got to meet many interesting people. It is good for my children to live in the city, good education and future jobs opportunities.

Now when you are educated would you like to leave Babati and travel abroad?

Well I studied at a university in Dar Es Salaam and many of my classmates wanted to travel abroad, for example to Europe or USA and make careers. I have never felt a longing for that although I know that I probably will make more money abroad. I think it is important that the educated people stays in the country, I would like to give back to my country not participate in so called “brain drain”.

Does the national identity exist?

In a multiethnic country like Tanzania, can a national Identity exist? If it exist what brings people together and what does being a Tanzanian mean? The perception from the interviews is that everyone are very proud of their country and to be a inhabitant in Tanzania. It doesn’t matter what your ethnic belonging is or your religion, because at the end you are a Tanzanian. A high acceptance level for all people was significant in the interviews. In the question about how they would describe their identity very few mention national identity, the focus was on the local identity and religion. Many couldn’t choose so they gave several answers, an example of that is below.

If you think about your identity, would you describe it as local, national, ethnic or religious identity?

Well I am a proud Tanzanian so I would say national identity. But If I would present myself to a stranger I would mention Tanzania, my kabila and my profession. It of course depends on who I meet and where I am.
**How important is religion?**

In Tanzania the biggest religions are Christianity and Islam, there also exist many indigenous religions. About 30 percent of Tanzania’s inhabitant are Christians and most of them live in the inland.\(^{32}\) One informant made it very clear that his life circled around his religion, for him to explain his identity the religion was the first thing he mentioned. But again the answers were not homogenous, every respondent said that they had a religion, the religion was more important for some than others. To not belong to a religion at all was strange and uncommon. Even the informants that seemed most religious had no problem with the idea of marrying a person from another religion and no informant talked about a indigenous religion from a *kabila* as their own religion.

**Are you religious?**

*I’m a catholic, both my parents are catholic, it is common that people from Mbulu are Catholics.*

**Is your religion a big part of your identity?**

*Yes my identity is affected by the fact that I’m a religious person, but in a good way, I like to be a catholic.*

**Do you feel that it is important for you to marry a catholic?**

*No, I will marry out of love and she doesn’t have to be catholic.*

**Are you religious?**

*Yes I am a Lutheran, but religion is not so important for me. I could marry someone from a another religion or another kabila.*

The meaning of language

In Tanzania the official language is Swahili but not everybody grows up learning this language. It is common to grow up with several different languages, especially when born in a city. Because of Tanzania’s wide selection of cultures amongst the inhabitant it was important for president Nyerere to unify the people and he used the language Swahili to do so. To be born on the country side with few people and grow up without learning Swahili can easily make you isolated. The main impression from the interviews about this subject was that language is important, it allows communication between people. Every informant knew at least one kabila language, some several and everyone knew Swahili. An impression was that the kabila languages becomes less and less important, instead focus is on learning Swahili and English. Some parents choose to pass on the traditional kabila languages and some don’t. The informants that had grown up in the city gave the impression that it were given and natural to learn Swahili and English, other who grow up in rural areas expressed gratitude to be able to learn these languages and the important factor it played in their lives. The discussion about difficulties keeping traditional kabila traditions was also a subject that occurred when talking about languages.

Can you tell me about which language you speak and also in witch situations you use them.

With people from Mwiraqw I speak the language Iraq. Under my childhood I also learned Swahili, which I consider to be my first language. In Babati people communicate usually trough Swahili. My second language is English, my profession is to be an English teacher, so with students and colleges I speak English.

So you don’t use the Iraq language much?

No only when I meet relatives.

What does Swahili mean for Babati?

As I said I grew up here in town and there are many different kabilas in town so it was necessary for me to learn Swahili in order to be able to communicate with people. Swahili is the main language people speak in Babati.
Can you tell me which languages you speak and also in which situations you use them.
I speak three languages, Mmeru language, Swahili and English. The Mmeru language few understand here in Babati maybe about 10 %, in Arusha more people understands the language and I speak it with my family. I’m a teacher in Swahili and Civics, so English is my third language.

Can you tell me which languages you speak and also in which situations you use them.
I speak four languages, Swahili, English, Iraq language and Barbaig language. My husband is Iraq and we have two children. We only teach our children English and Swahili.

**The importance of profession in the identity process?**
The impression from the interviews was that the profession did matter. To have an occupation is important and something to be proud of, because not everyone have one. If the occupation was uncommon and had a high status it seemed to mean more than for example a occupation as a farmer.

**Is your profession a big part of your identity?**
Yes it’s a big part of my identity. A problem of being a teacher and having a relatively high status in the society leads to separation from the poor population. I feel that I can no longer get an insight in the poor populations life.

**Is your profession a big part of your identity?**
I have several jobs, farmer, sell things in the market and I’m helping women give birth in their home. Being a farmer and sell things in the market is just something I do for money, it doesn’t mean so much for me. But I’m proud of helping women give birth, people in the near area know who I am because of that. The hospital is far away from here so the help is needed quite often.
9. Final Discussion

The identity creation is complex, for a person to define their identity into a label “religious” “local”, “national” or “ethnic” is nearly impossible. Every person belongs to several different labels at the same time, and the labels change as our lives are developed. Just as Stuart hall explains the identity process to be in a “constant transformation” I experienced it to be true. It is however possible to discuss in which directions a person is leaning towards in the present time. It is not always clear for people do define who you are and how to describe your self, it is therefore not an easy task for an interviewer to ask this type of questions. I find also Stephen Castles & Mark J Millers argument about multiple identities and the multiple societies that are a modern fact to be true in my observations. A high level of acceptance is grown in the habitants of an high multiple city as Babati. I believe that I despite the constant change in identity formation could after all draw some conclusions from my interviews. That the answer wouldn’t be homogenous was not a surprise. I choose deliberately people with different background, such as religion, age, gender and language group to get a broad understanding. The rapid expansion due to migration in Babati shined through in every interview. People who had migrated into Babati were very happy to be there and talked about a major change for the better in their lives. People who had grown up in Babati were exited about the new road and al it benefits it would bring with it, occupation, trade, expansion, wealth. But some also thought about the negative things such as crime, prostitution and street children. The identity label that felt farthest away amongst the respondents was the national identity, an explanation for that could be that very few amongst the respondent travelled abroad. Some of them said that they would probably say that the are from Tanzania if they travelled abroad. The local and religious identity I understood to be most important in their daily life. How the local community interpreted you and how you wanted the local community to interpret you. An interesting aspect of the people with religious identity was that even if their religion was very important for them they had no problem accepting other religions, even to marry someone from another religion was excepted and the children could choose a religion themselves. This was also the discussion when it came to Kabila, to marry someone from another Kabila was excepted and in some cases even preferred. The connection towards the Kabila clearly is in a stage of decreasing and this was explained by modernisation and urbanisation. The situation could be different in rural communities explained a informant to me, the tradition of marriages inside the Kabila might still exist. Resolution of these traditional bands has been a progress over time and is has significantly changed in urban
societies. To live in the city was very important for all informant, many expressed a feeling of gratitude when they talked about it. The opportunities for a better life is high when you live in a city, a city that also is in a process of expansion. Some however expressed a frustration over the fact that all the different Kabilas melted together and the originality is fading away. The children don’t learn the original Kabila languages anymore, the focus is on Swahili and English. This is a reason why not so many people identify themselves with an ethnic identity.
10. References


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