



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

A CONCEPT AT WORK

'Informal economy' and contestations
of labour, law and the state in Tanzania

ILONA STEILER



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of labour, law and the state in Tanzania

Ilona Steiler

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Opponent:

Deborah Fahy Bryceson,
Professor of African Studies, Honorary Fellow,
Centre of African Studies,
University of Edinburgh

Pre-examiners:

Colman Msoka,
Senior Lecturer,
Institute of Development Studies,
University of Dar es Salaam

Matteo Rizzo,
Senior Lecturer,
Department of Development Studies/ SOAS,
University of London

Supervisors:

Juhani Koponen,
Emeritus professor,
University of Helsinki

Marjaana Jauhola,
Docent/University Lecturer,
Development Studies,
University of Helsinki

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the content, context and consequences of conceptions and representations of the 'informal economy'. The central argument is that the 'informal economy' presents a political and social, normative and essentially contested concept that has real (discursive, material, social) effects on current transformations of the world of work and of social order. 'Informal economy', as concept and imaginary, is central to formalization and informalization which are here primarily understood as discursive and political processes.

The discussion engages with the perennial dispute in academia and policy-making over whether the 'informal economy' presents a relic of underdevelopment, a paragon of ingenious economic activity, the last resort for survival amidst capitalist accumulation processes or a community-based alternative to capitalist economic organization. At their fundament, these competing perspectives are divided over the appropriate role of the state in governing the economy. Political discourses along these lines, in turn, impact on the configuration of state governance and societal organization.

The analysis builds on insights from interviews and participant observation from six months of research work in 2014-2016 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and on a review of the research literature. It presents a multidisciplinary effort, bringing together development studies, political economy and labour law to discuss the use(s) of the concept in the two dissimilar sectors of street trade and domestic work. Drawing on the discursive analytical strategies of Reinhart Koselleck and the Cultural Political Economy approach as well as the framework of intersectionality, the study illustrates how, in Tanzania, 'informal' work is legally, socially and discursively constituted in dissimilar ways in small-scale trade and domestic work. Rather than a clearly definable or fixed category, informality of work is relative and relational; it intersects with postcolonial trajectories, class, gender, race and ethnicity, age, family status, income and education levels, as well as workers' visibility in public and private workplaces.

Competing conceptions of the 'informal economy' steer transformations in three interrelated thematic fields: labour power and organization, the promotion of rights and responsibilities, and relations between the state, market and society. Legislation and policies concerning the two sectors exemplify neoliberal and structuralist-oriented approaches. In each sector, legislation, rights discourses and state policies follow specific agendas, thereby not only influencing the dividing line between 'formal' and 'informal' economic activities, but also shaping societal organization across the formal-informal divide. Legislation enables and disables labour struggles in the respective sectors; rights discourses promote access to different kinds of rights for different groups; urban and formalization policies determine which groups have access to public space, formal frameworks and legal protection. While the findings of this study confirm the structuralist perspective on the 'informal economy' as primarily a domain of survivalist struggles, in recent decades, neoliberal conceptions have been influential, particularly with regard to street trade. This has had harmful consequences for the most disadvantaged groups among street traders. However, the neoliberal discourse is challenged in the sector of domestic work as well as at the nodes between global discourses and the particularities of everyday Tanzanian labour relations.

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Ilona 'Steilo' Steiler
Helsinki, September 2020

List of Acronyms

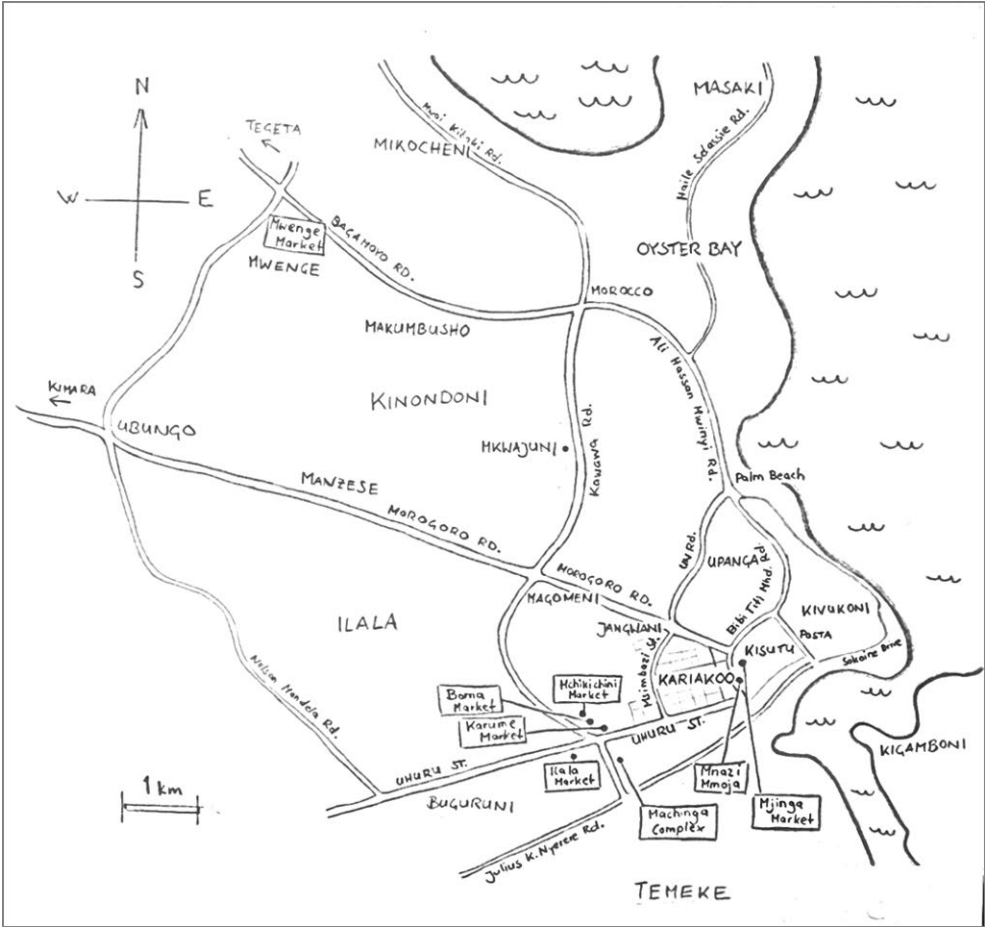
| | |
|-----------|---|
| ATE | Association of Tanzanian Employers |
| BRELA | Business Registration and Licensing Agency |
| CBD | Central Business District |
| CCM | <i>Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Party of the Revolution)</i> |
| CHODAWU | Conservation, Hotel, Domestic and Allied Workers Union |
| CLEP | Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor |
| DWA | Decent Work Agenda |
| DWCP | Decent Work Country Programme |
| ID | (Street vendor) identification cards |
| IDWF | International Domestic Workers Federation |
| ILD | Institute for Liberty and Democracy |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| KIWOHEDE | Kiota Women Health and Development Organization |
| LEP | Legal Empowerment of the Poor |
| LGA | Local Government Authorities |
| LHCR | Legal and Human Rights Centre |
| MFI | Microfinance institution |
| MKUKUTA | <i>Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umaskini Tanzania</i> (National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty) |
| MKURABITA | <i>Mpango wa Kurasimisha Rasilimali na Biashara za Wanyonge</i> (Property and Business Formalization Programme) |
| MoLE | Ministry of Labour and Employment |
| NEEC | National Economic Empowerment Council |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organisation |
| NORAD | Norwegian Agency for Development |
| NSSF | National Social Security Fund |
| RBA | Rights-based Approaches to Development |
| REPOA | Research on Poverty Alleviation Programme |
| SACCOS | Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| SME | Small and medium-sized enterprises |
| TAMICO | Tanzania Mines, Energy, Construction and Allied Workers Union |
| TIENAI | Tanzania Informal Economy Networks on AIDS Initiative |
| TRA | Tanzania Revenue Authority |
| TUCTA | Trade Union Congress of Tanzania |
| TUCTA | Trade Union Congress of Tanzania |
| TUICO | Tanzania Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers |
| TZS | Tanzanian Shillings |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| URT | United Republic of Tanzania |
| USD | United States Dollar |

| | |
|---------|--|
| UWAWADA | <i>Umoja wa Wajasiliamali Walemavu Mkoa wa Dar es Salaam</i> (Association of Businesspeople with Disabilities of the Region of Dar es Salaam) |
| VAT | Value added tax |
| VIBINDO | <i>Jumuia ya Vikundi vya Wenye Viwanda na Biashara Ndogondogo</i> (Community of Groups of Small Producers and Small Business) |
| VICOBA | Village Community Bank |
| ZANEMA | Employers Association of Zanzibar |
| ZATUC | Zanzibar Trade Union Congress |

Glossary of Swahili terms

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>bodaboda</i> | motorcycle taxi |
| <i>dada</i> | sister |
| <i>daladala</i> | Dar es Salaam minibuses |
| <i>fundi</i> | technician, specialist, skilled worker |
| <i>fundi wa viatu</i> | cobbler |
| <i>kahawa</i> | coffee, commonly sold by street vendors |
| <i>kahawa na kachata</i> | coffee and candy made from roast groundnut and sugar |
| <i>kaka</i> | brother |
| <i>katiba</i> | constitution, charter |
| <i>kazi</i> | work |
| <i>kijiweni</i> | street corner, also describes an informal job fair for day labourers |
| <i>machinga</i> | 'marching guy', hawker; more recently used as synonym for all street traders |
| <i>Mama/Baba Lishe</i> | street chef (lit. Mother/Father Nutrition) |
| <i>mchumba</i> | sweetheart, lover |
| <i>mfanya biashara ndogo ndogo</i> | petty businessman/woman, entrepreneur (lit.: person doing small small business) |
| <i>mgambo/wagambo wa manispaa</i> | municipal auxiliary police force (sg./pl.) |
| <i>mshahara</i> | salary, wage |
| <i>mzungu</i> | European, white person |
| <i>ofisi</i> | office |
| <i>pesa</i> | money |
| <i>pumzika</i> | rest |
| <i>sekta isiyo rasmi</i> | informal sector (lit. unofficial sector) |
| <i>shamba</i> | farm, plot of farmland |
| <i>uchumi usio rasmi</i> | informal economy (lit. unofficial economy, less commonly used than informal sector) |
| <i>ugali</i> | porridge made from maize or cassava |
| <i>wazee</i> | the elderly |

Map of Dar es Salaam



Source: own approximation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stories of 'informal' working lives and puzzle

Meet two young women journeying from their rural villages in Tanzania to Dar es Salaam. Rehema leaves her parents to find work in the largest city and commercial hub of the country. She becomes a domestic worker for a wealthy family, and struggles with arduous work and exploitation. Giving in to the wooing of her employer's husband, Rehema soon becomes pregnant. Another domestic worker, the gardener, helps her to confront her employers about it. With the support of the gardener's niece and legal councillors, Rehema gets over the initial shock and shame and claims her right to child support. She returns to school, gets to fulfil her dream of higher education and studies hard to become an interior designer. Eventually, she starts her own company and runs an organization which aids young women in their quest for a better life.

Sara is an orphan and a likewise strong-minded girl who ventures into Dar es Salaam to become a child of the streets. She makes a living by washing cars and is surrounded by a group of young *machingas*, as hawkers are called in local slang.¹ Together with a group of street children who become her close friends, Sara encounters poverty and the hardships of living from hand to mouth. Her uncompromising nature earns her the respect of the street boys as well as the admiration and affection of a well-to-do businessman. He pays for an operation on Sara's eye and, with his support, she is able to set up a small street kitchen business. On her own initiative, Sara starts a SACCOS (Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization) with other poor women. Aware of the constant risk of changing luck, she works hard and saves her profits, hoping to own a proper restaurant one day.

The two stories teach important lessons. Sara and Rehema make contact with the lures and dangers of rural-urban migration: the loss of close family ties in exchange for the volatile liaisons of city life; the temptation of easy money and dependency on men and women of wealth; the desire to gloss over their modest subsistence by shining in beautiful, expensive dresses; encounters with prostitution, HIV/Aids and crime; the death of a friend. Both young women make

¹ The exact origins of the term are unclear. It is likely to have been created and popularized by the media in the 1990s, building on a common but unfounded belief that many hawkers originate from a tribe of the same name in southern Tanzania. However, there is no tribe of that name, only a parliamentary constituency in the Lindi region called Mchinga (Liviga and Mekacha 1998: 9). Another explanation is that it is a playful response to 'marching guys' in English. The term is colloquially used to describe mobile peddlers and hawkers working on the streets. Recently, it has also become common for stationary traders with small stalls. Throughout the text, I use the anglicized plural *machingas*.

good because of their wits, industriousness and perseverance, becoming positive role models to others.

But their stories are marked by a central difference. Apart from the sporadic support of older men and women who act as surrogate parents, Sara and the other street children are left to manage their own survival, toiling for petty cash. While the city offers opportunities and space for their community of friends, street life teaches them that, ultimately, they have to fend for themselves. Rehema, conversely, benefits from several institutions when turning her life around: first from an acquaintance in the women's media association, then from legal advocates at the court and finally from the education system. In short, upon arriving in Dar es Salaam, Sara and Rehema have different paths laid out for them.

Rehema and Sara are fictional characters. Their stories are told in two English-language books which were both published in Tanzania around the end of the noughties for an adolescent audience at secondary school level (Lukindo 2008; Lema 2011).² Yet the common themes explored in the books, as well as the divergence in the two stories, are more than just the upshot of the authors' vagaries. They neatly capture the central trajectories of street trade and domestic work, mirroring many of the experiences I recorded during my stays in Dar es Salaam between 2014 and 2016. In depicting their struggles as well as their resourcefulness, the books follow a common trope to portray adolescent girls as "signifier[s] of modernity and progress ... reiterating a liberal ideal whereby subjects have limitless capacities for realizing their dreams" (Jauhola 2013: 88). As heroines of their stories, Sara and Rehema also exemplify admirable behaviour and appropriate, gendered norms for working women.

As in many other African countries, amidst a continuing lack of employment opportunities, street trade and domestic work have burgeoned in recent decades to accommodate ever-growing numbers moving from rural areas to the cities, foremost to the bustling metropolis of Dar es Salaam. The two sectors present key lifelines for many Tanzanians, not just adventurous girls like Rehema and Sara, but women and men of all ages. Offering entry-level jobs, the sectors are particularly attractive to those coming from rural areas and those with lower levels of formal schooling, simultaneously serving to absorb the jobless from all regional and professional backgrounds (Lyons and Msoka 2007; Kiaga 2012). Yet, although street trade and domestic work can be said to be of comparable importance to the national economy as well as to the individuals and communities involved in them, and although Tanzanians performing the work in the two sectors often share similar socio-economic backgrounds and face similar challenges, the institutional settings—legal and political—in which this work takes place are far from alike.

² Elieshi Lema's "In the belly of Dar es Salaam" received the Burt Award for African Literature which "is aimed at producing books which show the local situation" in the English language; Dorothy Lukindo's "Rehema the housegirl" was approved by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training as a reader in English for forms 1 and 2 of Tanzanian secondary schools.

As exemplified in the stories of the two adolescent girls, domestic work is embedded in institutional frameworks of support, and workers have, at least in theory, access to the courts to claim their rights like Rehema. In contrast, street traders like Sara are well advised to rely on themselves. Until recently, they also had to stay clear of the municipal authorities, or they risked being penalized and losing the little they had managed to accrue. However, after President Magufuli decreed in late 2016 that street traders would be tolerated, followed by efforts to provide easily obtainable licenses and street vendor identity cards, at the time of writing many municipalities are refraining from evicting them. Despite breaking with previous policies towards street trade, this shift sustains and indeed intensifies the need for traders' self-reliance as practiced by Sara, as I discuss in the thesis.

Rehema and Sara's diverging life trajectories represent instances of an overarching story which, under its current headline, was first told in the early 1970s. Like other street traders and domestic workers, and indeed the vast majority of all Tanzanians, Sara and Rehema generate an income in what is commonly referred to as the 'informal economy'. Conducting a seminal study of unregulated income-generating activities pursued by the urban poor in Accra, the capital of Ghana, economic anthropologist Keith Hart coined the term 'informal sector' (Hart 1973). While Hart was not the first to document activities that differed from the standard models of labour markets and employment (Lewis 1954; Jorgenson 1961; Harris and Todaro 1970), his analysis gave the phenomenon a name with which a wide array of activities could be categorized. A report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on "Incomes, Employment and Equality in Kenya" (ILO 1972), taking up the term 'informal sector', launched its remarkable career as a concept. Later broadened to 'informal economy',³ it was incorporated into various policy documents of major international organizations such as the ILO (e.g. 1991, 2002a,b, 2015a,b), the World Bank (2004) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2008).

Importantly, Hart stated right away that the 'informal sector' was what we make of it. For Hart, 'informal' income-generating strategies consisted of a set of empirically observable transactions which resulted primarily from a lack of formal employment opportunities, and often combined legal and illegal activities. Whether these activities were considered respectable and legitimate was a matter of predetermined normative associations and political goals (Hart 1973: 74f.). It was also a matter of perspective whether they were condemned as results of "deprivation or exploitation" or applauded as "the possibility of a dramatic

³ 'Informal sector' refers to unincorporated small or unregistered enterprises; this was later broadened to 'informal employment', which refers to "all employment arrangements that do not provide individuals with legal or social protection through their work, thereby leaving them more exposed to economic risk than the others, whether or not the economic units they work for or operate in are formal enterprises, informal enterprises or households" (ILO 2013e: 2f.). 'Informal economy' comprises activities by workers and enterprises.

‘bootstrap’ operation, lifting the underdeveloped economies through their own indigenous enterprise” (ibid.: 89).

Almost half a century after the publication of Hart’s article, the puzzle of what to make of informal activities is far from solved, while the debate and its potential implications have grown gigantically in scope and global scale. A common and frequently used definition of the ‘informal economy’ is provided by the ILO, according to which the term describes

all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Their activities are not included in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law; or they are not covered in practice, which means that – although they are operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or not enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs. (ILO 2002a: par. 3)

The ‘informal economy’ is everywhere. In its Statistical Picture compiled in 2002, the ILO estimated that ‘informal’ work comprises between half and three-quarters of all non-agricultural employment in developing countries: 51 per cent in Latin America, 65 per cent in Asia and 72 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Europe and the United States, ‘non-standard work’ comprised up to 30 per cent and 25 per cent of all employment, respectively (see ILO 2002d). Globally, more than two billion of the world’s employed population are estimated to work informally, representing more than 60 per cent of all employment worldwide. The second and third editions of the Statistical Picture, published in 2013 and 2018, indicate that the trend towards unregulated and non-standard employment has persisted and indeed increased in many countries (see ILO 2013e; 2018).

Against the background of these developments, Hart would later reflect on his term: “When so much of the economy is ‘informal’, we are entitled to ask whether the term has outgrown its usefulness” (Hart 2001: n.p.). Meanwhile, a broad range of theoretical discussions and empirical studies have illustrated the heterogeneity as well as complexity of activities and social relations found under the label of ‘informal economy’. Unregulated and unprotected economic activities are not restricted to specific sectors, enterprise size, levels of productivity, employment status and income, but rather surface across all branches of the economy and are for the most part interconnected with formal frameworks (Tranberg Hansen and Vaa 2004; Guha-Khasnobis et al. 2006; Chen 2007; Lindell 2010; Williams and Gurtoo 2012). They may, moreover, serve a range of purposes from survival to accumulation (Bremán 1996; de Neve 2005).

The limits to the analytical value of the term ‘informal economy’ are now widely acknowledged and, notwithstanding disagreements in other respects, the literature generally concurs on its ambiguity (e.g. Chen 2007; Herrle and Fokdal 2011). As Sakari Saaritsa (2008: 31) summarizes, “[t]he troubles of trying to find significant common features for ‘informal’ activities can be grasped by comparing

it with the concept of ‘formal economy’, which could hardly be considered illuminating”.

Usage of the term nonetheless appears to be continuously growing in prominence. Despite or perhaps precisely because of their much-debated opacity, the terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ have prevailed in academic and policy discourse (Guha-Khasnobis et al. 2006: 7). Ilda Lindell (2010: 5) suggests that the term ‘informal economy’ continues to be used as a “commonsense notion” to portray activities beyond state regulation. Common sense concepts, however, are problematic and deserve critical scrutiny. As Antonio Gramsci reminds us, “even in the brain of one individual, [common sense] is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential” (Gramsci 1971: 419); yet it is central to our making sense of the world and, as a collective belief shared by groups and masses, to transforming the world as well. Since ‘scientific’ and popular common sense are inseparably intertwined, critical awareness is needed in the dissemination of commonsensical, apparently self-explanatory concepts in order to bring about positive change (ibid.: 325ff.).

The disparities between Sara and Rehema’s paths, the omnipresence of ‘informal’ employment in Tanzania and elsewhere and the stubborn persistence of a concept that is evidently unhelpful all raise the question of what working in the ‘informal economy’ actually *means*—in the double sense of *denote* and *implicate*. In other words, the material and social conditions associated with the ‘informal economy’ require exploration, as well as how these associations and representations impact on the work lives of people earning an income in unregulated and unprotected labour relations.

The aim of this thesis is to understand more fully how conceptions and representations of ‘informal’ work affect the real-life counterparts of Sara and Rehema when they embark on making a living on the streets or in other people’s homes. Their stories exemplify how both street trade and domestic work are elementary to Tanzanian life but that, while both are located in the ‘informal economy’, legal frameworks and policies towards them differ sharply. Puzzled by these divergences, I seek to establish exactly *how* and *why* the informality of their work is constituted differently, and *in what ways* current legislative and policy reforms transform the lives of street traders and domestic workers, as well as social organization across the formal-informal divide more generally. Put differently, I am interested in the context, content and consequences of current discursive and policy interventions into the ‘informal economy’.

The analysis responds to the research questions: How does the ‘informal economy’ become conceptualized and represented in legislation, rights discourses and regulatory policies, and to what effects?

Unpacking the concept and implications of ‘informal economy’ gains relevance beyond Tanzania with a view towards wider economic developments, where neoliberal globalization is accompanied by a growth in joblessness, the disappearance of standard labour relations and increasing work insecurity, continuous precarity and poverty (e.g. ILO 2014, 2015). Ultimately, the question

of which ways of making a living are constructed as lawful, legitimate and—importantly—valued and worth protecting is closely intertwined with the question of what counts as the ‘good life’, ostensibly the goal of economic and social development.

1.2 The greatest trick the devil ever pulled

While the ‘informal economy’ demonstrably encompasses the majority of all work performed globally, the vast bulk of academic and political discourse treats it as a deviation from the norm of standard employment relations in regularized markets, based on presumptions of difference from the ‘formal economy’ that are not well supported. In effect, the ‘informal economy’ has been cast as beyond the grasp of well-known and time-honoured tools of political and economic analysis. The eclipse is reminiscent of Charles Baudelaire’s dictum, “The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn’t exist”;⁴ in the same way, people, activities and transactions in the ‘informal economy’ are central to the functioning of national and global economies, yet strangely hidden from the conceptual radar of mainstream theorizing on labour, the law and the state. The ‘informal economy’, however, is neither devious nor trying to conceal itself; its relegation to the back is, rather, the outcome of conceptual, analytical and political choices.

The binary opposition of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ is as old—and uneasy—as the concept itself, and inextricably entwined with it. Hart, for example, while emphasizing that regulated and unregulated activities exist alongside and in frequent exchange with each other, sometimes being performed by the same person on the same day, nonetheless outlines the flows between the two as “imports” and “exports” similar to those between two different countries (Hart 1973: 85). The definition of ‘informal economy’ by the ILO similarly centres on its oppositional relation with the law and other ‘formal’ arrangements and regulatory frameworks, but the same paragraph continues by cautioning that “the term ‘informal economy’ tends to downplay the linkages, grey areas and interdependencies between formal and informal activities” (2002a: par. 3).

As with other constructs of binary oppositions (cf. Goody 1977: 36), the formal-informal dualism is based on vague meaning, carries an ethnocentric bias and implies an apparent order. In lieu of a positive definition, the ‘informal economy’ is largely based on a negative image of what it is not. According to the definition of the ILO, for example, ‘informal’ activities are “not covered or insufficiently covered by the law” as they are either “not included in the law” or “not covered in practice” when the law is “not applied or not enforced” (ILO 2002a: par.3). The ‘informal economy’ is variously understood as non-formal, non-organized, non-regulated, non-taxed, non-protected, et cetera.

⁴ This translation is taken from the 1995 film *The Usual Suspects*. In original, the quip reads “*La plus belle des ruses du diable est de vous persuader qu’il n’existe pas*” (Baudelaire 1964).

It is, moreover, strongly associated with the Global South and the post-socialist East as opposed to the Global North and industrialized West. In his original article, Hart compared the situation and strategies of the working poor in Ghana to those in industrialized countries (Hart 1973: 67). In contrast, with a few exceptions (e.g. Sassen-Koob 1989; Morales et al. 1995; Cross 2007), later explorations have conceptualized and treated 'informal' economic activities largely as a phenomenon of developing and transitioning economies. For a long time, 'informal' work has been portrayed as separate and different from forms of precarious work existing in developed parts of the world. Even scholarship acknowledging interdependencies between the 'formal' and 'informal economy' locate the latter at the geographic periphery rather than the centres of global capitalist production (e.g. Castells and Portes 1989). Recognition of overlaps between 'informal' and precarious work emerged only in the early 2000s when the rise of workplace insecurities in industrialized countries drew attention to the "Brazilianisation of the West" (Beck 2000; see also ILO 2002d; Standing 2009, 2011; Siegmann and Schiphorst 2016). The 'informal economy' is, further, commonly framed in the context of regional or national economies, obscuring the role of globally interconnected formal-informal value chains (Carr and Chen 2001; Obeng-Odoom 2016: 107ff.).

As a result, the research literature of such diverse fields as industrial relations, development economics, development studies and political science generally subscribes to the limited applicability of established concepts and theories across the formal-informal divide. There is a tendency of "othering" (Thelen 2011: 48) the 'informal economy' and its agents, based on volatile assumptions of sameness and difference across time and space (ibid.; see also Sindzingre 2006; Williams and Onoshchenko 2015; Rekhviashvili 2017).

While the formal-informal dualism has "helped to organize thinking, served to structure official statistics, and generated a series of policy measures to 'help' the informal sector" (Guha-Kasnobis et al. 2006: 1), the discourse has also created its own world. Commenting on the ordering function of the concept, Hart (2008: 6) notes with a hint of sarcasm:

I had no ambition to coin a concept, just to insert a particular vision of irregular economic activity into the ongoing debates of professionals in the development industry. In this sense, it was a classic move in the genre of 'realism'. The ILO Kenya report on the other hand, did want to coin a concept and that is what it has subsequently become, a keyword helping to organize a segment of the academic and policy-making bureaucracy.

Jeffrey Harrod adds that the persistent failure to fully grasp the 'informal sector' conceptually and to develop strategies for political intervention

has not stopped an informal sector 'industry' from developing especially in academia. While this reflects the current sociology of knowledge in which a concept or 'theory' is introduced and, regardless of its initial

validity, provokes a massive and exhaustive literature usually denying its validity, in the case of the 'informal sector' it went even further. It has been both reified provided personality and even produced its own people - the 'informals'. The 'informals' are said to join political community holders ... to compete with other sectors ... while collectively they make a contribution to the national economy ... (Harrod 2007: 12, references omitted)

Thematic organization connected with the concept is indeed expanding ceaselessly. As of early 2020, searching for 'informal economy' using Google yields no less than 1,770,000 results, while the website of the ILO provides 7,318 documents and links on the topic. A search for sources in the Helsinki University Library lists 12,190 articles addressing the subject and 2,586 articles, 889 of which are peer-reviewed, with 'informal economy' in their title. Over the course of the past two decades, (critical) engagement with the 'informal economy' has increased ten-fold, with 20 articles published in 2000 and more than 2,100 articles published in 2019.⁵

There is great variety within this vast body of literature in regard to how the formal-informal divide is understood. Research discussing the root causes, characteristics and ways out of the 'informal economy' can be subsumed into four major theoretical perspectives, commonly labelled the dualist/modernization perspective, legalist/neoliberal perspective, structuralist perspective and postmodern perspectives (see Carr and Chen 2001; Williams and Gurtoo 2012). Three main ontological points of contestation can be pinpointed among the four perspectives. Firstly, each associates different types of employment and economic units with the 'informal economy' (Barnes 2010: 24ff.); secondly, they differ in how they theorize power relations between the 'formal' and 'informal economy'; thirdly, and most fundamentally, they disagree over the "dilemma of the informal sector" (ILO 1991): whether it should be welcomed as provider of employment or regulated at the cost of its job-creating capacity—in the words used by Hart (1973: 89), whether to interpret the 'informal economy' as "a dramatic 'bootstrap' operation" or as "deprivation or exploitation".

Some views on the 'informal economy' suggest that it represents a marginal and labour-intensive sector "characterized by small scale industry based in workshops or households, the use of primitive or out-of-date technology ... and a combination of waged and non-waged forms of labour" (Barnes 2010: 25f.). These views are predominantly put forward by proponents of the dualist perspective. Influenced by elements of modernization theory (Rostow 1960), the dualist perspective posits a sharp divide between modern, capitalist modes of production on the one hand, and traditional, pre-capitalist economic organization on the other. To dualists, the 'formal' and 'informal economy' exist in parallel and are largely independent of each other, with no or little exchange between them. Rural, peasant and unskilled labour are associated with poverty, low productivity and

⁵ Search conducted on www.google.com and <https://helka.finna.fi/> on 25.01.2020.

underdevelopment (Lewis 1954; Jorgenson 1961; Harris and Todaro 1970). Such types of economic activities are seen as vital to income generation for poor segments of the population in developing countries and expected to disappear once these countries proceed on the path of economic development (ILO 1972; Tokmann 1978).

Rigid two-sector models based on the traditional-modern dualism and on assumptions of linearly proceeding stages of economic development have been refuted in recent decades as simplified and, moreover, empirically proven wrong by the expansion of the 'informal economy' (Chen, Vanek and Carr 2004). The notion of small-scale, low-productivity industry has also made way for broader definitions, not least with the conceptual shift from 'informal sector' to 'informal economy' (ILO 2002d). Unregulated and unprotected economic activities have been shown to transcend specific sectors, enterprise size, levels of productivity and employment status, and to interlock with 'formal' labour and commodity markets (ibid.; Tranberg Hansen and Vaa 2004; Chen 2007; Hammer 2019). However, the normative bias framing 'informal' work as an unorganized and unproductive relic of the past still shines through some analyses (e.g. La Porta and Shleifer 2014; Ng'weno and Porteous 2018).

The structuralist perspective, seeking to address the theoretical shortcomings of dualist models, proposes a more nuanced view of the 'informal economy' as a continuum of labour and employment relations that are integral to 'formal' economies. In this view, the 'informal economy' presents a cluster of relationships of production and exchange which are interlinked with the 'formal economy' (Moser 1977, 1978; Portes and Castells 1989). In contrast to the dualist perspective, the 'informal economy' is not associated with poverty and low productivity, although workers in 'informal' production structures often work for survival and are prone to exploitation by 'formal' market actors who utilize the absence of regulation to maximize profits (ibid; Roberts 1989; Breman 1996). By and large, the structuralist and dualist perspectives share the presumption that because of poorer working conditions and fewer benefits, 'informal economy' workers would prefer to shift to the 'formal economy' but are kept from doing so by structural constraints. As power relations between 'informal' and 'formal' market actors favour the latter, proponents of the structuralist perspective argue for expanded and more effective regulation to protect workers (e.g. ILO 2002b, 2013f, 2019).

The most outspoken criticism of the structuralist school of thought has been put forward by advocates of the neoliberal perspective, most prominently by its leading figure, Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto. The neoliberal perspective sees the 'informal economy' as an entrepreneurial sector, coming closest to the notion of a 'bootstrap operation'. It contrasts with the structuralist perspective by portraying those in the 'informal economy' as micro-entrepreneurs and micro-capitalists as opposed to proletarians and wage workers (de Soto 1989, 2001; see also Barnes 2010: 24f.). 'Exit' is emphasized over 'exclusion' as entrepreneurs are presumed to choose 'informal' income generation rationally, to avoid political

barriers as well as bureaucratic and legal restrictions and to operate with lower costs and higher profit margins (Maloney 2003; Perry et al. 2007). The “real problem”, according to de Soto, “is not so much informality as formality” (1989: 255). As a solution, he proposes the simplification of regulations and bureaucratic procedures and the implementation of property rights. This would enable the participation of entrepreneurs in ‘formal’, competitive markets, thus reducing unemployment and poverty and stimulating growth (de Soto 2001). While the neoliberal perspective acknowledges exchange between ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ markets, entrepreneurs are seen as maintaining their independence vis-à-vis state regulation (Carr and Chen 2001: 6).

The notions of choice, independence and autonomy, as well as the focus on self-employed individuals and micro-entrepreneurs, are shared by different strands of the postmodern approach to the ‘informal economy’. Consisting of “a small tributary of critical, postcolonial, post-structuralist, post-development and post-capitalist thought” (Williams and Gurtoo: 395), the main thrust of this perspective is to see ‘informal’ activities within their wider social and cultural contexts. Ample space is given to values such as reciprocity, solidarity, trust, friendship and personal freedom, which are emphasized in opposition to the presumption that economic interests and market logics alone drive ‘informal’ activities (ibid.; Leyshon, Lee and Williams [eds.] 2003; Gibson-Graham 2006, 2008; Morris and Polese [eds.] 2015; Polese et al. [eds.] 2017). The ‘informal economy’ is seen as providing a refuge from modern capitalism and industrialism and its negative impacts (Amin, Cameron and Hudson 2003) and as anti- and post-capitalist anarchic space (White and Williams 2014). A more moderate view within this perspective suggests that ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ economies should be understood in terms of their costs and benefits as well as advantages and disadvantages, warning that formalization risks undermining the many benefits informality holds (Cross 2000). The goal, then, is to “create ways in which formal and informal sectors can exist side-to-side” (ibid.: 47).

The arguments of the four approaches are not mutually exclusive but may overlap or complement each other. To account for the complexity and heterogeneity of the ‘informal economy’, some scholars call for an integrated approach that utilizes elements from them all in so far as they are appropriate for different segments of the ‘informal economy’ (Chen et al. 2004). Empirical research speaks in favour of complementary approaches, as ‘informal’ work has been repeatedly shown to be performed by people from a broad variety of different social backgrounds and with different income levels, serving a wide array of economic purposes that range from survival to accumulation (e.g. Breman 1996; Fields 1990, 2019; ILO 2013e, 2018). In contemporary scholarship, the understanding of the ‘formal’ and ‘informal economy’ as poles of a continuum rather than opposites has become widely accepted (ILO 2002b, 2013f; Guha-Kasnobis, Kanbur and Ostrom 2006; Danquah et al. 2019).

Nonetheless, and all contestation between different perspectives notwithstanding, the ‘formal’ and ‘informal economy’ are still mostly conceptualized as two distinct

economic spheres. Even when it is shown to be integrated into the ‘formal economy’, the existence of a thing called the ‘informal economy’, however defined, is reaffirmed. What to make of this ‘informal economy’ quite literally remains a matter of perspective, the competing ontologies of which are normatively informed and influenced by ideologies and “political fantasies” (Saaritsa 2008: 30; see also Hansen and Vaa 2004; Sindzingre 2006; Barnes 2010; Vainio 2012).

1.3 Labour, law and the state

Whether—or to what extent—the ‘informal economy’, conceptualized as a distinct sphere in which people live and work outside of ‘formal’ regulatory frameworks, requires distinct analytical and policy tools presents a matter of discussion in at least three broad and interrelated thematic fields: labour organization and class struggles, the establishment of legal regulation and protection, and the role and responsibilities of the state.

Regarding labour and class, the ‘informal economy’ is seen to accompany other fundamental changes to the world of work. Non-standard types of employment, the erosion of labour securities, growing precarity, automation and digitization of work and, not least, the fragmentation and disintegration of the very notion of labour challenge the pillars of industrial relations (e.g. Beck 2000; Standing 2009; 2011; 2014; Ferguson 2015; Graeber 2018). This poses the question of the extent to which ‘old’ concepts of class and labour are still relevant in ‘new’ contexts (Waterman 1993, 2011, 2012; Schierup et al. [eds] 2015; Siegmann and Schiphorst 2016). Guy Standing (2011: 6) frames the conundrum as follows:

As the 1990s proceeded, more and more people, not just in developing countries, found themselves in a status that development economists and anthropologists called ‘informal’. Probably they would not have found this a helpful way of describing themselves, let alone one that would make them see in others a common way of living and working. So they were not working class, not middle class, not ‘informal’. What were they?

Whether people in insecure and unprotected labour relations, referred to by Standing as the global ‘precariat’ (ibid.), represent a newly emerging global class with a diffuse but distinct class interest remains debated (e.g. Wright 2016). The challenge to scholarship and labour activism consists of adequately conceptualizing ways of regulating work that account for different histories of work and inequalities in power and wealth in the Global South (Bremner 2013), without framing labour relations and struggles according to Western-centric norms of standard employment, yet remaining attentive to radical alternatives potentially facing workers located in the South (Gallin 2001; Lindell 2008; Munck 1999, 2013; Ferguson 2015; Scully 2016).

The ‘informal economy’ blurs conceptual and legal boundaries between informality, precarity and illegality, especially in the context of labour market

flexibility and growing flows of international labour migration (see e.g. Cholewinski 2006; Delgado Wise 2015). According to scholars in the field, established labour law encounters a “two-dimensional crisis”: the rise of flexible and irregular employment relations in industrialized countries on the one hand, and expanding ‘informal’ work in developing countries on the other, pose an empirical challenge, while the need to re-define labour law in light of changing relations of capital and labour and increasing imbalances between states and (global) markets presents a fundamental conceptual challenge (Davidov and Langille 2006: 1). However, scholarship in the fields of labour law as well as of industrial relations has only reluctantly extended its focus towards non-standard work, especially when it takes place in non-industrialized countries (Sankaran 2011).

At the same time, the functioning of capitalist economies depends on legal regulation’s clarifying the rights and duties of public and private actors. The language and practice of rights, most recently of human rights, has historically been closely intertwined with the expansion of capitalist organization of the economy, in a dialectic and often conflict-laden manner (see Rimlinger 1983; Dine and Fagan [eds.] 2006; Moyn 2010; Dezelay and Garth [eds.] 2011). The rise of the ‘informal economy’ as an empirical phenomenon and object of analysis during past decades has paralleled the vigorous emergence of the global human rights movement and the recourse to rights-based approaches to development (RBA) more broadly (see Seppänen 2005; Uvin 2010; Moyn 2014; Langford 2015).

The existence of the ‘informal economy’ results from and epitomizes the absence of social and economic rights, such as the right to (formal) work or the right to social protection; in addition, state authorities may be committing violations of the human rights of people working in the ‘informal economy’: their civil and political as well as property rights, for instance. The challenge for human rights promotion, then, lies in providing access to the law and to rights for people in the ‘informal economy’ whenever formalization is not possible (Miller 2007).

The ‘informal economy’ presents a litmus test for the limitations and potential of the regulatory frameworks and discourses of RBA. Taking place at the frontier of the law, the struggle for rights in the ‘informal economy’ entails competing views over the amount of control the state can and should have over the market. Here, debate between theorists of the perspectives outlined above touches upon the fundamental conflict between materialist theories of rights, which hold that rights discourses have a politico-economic dimension, and liberal theories, according to which the main purpose of rights is to guarantee the separation between the state and the private sphere (see Balbus 1977; Buckel 2008). Key questions include which rights and duties are assigned to public and private actors and, crucially, which groups benefit from certain rights (Rimlinger 1983; Alston 2005; De Schutter 2006; Voiculescu 2011; Moyn 2014).

The role and responsibility of the state, finally, lies at the heart of debates surrounding the ‘informal economy’. In theorizing by the dualist, neoliberal,

postmodern perspectives and—to a lesser extent—the structuralist perspective, the formal-informal dualism demarcates the limits to effective regulation by the state. The line drawn between the ‘formal’ and ‘informal economy’ often corresponds with that between the (modern) state and the (unregulated) market. In light of strong evidence of interlinkages between the two, as discussed above, these distinctions, as well as the power politics surrounding them, deserve critical scrutiny. To cite Hart again (2008: 7)—who notes that following the end of the Cold War and years of structural adjustment—

[t]he market frenzy had led to the ‘commanding heights’ of the informal economy taking over the state-made bureaucracy ... the formal/informal pair, inspired as I now thought by the state/market opposition, had leaked into each other to the point of being often indistinguishable.

The ‘informal economy’, in other words, is not as state-free as it appears to be. In this vein, the ILO has long maintained that its regulation—or lack thereof—is a question of governance (ILO 2002b, 2013f.). Research from diverse fields, such as political economy, law and anthropology, is increasingly going beyond the conceptual state-market dichotomy and instead calling attention to the complex ways in which the state and market are entangled in reorganizing societies (e.g. Hart 2002; Peck and Tickell 2002; Rodríguez-Garavito 2011; Bruff 2011). The conception and constitution of the ‘informal economy’ is central to these processes, as John and Jean Comaroff point out:

With market fundamentalism has come a gradual erasure of received lines between the informal and the illegal, regulation and irregularity, order and organized lawlessness. It is not merely that criminal economies are often the most perfect expressions of the unfettered principle of supply and demand, nor only that great profit is to be made in the interstices between legitimate and illegitimate commerce, between the formal and underground vectors of global trade, from differences in the costs and risks of production, north and south ... *Vastly lucrative returns also inhere in actively sustaining zones of ambiguity between the presence and absence of the law.* (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 5, footnotes omitted, emphasis added)

As the line between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ as well as between law and lawlessness is anything but clear, the question implicitly raised here—‘who benefits’ from shifting boundaries?—becomes paramount. Contestation over the ‘informal economy’ produces “winners and losers” as some groups gain advantages while others are excluded, with many complex trade-offs in between (Banks, Lombard and Mitlin 2019: 1). The interrelations between the demarcating of the formal-informal divide and the re-organizing of labour, law and the state are addressed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of the thesis.

1.4 Revisiting the informality of two dissimilar sectors

During my stay in Tanzania, I became fascinated by small-scale trade⁶ and domestic work. The two sectors present a combination of similarities and dissimilarities inviting interesting observations. As already mentioned when introducing Sara and Rehema, both sectors are commonly considered vital in their provision of ‘informal’ employment and livelihoods, while both domestic workers and street vendors count as particularly vulnerable groups in the ‘informal economy’ (e.g. ILO 2013e). Each of the sectors is classified as ‘informal’ in its own way: street trade is a publicly visible occupation that is not covered by Tanzanian legislation, whereas domestic work is mostly performed in private homes but fully covered by the law. Street trade and domestic work hence exemplify work which is excluded from legal coverage either by its text or its practice.

Assessing the role of street trade around the globe, Sally Roever and Caroline Skinner (2016: 359) summarize its predicament as follows: “[S]treet trade is one of the most visible occupations, yet few cities successfully balance the need to support livelihoods with the need to manage public space.” Indeed, while largely absent from the cities of highly regulated economies in the Global North, unregulated street trade is omnipresent in the Global South. In the wake of structural adjustment, population and jobless growth, and increasing rural-urban migration, street trade has become one of the fastest growing sectors of the ‘informal economy’ in many parts of Africa (Mitullah 2003). Worldwide, research estimates street trade to be the largest sub-sector of ‘informal’ trade, accounting for one-quarter to one-third of all non-agricultural ‘informal’ activity in Asia, about one-third in Latin America and one-third to almost half in selected African countries (Roever and Skinner 2016: 361; Herrera et al. 2012).

The average share of small-scale trade in ‘informal’ employment is higher in Africa than on other continents, making up between 13 and 24 per cent compared to 11 and 9 per cent in Asia and Latin America respectively.⁷ In selected African cities, small-scale trade is found to offer an income to between 14 and 35 per cent of women working in the ‘informal economy’, and between 8 and 17 per cent of men (Roever and Skinner 2016: 361; see also Mitullah 2003: 4). Accounting for roughly 15 to 20 per cent of ‘informal’ employment, the share of small-scale trade in Dar es Salaam is similar to that of other African cities. Tanzania also mirrors global trends according to which women are overrepresented in both rural and urban ‘informal’ employment (UN Habitat 2007: 9; ILO 2013a: 11f.). The research

⁶ Lyons and Msoka (2007:10) report that many Dar es Salaam traders object to the commonly used term ‘petty trade’, considering it “patronizing or even pejorative”. Respecting their concerns, I use the term ‘small-scale trade’ to generically refer to traders in both designated (e.g. markets) and undesignated trading areas, and the terms ‘street trade’ and ‘street vending’ to describe trading activities in non-designated areas. While small-scale trade in Tanzania is almost entirely unregistered and unlicensed, the main focus of my study is on street traders, whose trading activities in non-designated areas expose them to heightened workplace insecurity, harassment and evictions.

⁷ These numbers are based on studies in Niamey, Ouagadougou, Bamako, Dakar, Abidjan, Lomé, Cotonou, Antananarivo, Lima, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (see Herrera et al. 2012).

literature highlights the vital contribution of street trade to sustaining the lives of traders and their families, as well as the value of the services and goods they provide to wider communities in Tanzania (Tripp 1989, 1997; Lyons and Msoka 2007, Mramba 2015a; 2015b) and elsewhere (Jimu 2004; Crush and Frayne 2011; Mafunzwaini 2013).

It is common for city authorities to evict and penalize traders in an effort to enforce regulations, yet such campaigns are generally short-lived. A number of case studies document how neither hostile policies nor relocation programmes effectively reduce the number of street traders, who tend to return shortly after clearance raids, often in even larger numbers (e.g. Obeng-Odoom 2011; Adaawen and Jørgensen 2012; Rogerson 2017). Where clearances have more lasting effects, they are overshadowed by their dire social consequences and grievances over destroyed property and lives, as, for instance, in Tanzania and Senegal (Brown, Msoka and Dankoco 2015), Zambia (Tranberg Hansen 2004) and Zimbabwe (Potts 2006), as well as Thailand (Boonjubun 2017). In many cities, the resulting situation is one of a “tug of war” between local authorities and traders, characterized by simmering conflict and permanent insecurity (Owusu-Sekyere, Amoah and Teng-Zeng 2016).

Following large-scale evictions in 2006, a detailed empirical study was conducted in 2007 entitled “Micro-Trading in Urban Tanzania”, commissioned by the Development Partners’ Group on the Private Sector.⁸ This study stressed the economic and social importance of the micro-trade sector and was critical of the unfavourable policies of local authorities towards street trade (Lyons and Msoka 2007). From 2010 to 2013, further research was carried out as part of the research project “Making Space for the Poor: Law, Rights, Regulation and Street Trade in the 21st Century”.⁹ The project resulted in a number of publications discussing legal regulation and the legitimacy of ‘informal’ small-scale trade in the context of pro-poor reform agendas in Tanzania (Lyons, Brown and Msoka 2012), legal empowerment and barriers to formalization (Lyons and Brown 2013), the role of the World Bank (Lyons, Brown and Msoka 2014; see also Lyons and Msoka 2010) and property and land rights (Brown 2015; Brown, Msoka and Dankoco 2015).

While these contributions provide rich empirical research data and valuable insights, they usually take the informality of street trade for granted. With some noteworthy exceptions (Potts 2008; Anjaria 2011; Kamete 2013, 2018; Jennische 2018), street trade is usually presumed to be ‘informal’ per se. Like other types of ‘informal’ work, street vending in this view is a response to inadequate income

⁸ The Development Partners’ Group is a bi- and multilateral forum of donors with the goal of advancing aid effectiveness in Tanzania. See <http://www.tzdpdg.or.tz/dpg-website/dpg-tanzania/dpg-members.html> (accessed 26.02.2018).

⁹ The research project focused on the role of law, legal empowerment of the poor and rights-based approaches for fragile urban livelihoods; studies were conducted in Dar es Salaam, Ahmedabad, Durban and Dakar. See <http://www.theimpactinitiative.net/project/making-space-poor-law-rights-regulation-and-street-trade-21st-century> (accessed 19.02.2018).

opportunities in the 'formal' economy, one that conflicts with discriminatory laws and hostile state policies. Even when studies on street vending address the interconnections between the 'informal' and 'formal' economies, the alleged informality of street trade itself is rarely challenged (e.g. Lourenço-Lindell 2002; Brown [ed.] 2006, 2017).

By comparison, studies of domestic work have paid close attention to the complexities of legal and political contexts in constituting its informality. For a long time, domestic work was largely a topic of feminist scholarship, which critically analyzed the specific characteristics setting domestic work apart from other kinds of (paid) labour (e.g. Federici 2012; Mies 1982; McClintock 1995; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). In response to the globalization of 'care chains' and labour migration during the past two decades, interest in domestic work has grown and spread across a broader range of research fields and academic disciplines. The rich body of literature has highlighted the globalizing of domestic and care work across the Global North and South, as well as the gendered and postcolonial power hierarchies involved in its organization both within and across borders (e.g. Hochschild 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010; Romero, Preston and Giles 2014).

The limitations to regulating domestic work have attracted the thorough attention of labour law and human rights scholars, who have documented and analyzed the paucity of legal and social protection for domestic workers, particularly migrant workers, in detail (e.g. Fudge and Owens 2006; Morgan 2008; Mantouvalou 2013). Given the specific nature of domestic and care work, the question of whether it should be regulated as "work like any other" or "work like no other" poses a key dilemma (Mundlak and Shamir 2011: 292).

Academic literature on the phenomenon in Tanzania is still sparse, although domestic work is widespread in the country and plays a significant role in the national economy. A milestone exploration into the history and development of domestic work in Tanzania is Janet Bujra's "Serving Class" (2000), in which life histories of domestic workers are interwoven with analysis of the class, gender and the postcolonial trajectories of the sector. Likewise, Robyn Pariser (2015) offers an account of gender roles in the labour organization of male domestic workers in Tanganyika, while Annamarie Kiaga's dissertation (2007) studies the role of gender, class and age in the construction of domestic workers' and employers' identities. In the wake of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Resolution 189 on "Decent Work for Domestic Workers", the ILO Country Office in Dar es Salaam conducted extensive research into the legal protection and actual working conditions of domestic employment, which were published in a Situational Analysis (ILO 2016a).

In contrast to street trade, which is concordantly categorized as 'informal' by researchers and policy makers alike, the relation between the law and the 'informal' status of domestic work is disputed in Tanzania. In its Situational Analysis, the ILO implicitly differentiates between, on the one hand, legally

clarified, more ‘formal’ aspects of domestic work—for instance, the oral or written work contract between an employer and worker—and the more ‘informal’ practices surrounding it, on the other, such as word-of-mouth recruitment, the blurring of family and employment relations, or irregular remuneration below the minimum wage or in kind (see ILO 2013c; 2016: *passim*).

This short overview indicates that the two sectors are too dissimilar for a systematic comparison and, as I discuss in Chapters 4 and 5, too internally diverse as well. Examining the two sectors side by side, however, offers insights into how informality works differently across different labour regimes which each operate by distinct logics,¹⁰ at the same time bringing into relief the factors and dynamics rendering work ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ in both sectors. The juxtaposition of street trade and domestic work in this thesis hence serves to unpack the category of ‘informal economy’.

1.5 Theoretical approach and research data

I propose to understand the ‘informal economy’ not only as an analytical concept and empirically observable phenomenon, describing the world of income-generating and other economic activities that are not regulated and protected by law, but also and simultaneously as a contested political concept and economic imaginary conveying normative agendas and legitimizing interventions. This line of reasoning is theoretically informed by the discussion framing political and social concepts as necessarily ambiguous and essentially contested, one put forward by Reinhart Koselleck (1982, 1995) and John Gray (1977, 1983). The importance of ‘conceptual politics’ (Hobson and Kurki 2012) is further highlighted by the Cultural Political Economy (CPE, see Sum and Jessop 2013) approach, which attributes a central role to ‘imaginaries’ in linking material structures and conditions with the use of language and signs in the transformation and contestation of social order. These conceptual and theoretical fragments correspond with an intersectionality approach that understands law as intertwined with social categories and hierarchies (Crenshaw 1989, 1994; Grabham et al. 2009). Combined with the discussion on political and social concepts, intersectionality offers a highly useful prism for the analysis of the dynamics between legal frameworks, material and discursive processes connected with labour market transformations, and social norms in the construction of the ‘informal economy’. I elaborate the details of this theoretical framework in Chapter 3.

The analysis is based on six months of intermittent fieldwork in Dar es Salaam between April 2014 and December 2016 as well as on primary and secondary literature. The research in Dar es Salaam combined the use of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ research tools to study the ‘informal economy’, discussed in the following chapter. In addition to participant observation, I conducted semi-

¹⁰ I am grateful to Christa Wichterich for pointing this out in a comment on an earlier draft.

structured interviews with official representatives and experts of a broad range of institutions, and semi-structured interviews as well as informal conversations with small-scale traders and domestic workers.¹¹ To learn about developments in the sector of domestic work, I interviewed people from the ILO, the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), the Conservation, Hotel, Domestic and Allied Workers Union (CHODAWU), the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), the Association of Tanzanian Employers (ATE), Kiota Women Health and Development Organization (KIWOHEDE), a local Tanzanian non-governmental organization (NGO), as well as with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), an NGO associated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany. In addition, I rely on the Situational Analysis of Domestic Work in Tanzania, compiled by the ILO between 2013 and 2015 (ILO 2016a), as a key source of secondary data, and legislation, policy papers and newspaper articles on domestic work as primary data.

In the sector of street trade, in addition to interviews with experts and officials of the ILO, MoLE and ATE, useful information was provided by semi-structured interviews with representatives of the Tanzania Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers (TUICO), the Business and Property Formalisation Programme (MKURABITA, *Mpango wa Kurasimisha Rasilimali na Biashara za Wanyonge*), the National Economic Empowerment Council (NEEC), the Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA) and Kinondoni Municipal Council.

I gained the most important insights, however, from semi-structured interviews with representatives of small-scale traders' associations, individual traders, domestic workers and domestic workers' employers. In a very informal atmosphere, I met with representatives of the VIBINDO Society (*Jumuia ya Vikundi vya Wenye Viwanda na Biashara Ndogondogo*, a community of groups of small producers and small business), an umbrella organization counting approximately 65,000 individual members. I conducted one focus group interview with board members of *Migahawa* (cafeteria), an association of food vendors at Ilala market, and one with board members of UWAWADAR (*Umoja wa Wajasiliamali Walemavu Mkoa wa Dar es Salaam*), an association of entrepreneurs with disabilities who operated their stalls at Karume food market and the Machinga Complex.¹² Of the 33 interviewed traders, nine were female and 24 were male, ranging from 16 to 55 years of age. In addition, I draw on numerous informal, unstructured conversations with, and participant observation of interactions between, street vendors and a broad range of their customers, shopkeepers and members of the municipal auxiliary police.

In the domestic work sector, I conducted informal, unstructured interviews with two female employers of domestic workers, semi-structured interviews with two male and two female domestic workers and two focus group interviews with female domestic workers, the first with three and the second with five participants. With twelve domestic workers interviewed in total, the sample is

¹¹ A full list of interviews is given in the Annexes.

¹² I give the full names of the associations and the board members but use pseudonyms for street traders and domestic workers to ensure their anonymity. See Annexes for details.

smaller than that for the street trade sector, reflecting the hiddenness of domestic workers' workplaces. To balance the disparity somewhat, I give more space to domestic workers' individual life stories and work experiences (see Chapter 5).

1.6 Key arguments, structure and a clarification

The central argument of the thesis is that the 'informal economy' does not simply exist 'out there' as a distinct and objectively demarcated realm of unregulated and unprotected income-generation beyond the purview of the state. Rather, as an empirical phenomenon as well as an analytical category and concept, the 'informal economy' is an element of certain governance rationales and techniques. I propose to direct attention away from the 'informal economy' towards *processes of formalization and informalization*, specifically, to the dimension of their discursive formation. Put differently, the 'informal economy' is *not only* a result of material conditions and factors, *but also* constituted by its discursive conceptualizations.

Previous studies on the basis of arguments drawn from the structuralist perspective have already proposed understanding processes of informalization as the historical and spatial reorganization of employment relations, production and work (Castell and Portes 1989). For instance, in his study of urban development in India, Thomas Barnes (2010: 32) argues that "the observation and measurement of informality is an attempt to take an empirical snapshot of a dynamic process".¹³ Informalization thereby describes shifts in macroeconomic structures, production and the labour market (ibid.; Bhattacharya 2007; Chang 2009).

These studies make a vital contribution to transcending 'informal economy' as a static category. However, within the field of political economy, documentation of the changing economic and social aspects of the 'informal economy' has so far been largely materialist in focus. As I show by juxtaposing the sectors of street trade and domestic work in Tanzania, formalization and informalization equally represent a product of immense discursive efforts and political interventions that establish certain ways of working as integral, and others as peripheral, to the functioning of the economy and the state. In doing so, I contribute to a growing body of literature which challenges the notion and politics of the 'informal economy' as a discursive construct and explores informality—economic, spatial and political—as a site of critical investigation (Sindzingre 2006; Potts 2008; Kamete 2013, 2018; Jennische 2018; Banks, Lombard and Mitlin 2019). As Nicola Banks, Melanie Lombard and Diana Mitlin (ibid.: 2) argue, informality presents a sphere of complex phenomena, processes, and interactions where we find "a set of strategies and positions as both elite and subaltern groups struggle to gain advantage or to cope with disadvantage".

I suggest that the 'informal economy' and notions of 'informal' work, as concepts and imaginary, themselves are central to shoving work out of, or into, the purview

¹³ I am grateful to Franklin Obeng-Odoom for bringing my attention to Barnes' work.

of regulation and protection. Shifting the gaze towards the discursive processes through which work becomes 'formal' or 'informal' in the first place brings to the surface how definitions of 'formal' or 'informal' work are embedded in the contestation of social order and power relations. Following this line of thought, I demonstrate that what makes some relations, activities or persons more 'informal' than others is a complex combination of legal and social factors. The boundaries of the 'informal economy' are constructed on multiple trajectories. They emerge and are contested at the intersections of legal and social categories, global and local discourses, and hegemonic discourses and real-life experiences. The informality of street trade and domestic work needs to be understood as relative and relational, affected by class, gender, education level, age and family status, as well as postcolonial legacies and race/ethnicity.

Disputes over the legality and legitimacy of 'informal' income-generation constitute an important battleground for contestation over the appropriate role of the state in governing the economy. Although malleable, formal-informal divides develop a life of their own as they impact on worker mobilization, labour protection, rights discourses, formalization programmes and urban planning policies. The boundaries of the 'informal economy', prescribed by legislation, law enforcement and political discourse, can be shown to shape identities and enable or disable possibilities for worker organization and mobilization as well as for social inclusion.

These findings caution against any theorizing that uncritically takes the existence of the 'informal economy' as given, regardless of whether it is explained as a problematic by-product of economic structures and capitalist markets or praised as an unblemished, 'bottom-up' expression of free market enterprise. The complexity and multiple causality behind the 'informal economy' resist sweeping, one-size-fits-all conceptual and theoretical frameworks or 'grand narratives', but demand careful, empirical documentation of all contributing factors.

However, the developments in the sectors of street trade and domestic work in Tanzania strongly support the arguments offered by the structuralist perspective. The majority of street vendors and domestic workers work 'informally' not by choice but because of their exclusion from 'formal' labour markets and protective frameworks. The relations of production and exchange in which their activities are embedded straddle the formal-informal divide, and the informality of their work is directly affected by state policies and governance mechanisms. The neoliberal perspective, conversely, has come to dominate much of the public and academic discourse on the Tanzanian 'informal economy', resulting in policies which often misjudge survivalist struggles, particularly those of the poorest and most disadvantaged street vendors. Yet neoliberal thought and policies towards the 'informal economy' are also contested and countered—in the sector of domestic work as well as through new openings in street trade.

The arguments of the thesis are developed over the course of nine chapters. In the next chapter, I reflect upon the co-evolution of the research interest, methodology

and discoveries which eventually merged to become this thesis. Discussing the ethical and practical concerns of informal research techniques which I summarize under the headings of 'hanging out', 'floating' and 'flirting', I show how the research itself was shaped by, and simultaneously transcended, the formal-informal divide.

In Chapter 3, I lay out the conceptual and theoretical foundation for viewing the 'informal economy' as evolving from discursive process. This is based on an understanding of 'informal economy' as an essentially contested political and social concept, and as a political imaginary which helps transform social structures. The intersectionality framework highlights that the 'informal economy' is not opposed to the law, but rather presents an outcome of complex intersections of legal and social categories and norms. Furthermore, the 'informal economy' takes shape at the nodes between wider, global dynamics and concrete local manifestations, allowing hegemonic discourses to be challenged by everyday practices and experiences.

These reflections set the stage for dissecting the multiple intersecting trajectories rendering street trade and domestic work 'informal' in Chapters 4 and 5. I review legislation, historical directions, the composition of the workforce, social hierarchies and the location of workplaces in public or private space in each sector. It transpires that informality does not merely result from economic and regulatory constraints; rather, it is intertwined with in/visibility and also, importantly, the result of complex intersections of legal and social norms based on gender, race and ethnicity, age, family status, education and income levels, as well as the postcolonial trajectories of each sector.

I move on to analyze labour organization and labour struggles in Chapter 6. Class formation and labour power, both structural and associational, are shown to depend to no small part on the conceptualization, representation and practices of 'informality' in the two sectors. Class matters, as the economic position of street traders and domestic workers is embedded in social stratification in which informality overlaps with income levels and status across the formal-informal divide; likewise, legislation matters in enabling or disabling labour struggles even if work is 'informal'. The legal insecurity of street traders impedes trade union involvement in the sector; in contrast, identifying domestic work as a 'formal' employment relation has enabled trade union and worker activism.

In Chapter 7, I tease out how conceptions of the 'informal economy' interact with and co-constitute the discourses and practices of allocating rights and responsibilities. I illustrate how rights agendas are not neutrally promoted but reflect representations of work as 'informal' which, in turn, contribute to processes of informalization. This is exemplified by the Decent Work and Legal Empowerment for the Poor Agendas, both of which play a significant role in Tanzanian policies targeting 'informal' work; the two Agendas display structuralist and neoliberal perspectives, respectively. Their conflicting conceptions of street traders as micro-entrepreneurs and, conversely, of domestic

workers as employees dictate the promotion of property and business rights on the one hand, and of labour, economic and social rights on the other.

Chapter 8 discusses how conceptions of the 'informal economy' contribute to its composition and conditions by reconfiguring the role and relations of the state, the market and society. I argue that, contrary to its definition, the 'informal economy' is not separated from state politics, nor are the boundaries of the 'informal economy' determined by the reach of the state. Instead, the line drawn between the 'formal' and the 'informal economy' reflects the power and control allocated to public and private actors. In this light, a shift towards neoliberalism can be discerned behind processes of informalization in Tanzania in which state governance has shifted from a repressive to a welcoming stance on the 'informal economy', understood as entrepreneurial space. This can be observed, firstly, in the allocation of market space as a commodity and status symbol for an emerging class of entrepreneurs; secondly, in attempts to license and tax 'informal' street vending businesses; thirdly, in understanding formalization in terms of business formalization; and fourthly, in the valorization of the 'informal economy' as moral economy. Neoliberal conceptions are however paralleled and countered by structuralist interventions into the domestic work sector, and challenged by vendors and domestic workers alike.

Chapter 9 summarizes the key arguments, reflects on the limitations of the study and provides an outlook for future research.

Given the limitations on their analytical utility and my intention to investigate the political and normative tenets of their use critically, I need to clarify my own application of the terms 'informal economy' and 'informal' in the thesis. Alternative terms for the phenomena under its heading abound. They are referred to as 'black', 'cash-in-hand', 'clandestine', 'dual', 'everyday', 'ghetto', 'grey', 'invisible', 'marginal', 'occult', 'other', 'parallel', 'peripheral', 'shadow', 'subterranean', 'twilight', 'unorganised', 'unregulated' or 'underwater' as adjectives, with a choice of 'economic activity', 'economy', 'employment', 'sector' or 'work' as nouns, to name but the most common or the most exotic expressions.¹⁴ One can further add 'real economy' (MacGaffey 1991), 'need economy' (Sanyal 2007) or 'popular economy' (Hull and James 2012) to the list, as well as 'second economy', a term used in the Tanzanian context (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990).

Each of these alternatives is arguably at least as normative as the term 'informal'; moreover, replacing a political and social concept with another is unlikely to solve issues of conceptual clarity and contestation. For these reasons, I choose to hold on to the term while keeping a critical distance from its use as a concept and imaginary describing specific forms of economic organization. To highlight their ambivalent and normative qualities, I use single inverted commas with the term

14 A full list is compiled by Colin Williams (2004: 3).

'informal' when it refers to people, activities or relations in the 'informal economy', as well as with its conceptual counterpart 'formal'. The reader might find this ponderous, even annoying. This is on purpose: the single inverted commas are intended to function as signal of disturbance to emphasize the critical role of the concept in transforming the life-worlds of work.

2. LEARNING FROM ‘MUDDLING THROUGH’

2.1 Doing research in and on the ‘informal economy’

The malleable and contestable boundaries which categorize work in binary terms as ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ and the social impacts of this division are at the centre of my research. This, however, had not been part of the original research plan or intended as a topic to explore in my first visit to Tanzania in early 2014. Instead, as I recall in more detail below, it was in a sudden, unexpected exposure to a violent street clearance and during the first set of official interviews that unregistered, unorganized and unprotected work came to my attention as a key issue for discussions on labour regulation and workers’ rights.

Informality of employment, so I learned in my early interviews, presents a number of problems: with more than ninety per cent of the total Tanzanian workforce earning a living in the ‘informal economy’,¹⁵ it was an empirical obstacle for the study of labour relations and worker protection; the prevalence of ‘informal employment’ likewise challenged experts of law with blurred lines around the legality and legitimacy of certain types of work; while, for policymakers, the persistent and even growing share claimed by the ‘informal economy’ displayed the puzzle of being either cause or effect, or perhaps both, of stalling and unequal economic and social development.

Gradually, in a thought process which began during my stay in Dar es Salaam and matured in the course of writing, the ‘informal economy’ emerged as more than a term describing an empirical phenomenon. Beyond being conceptually problematic, it turned out to be intrinsically paradoxical: on the one hand, it is commonly characterized as not being recognized and protected by the law, and as hidden from the outreach of state institutions; on the other, it is far from being invisible, but instead a ubiquitous part of everyday life, appearing everywhere in Dar es Salaam and across Tanzania. This initially confusing observation would later prompt me to reflect critically on the visibility and invisibility of work to the public eye, as well as on the thorniness of the opacity of the concept which, given its integral role in the creation of legal and social divisions, renders it complicit in the construction of political and social exclusion.

Doing research on and in the ‘informal economy’ moreover became entangled in an intriguing methodological conundrum: if ‘informal’ work by definition defies the concepts and categories established to fit formalized activities, which concepts could then be used to grasp and understand it? Which research and writing methods would prove both social scientifically sound and suitable for a

¹⁵ This number refers to all agricultural and non-agricultural employment in Tanzania (see ILO 2013e).

phenomenon which by its very definition exists off the books? Conversely, if 'informal' work could be researched, grasped and written about, what did this say about the demarcation between the 'formal' and 'informal' worlds of work as a sign of the limits of law enforcement and legal protection, as well as political and social inclusion?

To understand the 'informal economy' in both its empirical and conceptual manifestations, I had to look beyond 'formal'—in the sense of officially registered and well-established—terminologies and explanations, turn towards an open-ended research strategy and rely on quite 'informal'—in the sense of unplanned, unsystematic and sometimes unsanctioned—research techniques. In other words, to get better insights into what was happening off the books, I occasionally felt compelled to discard doing research by the book. Informality, understood in the broadest terms, hence crystallized as part and parcel of my research. These manoeuvres brought about their own dilemmas, but also magnified the quandaries and conflicts commonly inherent to fieldwork, particularly in a postcolonial context.

In this chapter, I recall how my interest in de-constructing the 'informal economy' emerged organically in the course of the research process, and elaborate on how informality, as practice and concept, shaped my fieldwork. Reflecting on six months of intermittent fieldwork conducted in Tanzania between 2014 and 2016 and the research methods I used, I discuss the analytical and ethical implications of this process for my research. I draw on discussions among anthropology, feminist and postcolonial scholars to challenge the idea of the researcher as in control, and of ethnography as a mere exercise in data collection.

I suggest that the merit of ethnography does not only lie in gaining deeper, more comprehensive or 'authentic' knowledge but, more importantly, in disrupting the knowledge, power and authority of the researcher, if only momentarily. The challenge of reconciling methodology with the diverging demands of the institutions of the 'formal' and 'informal city' illustrated questions on the adequacy of different disciplinary approaches and toolkits. Often belittled as 'muddling through', elements of uncertainty and perplexity are an inevitable and valuable part of a methodology which is committed to learning to learn from 'the field'. The confusion occurring when working in an unknown environment, such as the 'informal economy', can be seen as a blessing in disguise as it forces the researcher to un-learn previously held conceptions, re-orient the research agenda and learn anew. Although they cannot solve the perennial problems of representation and power, unpredictable and uncomfortable encounters help to lay bare and subvert the privileged position of the researcher, and thus potentially help to make ethnography if not a better then at least a less arrogant research enterprise (see also Höckert 2015; Daigle 2016; Alava 2017).

The chapter is structured into five parts. Following this introduction, I critically reflect on academic conventions and discussions concerning the use of ethnographic fieldwork. I draw on Tim Ingold's conception of participant

observation to destabilize the construction of the researcher as in control of the research process and its outcomes, and to offer an appraisal of ‘muddling through’ as a method. In the third section, I recount the emergence of the ‘informal economy’ as the object of my research and, simultaneously, of the ‘informal’ and ‘formal city’ as two interlinked but simultaneously parallel and separate sites of fieldwork. The fourth section discusses the unplanned and sometimes unorthodox research tactics with which I engaged the ‘two cities’, particularly the ‘informal city’. I label these tactics flirting, floating and hanging out. Doing research in such a manner highlighted the researcher’s idiosyncrasy and spontaneity as important strengths in fieldwork; yet, although they proved to be useful and perhaps inevitable, they also tested the limits of proper ethical research conduct. In the fifth section, I reflect on my research strategy and tactics in the context of broader postcolonial and feminist critiques addressing the problem of representation and ethics in ethnographic research.

2.2 Research by the book? ‘Ethnographic fieldwork’ and its discontents

It is commonly acknowledged in social scientific research that “a discussion of a study’s methodology is incomplete without a deliberation of implicated ethical and moral choices” (Meincke 2015: 51) and without reflection on the political implications of conducting fieldwork (Davies 1999: 45ff.). This is considered especially obligatory for ethnography, which has self-critically been described as “really quite an arrogant enterprise” when considering that in a relatively “short period of time, an ethnographer moves in among a group of strangers to study and describe their beliefs, document their social life [and] write about their subsistence strategies” (Agar 1980: 41; see also Höckert 2015: 137). In the fields of ethnology and cultural anthropology, this admittedly questionable approach has been subjected over time to various efforts to establish and justify the authority of the researcher in producing ethnographic knowledge (see Clifford 1983).

As Ilan Kapoor discusses, there is a danger of taking self-reflection to the point of intellectual paralysis, or worse, of tripping into navel-gazing, which further serves to consolidate one’s privileged position (2004: 643). The motivation here is to strike a balance: Given that my research is located within highly uneven structures of power and wealth, many of the wrongs which accompanied fieldwork cannot be righted by either renouncing its purpose altogether or by reaffirming its authority. Rather, I wish to spotlight how the dilemmas and struggles I stumbled over also drive critical commitment and the final form of this study. If writing is a method of formalization, and formalization a means of inclusion and exclusion, as I suggest, the aim must be to make this research enterprise more open and less arrogant.

Building on postcolonial critiques, and putting the thoughts of Tim Ingold, an anthropologist, and Sara Ahmed, a postcolonial feminist, into dialogue with each

other, I aim to develop a conception of ethnography as a way of working with others which challenges the assumption of the pre-given authority of the researcher in fruitful ways. The argument I wish to develop is that the uncertainties involved in working in an unknown environment, such as the 'informal economy', destabilize the construction of the researcher as controlling the process and its outcomes, and thus deserve critical appreciation when discussing the promise of ethnography as a method.

Among anthropologists, the phrase, "it was only when I got there that I understood what the real interesting questions were" (Kalir 2006: 237), is common in discussions of fieldwork and ethnography. Nonetheless, to satisfy supervisors, faculty administrations, ethics committees and, last but not least, funding institutions, researchers wishing to leave their desks and go to 'the field' often find themselves compelled to produce well-grounded and comprehensive research plans beforehand, explicating in detail the study and interview questions, selection of potential 'informants', collection of 'data' and sometimes even preliminary 'results'. A number of social science textbook descriptions portray ethnographic approaches as one methodology among others from the social science toolbox, according to which notion the key techniques of participant observation and open-ended interviews are chosen in accordance with a pre-formulated research interest, to be fitted into qualitative or quantitative research designs (e.g. Klotz and Prakash [eds.] 2008; Della Porta and Keating [eds.] 2010).

Although the focus and questions are bound to change somewhat in the process, the research is expected to move more or less linearly through three steps: formulation of the research interest, data collection and analysis/writing (see e.g. Gusterson 2008; Bray 2008; Murchison 2010). This assumption of linearity is marked along the time-space continuum: first, students are advised to prepare 'here', then to go 'there' to 'the field' to observe and take notes, and afterwards come back 'here' to write up (e.g. Gobo 2010; Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011). Researchers' diverse experiences as well as substantiated critiques (e.g. Jacoby 2006; Cerwonka and Malkki 2007; Vrasti 2008; Quist 2016; Alava 2017) may have repeatedly proven this ideal-type of fieldwork/ethnography untenable as well as epistemically and politically problematic, yet, in practice, it continues to serve as the norm and benchmark in the acceptance, for instance, of research proposals or in determining the duration of funding periods.

The widespread turn towards ethnography as a method of gaining better or deeper 'data' and 'results', and related efforts to mould ethnography to fit the needs of social scientific conventions, prompt Ingold to go so far as to discard the idea of 'ethnography' altogether: using a term by Johannes Fabian, he criticizes it for its "schizochronic tendencies" which require that all encounters, even before and while they are taking place, are already cast in a way that allows them to be afterwards matched with the intentions driving the research in the first place (2014: 386; 389). According to Ingold, the schizochronic framing of ethnography finds its expression not least in the continuing equation of ethnography with fieldwork, which clearly separates the 'here' and 'there', as "the term does not

extend to what goes on within the confines of the academy”; rather, ethnography “is always going on somewhere else” (ibid.: 385). Similarly, Tiffany Page discusses the problematic nature of “knowledge ... produced in advance of time” (2017: 16): time, epistemology and politics come together “where ‘knowing is the means for knowing what *to do*’ (ibid.: 17; emphasis in original).

However, Ingold also constructively points out paths towards addressing these limitations. He suggests discarding the notion of ‘the field’ as a separate site of the research process and, instead, considering one’s engagement as a way of working. Unpacking the overused term ‘ethnography’, he stresses that such work needs to be driven by a commitment to participant observation: less a specific research method from the social science toolbox than actually a practice of everyday life, participant observation offers the opportunity to bridge the gap positivist science assumes to lie between “being *in* the world and knowing *about* it” (ibid.: 387, emphasis in original). Observing, in this sense, does not entail objectifying others or claiming to know them objectively; on the contrary, it presents an intimate and personal path to learning from others, just as a child does in his or her immediate surroundings. Participating and observing are thus simultaneous practices of education and learning, which have at their core being attentive “to what others are doing or saying and to what is going on around and about; to follow along where others go and to do their bidding, whatever this might entail and wherever it might take you. This can be unnerving, and entail considerable existential risk” (ibid.: 389).

When speaking of risks, Ingold acknowledges risks to a researcher’s personal safety, but primarily addresses the threat which is perhaps perceived as most existential: doing research with no apparent end, to return without what could qualify as ‘data’ or ‘results’—or, to put it differently, the loss of authority and competence. Admitting this risk implies a rejection of ethnography as a method in the strict sense of regulated and controlled steps in pursuit of a fixed goal. Instead, knowledge is considered distinct from a compilation of facts and data, as it slowly and uncontrollably grows from waiting on, attending to and conversing with others (ibid.: 391ff.). In other words, such a way of working with others celebrates what is commonly decried as ‘muddling through’: exploring and learning through contingency and circumstance.

Many ethnographers emphasize the constructive and emancipatory elements of research that is unpredictable and admits to being personal and partial, in contrast to the limited positivist presumptions of research processes as linear, impersonal and objective (e.g. Cerwonka 2007; Jauhola 2015; Onodera 2015: 48f.; Quist 2016). Improvisation is central to orientating oneself in a new environment, and thereby impacts deeply on the analytical and ethical consequences of working with others. There lies, of course, an inherent paradox in any attempt to devise standardized How-To instructions on fieldwork improvisation for students of ethnographic methods, one similar to the paradox of teaching jazz as an improvisational art form in music schools (Wilf 2014). Moreover, in overemphasizing improvisation, the focus remains on the researcher’s skills and

power to steer the research process, last but not least in the final stage of writing up the results (Daigle 2016).

In light of my own fieldwork experience, described in this chapter, I want to give space in the discussion to the vulnerabilities encountered in fieldwork, in which authority and power relations are anarchically confused and re-constructed, and in which improvisation often is no more than a destitute attempt to re-establish lost certainty and control.¹⁶ Situatedness, maintains Page, “is also a space of vulnerability, where it is not necessarily possible nor is it the intended outcome of such methodological practices, to predict in advance how and in what directions the research will progress” (Page 2017: 20).

In the following sections, I recall how, despite all preparation and planning, the uncertainties of working in an unknown environment disturbed my erstwhile research agenda and my assumption of having control over the research process. Leaving the path of ‘formal’ research prompted me to take up more ‘informal’ research methods, which I explore below. The research itself was captured by, and simultaneously transcended, the formal-informal divide. This allowed a more profound and more personal glimpse into lived experiences of ‘informal’ work, but at the same time aggravated dilemmas of academic and ethical responsibility.

2.3 A tale of two cities

Introducing an edited volume on “Rethinking Informality”, Karen Tranberg Hansen and Mariken Vaa adopt the metaphor of the ‘formal and informal city’ whereby, in line with conventional definitions, the former “consists of the urban government and its agents, institutions and rules and regulations that over time have been introduced in order to control urban space and economic life”. The latter is constituted by “extra-legal housing and unregistered economic activities” which, however, from an unofficial standpoint, might be “not only functioning but normal and legitimate practices” (Tranberg Hansen and Vaa 2004: 7f.). The two cities do not operate separately from each other but are linked through manifold interfaces, as the authors and contributions to the volume maintain. Without intending to lay down specific demarcations for either the ‘formal’ or the ‘informal city’, I find the metaphor useful to illustrate how the formal-informal divide, albeit flawed and fluid, continuously accompanied and manifested itself in my research.

Although I had read about the phenomenon of the ‘informal economy’, it had not featured in my original research plan, in which I focused on conceptual differences between human and labour rights-based approaches to development and their

¹⁶ It is important to note that this chapter is part of a process of *ex-post* reflection and an attempt to make sense of my research experience in Tanzania by engaging with theoretical and methodological thought. I read the texts by Ingold and Ahmed, on which my conception of ethnography is based, only after returning from Dar es Salaam and was fascinated by how they corresponded with my experience. Many thanks to Jelena Salmi, Timo Aho, Saana Hansen and Taina Meriluoto for useful reflection on the practical relevance of the texts.

implications for promoting workers' rights in the global economy. Tanzania promised to be a noteworthy context from which to learn, as the ILO was coordinating its Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) there, with United Nations' (UN) agencies and local partners, and I became interested in the discourses and concepts employed in the coordination process. The data collection I had in mind consisted of desktop research and fieldwork in which I aimed to interview ILO and UN staff members as well as government officials and trade union representatives based in Tanzania.¹⁷ I had further planned on conducting 'ethnographic fieldwork', which, however, I understood in rather limited terms to consist of surveying local newspapers and internet blogs and attending meetings, briefings and conferences held by the ILO, trade unions and civil society organizations for participant observation.¹⁸ Thus, expecting to do research in what I imagined to be an orderly and professional way, I departed for Dar es Salaam with textbooks on research methods and interview guides in my luggage, as well as print-outs of informed consent forms, letters of introduction, my curriculum vitae, business cards, an outline for semi-structured interviews and a voice recorder.

Notwithstanding the careful preparation, in Dar es Salaam research did not go according to plan. It turned out that interview appointments were difficult to arrange and rarely kept, and the experts I eventually got to meet for the most part did not see the relevance of my questions, rather directing the conversation to the more practical problems they were encountering in their fields of work. I realized that, with a background in Political Science and Development Studies,¹⁹ and despite familiarity with a broad selection of readings on anthropological and ethnographic methods, I had anticipated a research environment consisting of 'formal' institutions, with fully functioning communication channels and clockwork-like routines that are not necessarily the norm in Tanzanian offices. While I strongly agreed with literature challenging the researcher to revise her methodological and ontological assumptions continuously, I had nonetheless internalized the idea that research in political science was "more tightly buttoned" and followed a pre-determined set of theories, variables and hypotheses, whereas anthropology was "inclined toward the informal" and allowed for surprises and unpredictable events in fieldwork (Gusterson 2008: 93). Similarly to Megan Daigle, the frustration with the dead-ends of my research led me to "rebel against the very concept of methodology" based on assumptions of the objectivity,

¹⁷ As stated in my application for a salaried position submitted to the Doctoral Programme in Political, Societal and Regional Change, University of Helsinki, October 2013.

¹⁸ As stated in my application for a travel grant submitted to the Nordic Africa Institute, January 2014.

¹⁹ After having moved from Political Science to Development Studies, where such approaches are strongly encouraged, I had familiarized myself at length with poststructuralist, postpositivist and postcolonial writings from a range of disciplinary fields. However, two and a half decades of educational upbringing in positivist and rather Eurocentric traditions of 'knowing' proved to be resilient. Being confronted with the shortcomings of such an epistemology, un-learning and learning anew has been a rewarding element of my postgraduate studies.

neutrality and predictability of both the researcher and the field (Daigle 2015: 16f.; see also Cerwonka 2007: 8).

The experiences taught me to reconsider my assumptions of how ‘formal’ institutions worked and could be studied, in Tanzania and elsewhere: they are not staffed with neutral bureaucrats, but with people who inhabit a complex web of personal politics and hierarchies. This provided an example of how the “often chaotic and unplanned nature of social research” demands that researchers flexibly respond to new situations and allow for intellectual and practical changes to their research throughout the entire process (Davies 1999: 27). It further confirmed the potential for multidisciplinary approaches—combining elements from anthropology and political science, for instance—as well as the need to open the analysis of policy and politics to include their informal, personal and situated components (see e.g. Mohanty 2003; Shapiro 2013; MacKay and Levin 2015).

Meanwhile, heavy seasonal rain left the roads flooded and many offices of potential research contacts in the city centre deserted for several days. Repeated blackouts and power cuts confined my activities to attending a Swahili course and aimlessly wandering around in the Kivukoni, Kisutu, Upanga and Kariakoo wards in the inner city, or taking *daladala* (Dar es Salaam minibuses) rides to explore the city’s surroundings. Street traders quickly became a familiar sight and a welcomed source of help and useful items, and over the days, I befriended a group of *machingas* in the Posta area near the hostel where I was staying. All the more shocking, therefore, was the brutality of a clearance raid I witnessed one morning in the same area. Traders were beaten by the municipal auxiliary police and arrested unless they deserted their belongings and ran away; their makeshift tables were destroyed, and their goods thrown into the street or carelessly hurled onto pickup trucks.

The event left me confused and with many questions. It was difficult to make sense of the fact that the hundreds of traders lining the streets in plain sight were breaking the law and could be treated as criminals. I discussed the issue with the *machingas* with whom I had become acquainted, and they spoke about the hardships they faced when working on the streets. Since I had explained that my research focus was on rights discourses, they brought up the issue of *their* rights, such as the right to make a living, to be spared violence and to retain their rightful property. In turn, I began to raise the issue in interviews I conducted at the ILO Country Office and the Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA), and was given the answer that the main problem of organizing and legally protecting street traders, as with the vast majority of other workers in Tanzania, resulted from the specific characteristics of the ‘informal economy’ (interviews with ILO 08.05.2014a,b; TUCTA 30.04.2014; 07.05.2014). During the interviews, ILO experts were also cautiously optimistic about the future of labour rights in Tanzania, drawing my attention to positive example of the domestic work sector, in which some progress had been achieved regarding domestic workers’ rights despite the sector’s being ‘informal’ in practice.

The shortcomings of my initially intended, limited research approach thus paved the way for a new focus: on the one hand, I had been able to conduct only a few interviews and it was becoming clear that my erstwhile research interest missed the mark of addressing workers' protection in Tanzania; on the other, the prevalence of unregulated work in the street trade and domestic sectors presented concrete cases of unprotected labour and added to the importance of studying RBA in more depth: I needed to study the 'informal economy'. Yet, over time, it also became clear that the contacts, information and support I found in 'formal' institutions were insufficient to gain deeper insights into the situation of street traders and domestic workers.

As it turned out, the nature of the 'informal city' required that I negotiate my way with regard to both daily politics and research methods: just as the 'informal city' as a social reality operated at a distance from the reach of state institutions and the law, so did it escape being studied as an object of empirical investigation from the vantage point of the 'formal city' and its toolkits. The two cities were not strictly segregated from each other but interlinked by constant flows of money, goods and services. Indeed, in his early article, such manifold interlinkages prompted Hart to suggest analyzing exchange between and within the two 'sectors' in an "input-output matrix" as 'exports', 'imports' and 'balance of payments' (Hart 1973: 85). Nonetheless, as intertwined as they were, the 'formal' and 'informal city' at the same time appeared to exist parallel to each other, separated by a glass wall which effectively confined people to one or the other side.

This separation intersected with gendered and racialized hierarchies of class and social status, as I illustrate in more detail in the empirical chapters of the thesis. The 'informal city' quickly surfaced as part of daily politics and power relations when I learned that the topic of 'informal' work was not always welcomed among government officials and legal experts. Mentioning my research interest in street trade or my actual contacts with traders at the least raised eyebrows, particularly at the City Council administration offices, and sometimes resulted in an openly hostile response or the refusal to answer my questions. Although the topic of domestic work would generally be discussed in a more positive light, 'informal' income generation was generally considered a problem and a manifestation of arrested economic development.

Conversely, when talking to traders and domestic workers, positioning myself between the world of 'formal' reports, documents, decisions and laws—perceived by many of my interlocutors as 'up there'—on the one hand, and the world of street corners and sidewalk tea breaks—'down here'—on the other, was a balancing act in which I often felt deceitful. I had to be careful not to reveal all aspects of my research in the 'formal city': for instance, the fact that I maintained contact with members of the municipal auxiliary police or spent a fair amount of time and money when working with my laptop in a relatively expensive rooftop terrace restaurant in the city centre might have aroused suspicion and reinforced the stereotype of *mzungu* (European or white person) as powerful and wealthy.

Sometimes only a stone's throw away, the hotels and beach resorts, air-conditioned high-rises, gated communities and glittering shopping malls of the 'formal city' were always easily accessible to me but rarely to my research contacts who dwelled in the 'informal city'.

Ironically—or perhaps tellingly—the 'informal city' functioned more efficiently and offered a much more rewarding space for exploring the 'problem' of informality. While it was seemingly impossible for me to prepare well for formal interview appointments, the street presented itself as a welcoming research environment for a clumsy *mzungu* PhD student: despite wearing semi-official attire to formal interviews and carrying a backpack filled with paper materials around with me, for most of the time I found myself in inappropriately simple and 'informal' clothing, short of some equipment and freezing when meeting my neatly dressed interview partners in their heavily air-conditioned offices; yet, at the same time, this kind of gear proved to be uncomfortable, cumbersome and too warm for the hours inevitably spent in the heat of Dar es Salaam traffic jams, and seemed specifically to attract pick-pockets and tourist-targeting cons.

In contrast, comfortable sandals, a simple skirt and blouse, plus a scrap book and pencil carried in a small inconspicuous plastic bag, were the ideal paraphernalia for a long day in the 'informal city'. Whereas officials and experts often let me wait for hours or days, in some instances even repeatedly postponing meetings until after my likewise repeatedly postponed departure date, most of my contacts in the 'informal economy' received me and my questions right away. While my letters of introduction tended to get delayed or lost on the way from front desk receptionists to offices, street traders and domestic workers miraculously located anything or anyone I asked for within minutes, often through dozens of quick text messages sent to a large network of unseen friends. Finally, whereas it was usually easy for me, on both the personal and analytical level, to connect to traders' and domestic workers' stories and concerns, the perceptions of my white collar interview partners in some instances seemed strangely out of touch with the struggles and destitution of Tanzanians working all day and barely making ends meet. The different attire I wore (see Image 1 and Image 2) thus came to symbolise my travels between the 'two cities' and the differences in class and social status that were associated with each.

At times, the life I had as a European researcher was irreconcilable with the dire conditions I was witnessing in the 'informal city'. The striking discrepancies in class and wealth inscribed into the colour of my skin and language withstood my attempts to 'blend in' with the lifestyle of working-class Tanzanians, making ethically or politically 'right' choices all but impossible, especially when it came to the questions of whether or how such privileges could be shared. On the many occasions when I was asked to give money or other forms of support, doing so helped little to mitigate the economic hardships of poor workers and their families in the long run, while saying "no" to their requests was an uncomfortable reminder of my powerful position and the fact that many of the amenities I take for granted in life were unattainable for a large number of Tanzanians.



Image 1. After a day in the 'informal city'.



Image 2. On the way to an interview in the 'formal city'. Note that the suit and heels were bought from 'informal' mitumba markets.

Moreover, associations of privilege also affected my research in terms of pre-assigned roles and expectations. When meeting officials or experts in the 'formal' settings of office buildings, the roles as well as the topic of discussion were at least to some extent pre-determined. In most instances, communication was made easier by shared points of reference, such as academic education or familiarity with political and cultural institutions. However, roles and mutual expectations were also imbued with acts and symbols of power. Letting me wait for hours or using up limited interview time with monologues on unrelated subjects were the usual tactics applied by senior male experts to remind me that it was my role to listen to them. The exact effects of my gender, age or level of expertise on the interview outcomes cannot be established, but it was interesting to note that in comparison, conversations with female and younger male experts tended to be more reciprocal and focused. As described above, meeting

the experts and officials of the 'formal city' required me to dress in semi-official attire and have my shoes polished and my dreadlocks coiffured in order to be taken seriously. Such status-adequate preparation was a minimal but not sufficient condition for productive interviews, thus resembling the experiences of Maylin Meincke (2015: 62) in that finding the right balance between my roles as a learner and a professional required continuous and repeated negotiation with every meeting.

Slipping into the roles of researcher, expatriate or tourist provided me with access to office buildings, restaurants or shopping malls in Dar es Salaam but the same roles proved to be problematic when spending time in the 'informal city'. There I visibly stood out as an outsider, and was often openly confronted with stereotypes of the European Other as well as with legitimate, critical interrogations of the intentions behind my research. Like all racial and gender stereotypes in colonial and postcolonial settings, they were riddled with ambivalence: my skin colour and origin signalled that I was educated, wealthy, powerful and, to some men, an unreachable object of desire. Despite—or perhaps precisely because of—this

image, some of the people I encountered enjoyed laughing at my ignorance, mocked me for my lifestyle, tried to take advantage of me or spoke to me in the disrespectful ways usually reserved for non-Tanzanian women. These experiences were frustrating and exhausting, but I forced myself to see them as unavoidable consequences of colonial history and structural inequalities rather than personal faults. Furthermore, in many instances, they were products of my interlocutors' well-founded resistance to being researched and known by a *mzungu* who would briefly enter their lives only to disappear shortly after.

After all, in my multiple personae of researcher, visitor, European or woman, I was knowledgeable, rich, influential and exotic. The critical questions and mockery prompted me to consider how structures of inequality and formally established order were integral to the enterprise of my research, and quite alien to the people whose lives I had set out to understand. Emily Höckert, summarizing reflections on ethics in critical ethnographic research, cautions that, regardless of the chosen methods, doing academic research in the Global South "still often means researchers coming down from their ivory towers in order to give a voice to the silenced and oppressed" and that "although critical ethnography is presented as a bottom-up approach, the priorities and interests of the academic audience still tend to come before the needs and interests of the local communities" (2015: 147).

Agreeing with this point of view put me in conflict with my own presence in Dar es Salaam, where I was just one among a swarm of foreign researchers, volunteers and aid workers, and thus inescapably part of the economy of expatriate life and its neo-colonial inclinations. I came to rebel against all elements of lavish expatriate lifestyle, and avoided visits to shopping malls, the gated NGO buildings in Mikocheni and, above all, restaurants and bars in the high-end Oyster Bay and Masaki areas. Living like a student in my home country, I renounced all superfluity, embraced the 'informal city' and chose *daladalas* over taxis, street kitchens over restaurants, and the long waiting lines of public hospitals over the comforts of private clinics. Perhaps these efforts mitigated class differences, but certainly did not erase them: contrary to the less well-off Tanzanians I encountered, I went without these luxuries by choice, not by constraint.²⁰ I still lived in a sixth-floor apartment on busy Congo Street with Asian and European roommates, where I was immersed in the bustling street life of Kariakoo, historically the African ward of the city, but now at the heart of its gentrification. From the balcony, I could watch traditional one-storey Swahili houses in the area being razed to make space for high-rises similar to the one in which I was living and witness the construction of apartments affordable to an emerging elite of young Tanzanian entrepreneurs or Asian businesspeople. I still remember the unease I felt when an elderly, slightly drunk regular customer at my favourite bar

²⁰ The rejection of Western consumer culture and my preference for 'simple' treats like *kahawa* or local beer often met with suspicion or head-shaking, and I had to explain my reasons carefully.

in Congo Street merrily remarked how glad he was for me to enjoy typical Kariakoo nightlife before bars like this one disappeared.

In consequence, whether in formal interviews, in back alleys and markets, or most of all, in the world of expatriates, I could not overcome being an outsider—I was by default what Michael Agar (1980) calls a ‘professional stranger’. Conversely, with time, hanging out in places where people had gotten used to my presence or even become friends made me feel at ease, but I was always a guest, never a ‘native’. Ermina Martini and Marjaana Jauhola (2014) recall similar feelings of foreignness and alienation when doing aid work in post-disaster areas, but draw attention to the constructive element inherent to this experience. They suggest that emotions are not only important in the research process, but can themselves be considered a form of insightful data, as “moments of discomfort and awkwardness are essential for destabilising the seemingly natural and depoliticized Aidland” (ibid.: 79; see also Humble 2012). Failing to ‘fit in’ or ‘do the right thing’ forced me to reflect on how working in a poor country placed me strangely amidst the contrasting politics and economics of the One-Third and Two-Thirds Worlds (Mohanty 2003: 506f.). The ‘formal’ and ‘informal city’ and their discrepancies became a microcosm of these worlds into which my fieldwork became deeply enmeshed.

This is not to call into question the valuable insights I gained from my fieldwork in the ‘formal city’. Despite their busy schedules, many government officials, trade union representatives, activists, lawyers and scholars agreed to meet with me, patiently answered my questions and connected me with further research contacts, and I am immensely grateful to them for sharing their time, knowledge and enthusiasm. Meeting with Tanzanians who were working to establish lifelines between the ‘formal’ and ‘informal cities’, such as trade unionists and legal activists, allowed me to gain a deeper comprehension of the complex political, economic and social relations surrounding the concept of informality. Furthermore, as I discuss in the following section, the ‘formal city’ was not immune to or detached from ‘informal’ practices; on the contrary, as perhaps in every bureaucracy, flouted conventions and personal interaction were just as much part of my encounters with Tanzanian officials as was the sometimes stubborn insistence on rules and hierarchies.

However, the described formal-informal division was a remarkable element of my fieldwork experience, and traveling within and between the two cities brought into relief the politics of social inequality on the one hand, and of knowledge production on the other. Mirroring the ratio of the ‘informal’ to ‘formal’ economy economic activities in Tanzania, I ended up spending the lion’s share of my time on the streets rather than in office buildings or libraries. In my fieldwork, encapsulated as it was in real-life Tanzanian politics and economics, ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ practices existed parallel to and segregated from each other yet with fascinating interconnections between them; and in the same vein, my research methods, while varying from one city to the other, became infused with elements both of, and off, the fieldwork method guide books.

2.4 Research off the books: floating, flirting and hanging out

If informality is regarded as a part of methodology, it can be argued that academic research is at home in the 'formal city' and its rules. As described above, academic convention demands that, notwithstanding the necessity for flexibility and improvisation in the field, findings are eventually channelled into a straightforwardly written text – in other words, subjected to a formalization process. The research process and data require careful documentation, and the analytical movements of generalizing, abstracting and theorizing of fieldwork data (Lund 2014) ultimately aim towards the outcome of a more or less logically linear argument. Yet, while in Tanzania, when reading through field notes or transcripts of formal interviews only a few days after writing them down, I would usually find my questions already out-dated and lacking; field note scribbling often no longer made sense. Attempts to align my interview questions more rigorously with 'big picture' theories commonly nosedived when my interview partners misunderstood the questions, found them confusing, laughed at them or demonstrably avoided responding to them. As I describe in more detail in this section, encounters and conversations, especially in the 'informal city', usually forfeited all preparations and instead required openness to new and unexpected angles and views.

A number of researchers have attempted to come to terms with the formal requirements of academic procedures on the one hand, and the uncertainties they encounter during their research on the other. For instance, Barak Kalir (2006) points towards the restrictions placed on the researcher in fieldwork interactions. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the 'field', he identifies the researcher's individual habitus as central to his or her improvised responses to fieldwork obstacles, arguing that it should be included in the planning process rather than being merely reflected upon ex-post. Others have drawn attention to the power dynamics of gender, race/ethnicity, class and colonial legacies that influence research in unpredictable ways but are at the same time open-ended (e.g. Jauhola 2015; Vastapuu 2017). Three tactics emerged during my research in Dar es Salaam, partly due to spontaneous choice and partly circumstance, but irrespective of previous planning. I call them 'floating', 'flirting' and 'hanging out', and each played a decisive role in determining the course of my research.

Floating

Having come to Dar es Salaam with a fieldwork strategy and work plan aligned with my overall research aim, my work progressed only sluggishly and repeatedly ran into dead ends. Improvisation became a necessity rather than a virtue. More out of despair than out of deliberation, I submitted to what I call floating—not entirely drifting, but not determining the direction either. Much like Ingold's (2014: 389) conception of participant observation, outlined above, floating implied leaving the course of research to some extent up to chance as well as to my interlocutors. One obvious and common way in which this happened was

through the snowballing of research contacts. In the ‘formal city’, introductions and interview requests via email or at office receptions often failed to reach the experts to whom I wished to talk; contact with most of the experts I eventually met was established through personal recommendation by previous interview partners. While I had to rely on their judgement as to who or what would be relevant to my research, it was satisfying to see that, towards the end of my stay, the names I was given began to reappear more and more often, and institutional connections and networks were coming full circle.

Floating in the ‘informal city’ was much more unpredictable and open-ended. Snowballing was a viable tactic to make contact with domestic workers but of limited use among street traders as they usually introduced me to friends and co-workers who traded in the same area and whose experiences and views were therefore very similar. Ultimately, it was my exotic appearance which allowed me to apply a “scattershot approach” (Gusterson 2008: 97) to expand my contacts more widely: my dreadlocks certainly added to the attention paid to a female *mzungu* walking unaccompanied in the streets, not only in those neighbourhoods usually devoid of foreigners but also in the city centre or at busy markets. Blending in with the crowd was not an option—instead, I utilized some characteristics of my identity, such as skin colour, gender, education level, hairstyle and so forth, to gain access to Tanzania’s ‘informal’ world of work (cf. *ibid.*: 96).

Mutual curiosity was a gateway for making unanticipated contacts. I almost never skipped an opportunity for a chat, and unless in a hurry, sat down with anybody who invited me to do so. Just as Ingold (2014: 389) cautions, this approach was risky and extremely exhausting. I often spent hours listening and talking to strangers, for some of whom informal chatting served the purpose of asking for money, sex or other favours, or who, in some cases, had criminal intentions. Again, it meant transferring control over the direction of my work to others, who showed me what they thought I needed to see, hear and write down. Yet, without giving in to the serendipity of floating, I would have missed out on many indispensable and thought-provoking insights and, in some instances, the opportunity to make friends in the most unexpected places.

Floating from one encounter to the next thus greatly defined the final composition of interviews.²¹ In the beginning and even when my list of contacts had expanded, language was a decisive factor in determining my interlocutors. English, the second official language of Tanzania, is usually spoken by people who have had access to secondary education. Although I was able to have simple conversations in Swahili towards the end of my stay, more detailed, in-depth discussion remained confined to English speakers. Thus, with the exception of translated

²¹ Due to the nature of their workplaces, the public spaces where street traders worked were much easier to access than the private spheres in which domestic workers spend most of their time. There remains an imbalance between the random sampling I achieved among street traders and the limited access I had to domestic workers. See section 1.5 and Annexes for a list of formal interviews and of contacts in the ‘informal city’.

interviews and a small number of Tanzanians who had learned to speak English outside of school, people whose views I noted for this study had received at least secondary education, or had lived in urban centres for long periods. The precise ways in which this affected the selection of views gathered for this study, the content of the conversations and, in consequence, my thinking, cannot be conclusively determined; but I wish to emphasize that I do not claim to have recorded anything resembling an 'authentic Tanzanian voice'. This is all the more so as there was remarkable diversity between the people who did converse with me in the limited time of my stay.

Moreover, the notion of floating describes the open-ended course of the interviews themselves. With the exception of three interviews in which experts had asked to be given a list of questions in advance, interviews were structured loosely around thematic areas in which I formulated questions mostly on-the-spot—following up on the subjects and keywords mentioned by my interview partners—and allowed for counter-questions and discussion. I largely let my respondents determine the timeframe of the interviews, which lasted between twenty minutes and three hours.

I also checked with them how they allowed their answers to be recorded: the voice recorder was of limited use almost everywhere in noisy Dar es Salaam, its presence stifled the atmosphere even in quiet offices, and some interviewees rejected having their answers audio recorded. In total, I recorded only five interviews. During all other expert interviews, I took brief notes and transcribed the interviews on the evening of the same day while the memory was still fresh in my mind. When interviewing street traders and domestic workers, some would wait patiently for me to take notes, in some cases insisting that I transcribed their responses word for word, whereas others forbade my taking notes while they were talking to me. As opportunities for interviews arose at the most unlikely times and places, I sometimes had to jot down notes on napkins or in newspaper margins, similar to Megan Daigle's experience during her research in Cuba (2015: 16). Like her, I quote my respondents literally only when I was able to note their exact words.

The interviews once more revealed how the 'informal city' resisted convention and method: interviews with workers rather resembled open conversations and dialogue in which interview partners often questioned my ideas or challenged the purpose of academic research on their lives and work. The informality of the workplaces and homes I visited required forsaking the strict roles of interviewer and interviewee as well as any pretence of academic or professional authority.

Although "personal chemistries" (Höckert 2015: 161) influenced the tone and content of all interviews to a varying extent, formal interviews were footed on the professional roles held by the experts and myself. In contrast, exchanging views on the objective of my research with street traders and domestic workers, and importantly on their role as my 'informants', was significantly more difficult. Like other researchers using ethnographic methods, I depended on the willingness of

people who did not always understand my motivation, and who received little to no personal benefits from it, to bear the costs and risks of talking to me. As a dependent outsider, it was indispensable that I opened up ways of meaningful communication with strangers, and established mutual trust with my interlocutors. The main resources for doing so, once again, were intuition, “personal politics” and habitus (Kalir 2006: 236; Daigle 2015: 16).

It certainly helped that I enjoyed making contact with Tanzanians and practicing my faulty Swahili, and that I was sympathetic to the efforts and struggles of the people to whom I talked. Yet, in encouraging conversations and building trust, I had continuously to re-define my role in the face of what others expected of me. Floating in both the ‘formal’ and ‘informal city’ challenged me to manage uncertainty by playing along and at the same time giving direction to the relationships which emerged. One tactic on this path, at least initially, was to accept the role which was suggested to me in some encounters with Tanzanians, particularly with Tanzanian men—that of an exotic female.

Flirting

Given that flirting, the playful suggestion of attraction and intimacy transgressing social boundaries, is part of daily life, surprisingly little has been written about its occurrence in research encounters and knowledge production. The topic of erotic and sexualized subjectivity rarely appears in fieldwork preparation guides and is seldom openly discussed in ex-post reflections on ethnographic encounters (for a discussion, see Kullick 1995). Yet flirting was a common feature of my time in Dar es Salaam; it played an undeniable role in how I experienced Tanzanian people, opened gateways into the exploration of Tanzanian politics, and ultimately affected the course of my work quite considerably. Flirting also presented perhaps the most tenuous line between being in and out of control: devoid of clear guidelines, I had cautiously to rely on my intuition to sound out the limits of flirting as light-hearted communication on the one hand, and unintended ambiguous promises on the other. Indeed, erotic and sexual relations in the field tend to be interpreted as posing a threat to the authority of the researcher and his/her management of “self-control, being ‘on top of things’ ... keeping the influent others under control as well. Domination is the best defense, and retreat its familiar back-up plan” (ibid.: 17). Following feminist explorations of fieldwork, flirting can hence also be seen as admitting to partial as opposed to complete knowledge.

The risk of suffering the loss of authority was all the more given as culturally specific nuances between proper and improper behaviour, or between a funny joke and disrespect, were difficult to grasp. For example, how was I to respond adequately to men offering me a tour around a market, and then cheekily announcing to a circle of hooting bystanders that I was their *mchumba* (sweetheart)? Did I send misleading messages when I all too willingly agreed to exchange phone numbers, and to continue a conversation over after-work beers? Was it appropriate for a (white) woman to sit beside a bus stop and spend hours

slurping *kahawa*²² with working men? In the entire time I spent in Dar es Salaam, I could not find definite answers to these questions. The signals I was sending or receiving never seemed to mean the same thing for two different people, and opinions among my male and female Tanzanian friends diverged widely on these matters.

Flirting 'worked' for me both in the 'formal' and 'informal city': at times, eye-contact replaced long negotiations in the hallways of state bureaucracy, city administration and organization offices, where uniformed clerks with an amused smirk flouted regular procedures on my behalf. Mutual smiles across a desk would sometimes extend formal interviews into informal coffee breaks in which more insightful information was provided than in the interview itself. In the streets or markets, whistles and pickup lines that under different circumstances would be plainly annoying provided a welcomed invitation to introduce myself and my research purpose. And in both the 'formal' and 'informal city', a wink could spark a chat evolving into an hour-long discussion or interview. With some of the traders with whom I established more long-term contacts, particularly those of my age or younger, flirting became sort of a ritual at every meeting in which we congratulated each other on looking *smart* before turning to discussion of our work lives. There was no apparent conflict between flirting and maintaining relations at a respectful distance, while some contacts gradually developed into friendships.

Flirting served as an icebreaker, playfully building trust and establishing a basis of common understanding across the gulf of highly different backgrounds and unequal shares of power, knowledge and wealth. It needs to be stressed that flirting seldom presented a serious advance for romance or sex, and it is also noteworthy that it was not confined to my encounters with men. Being a white woman and hence an outsider allowed the transgression of social norms of appropriate behaviour which would restrict such interaction among Tanzanian men and women. As Ahmed (2007: 154) argues, whiteness entails phenomenological privilege, for "whiteness is an orientation that puts certain things within reach ... not just physical objects, but also styles, capacities, aspirations, techniques, habits". In that sense, flirting as and with a white woman presented a way for both sides to negotiate rules and access to different worlds. Perhaps because it presupposes eye-contact, flirting offered the opportunity to converse at eye-level, despite all discrepancies. It had the power to add both sincerity and humour to a conversation simultaneously. When getting to know street traders and domestic workers, expressing mutual affection by word or by body language was one way also to express mutual respect.

Determining when flirting turned from an 'innocent', everyday type of behaviour into a conscious research technique was a matter of intangible hunches rather than clear lines. This raised important questions about acting in ethically responsible ways, both in terms of my personal role and safety and my

²² Strong shots of coffee sold by street vendors, rarely consumed by Tanzanian women.

professional relations with my Tanzanian interlocutors. Given that research is a gendered experience and enmeshed in gendered power relations, there arises not only a real danger of sexual(ized) harassment and violence but also the question of what counts as appropriate behaviour for a “good anthropologist” (Kloß 2016: 7; see also Moreno 1995).

Straightforwardly explaining my motivations and intentions early on in a conversation helped to avoid many misunderstandings, and humour often allowed face-saving in awkward situations. Yet there were also occasions—probably more than I realized—in which verbal clarifications and jesting got lost in translation or misinterpretation. There were some rare unpleasant instances in which male contacts pursued sexual interests aggressively, with countless inquisitive and insulting text messages as well as nightly phone calls, and instances in which I mistook romantic hopes for an interest in friendly exchange. In light of these negative experiences, real risks, particularly for female researchers, and the inescapability of gendered power relations, flirting may rarely be innocent—at home and abroad. However, I suggest taking into account the possibility of flirting as one element of the gendered and sexualized aspects of the research process, rather than erasing it to maintain the norm of the neutral researcher in control.

Hanging out

The twist and turns brought about by floating and flirting as research tactics were complemented by a more long-term technique, which is commonly handled under the rubric of ‘participant observation’ and referred to as the hallmark of ethnographic research. Participant observation describes a research strategy entailing a variety of research methods (Davies 1999: 67f.), yet, rather than understanding participant observation as dedicated to open-endedness—following Ingold—it is often portrayed as a straightforward method of data collection. For instance, Julian Murchison draws a sharp contrast between the challenging practice of participant observation and “‘just hanging out’—having fun and letting things happen” that is associated with the stereotypical image of the “ethnographer who spends every day in a bar or coffee shop chatting with the clientele” (2010: 84). Students of ethnographic methods are advised to exercise care in balancing the elements of participation and observation in accordance with the research plan (ibid.: 87f.). In contrast, Ingold (2013) maintains that as a practice of education, participating and observing must go hand in hand.

Moreover, textbook instructions that consider successful participant observation merely another tool for data collection envisage a level of intentionality and control which cannot be taken for granted when working in an unknown research environment. Recalling my own experience, I propose that the negatively stereotyped practice of hanging out is a particularly worthwhile technique in participant observation and far more than having fun. ‘Letting things happen’ challenged me to admit to the limits of being in control, and to master patience as a research skill. Contrary to the research projects anticipated in many

ethnography textbooks, I did not have a specific set of questions or an isolated community of people whom I wanted to study. Instead, the 'problem' of informality had emerged largely in dynamic interaction with my fieldwork encounters and in defiance of more traditional research methods.

Similarly to Jauhola's (2015) experience of productive "boredom", I depended on the volatile schedules of others. I was often condemned to waiting about, and the steps of my research had to be taken spontaneously. Losing an entire day stuck in traffic only to be stood up for an interview appointment was no rarity. Hanging out was unavoidable, so I tried to put my time to good use: for example, hanging out alone at Mnazi Mmoja bus stop gave me the chance to read local newspapers, discuss the headlines with commuters who stopped for *kahawa*, and observe the interactions among street vendors, bus conductors and traffic policemen. With one friend, I spent considerable time hanging out in front of the Mkwajuni mosque and listening to the conversations of locals over afternoon tea while I watched the Dar Rapid Transit construction project take shape on Kawawa Road. Just as the 'informal city' had prompted me to adopt floating as a tactic, I came to appreciate hanging out as a suitable method to study life which escaped planning and routine, as a much appreciated pause and necessary interruption to those days and nights bustling with activity, and as a prelude to surprise.

I'm grateful for the many hours I got to hang out with a group of traders in Palm Beach garden who volunteered to become my personal Swahili teachers. Their invitation to me to join their lunch and tea breaks, and, moreover, their dedication to committing their spare time to going through the exercises in my Swahili course book chapter by chapter, transformed my role from that of researcher to one of guest and student. By exchanging questions back and forth in English and Swahili, the dialogue became mutual by default. Soon I learnt that, rather than pushing specific topics, it was worthwhile leaving the choice of subject to my Tanzanian hosts. As a result of their initiative rather than mine, I had come to follow what Emily Höckert calls "hospitable methodologies" (2015: 137). The approach closely resembled that taken by Robert Desjarlais (1997: 40f.; see also Stoller 2002: 36):

I spent much of my time hanging about, listening to conversations, and then finding a place to write down the gist of these exchanges ... My notes on these conversations, which typically contained quasi-verbatim accounts, lacked the precision that tape or audio recordings could have provided. However ... the advantages of unassuming participation in daily activities, during which one can develop lasting, informal ties with people, often outweigh the benefits of information obtained through surveys and more intrusive methods.

Despite being valuable and 'fun', hanging out was, however, also a gamble, as I mostly did not know what the rest of the day would bring, whether it would prove useful for my research, and if so, in what way. Long hours of waiting, either for interviews in sometimes overly cold air-conditioned lobbies, or for some action to

happen at hot and dusty roadsides, often with no access to refreshments or a toilet, exposed my own body to the power relations integral to waiting (Schwartz 1974).

These experiences also forced me to position my research efforts critically in relation to the lives I was observing. The uncertainty inherent to my own waiting was linked to the uncertainty of life in the 'informal city'. However, while my biggest concern was to come across valuable research material, I could only begin to understand the hardships of some of my interlocutors, who could hardly predict what might happen the following week, whether they would have work, food or a roof over their heads.

The moment that would change my understanding of the 'informal economy' profoundly came when, after hanging out by a roadside and awaiting interviews with a group of *machingas* for three consecutive afternoons during which I got sunburned, I lost my patience and told the traders angrily that I could not waste my precious time just sitting around with nothing to show for it at the end of the day. The surprised, amused and offended looks on their faces sharply exposed my blindness: not only had I, a German citizen, preached to them about work ethics and productivity—with colonial history in mind, this was shameful enough—but, uncomfortable and worried about not collecting enough 'data' and of having nothing "to say and declare" (Page 2017: 19), I had also lectured them on the insecurities and vulnerabilities of my own work when their existence depended on waiting and hoping every day for customers to venture down this road!

Although I had previously read and pondered extensively on the precarity of 'informal' work, particularly that in the low-income bracket, this was the first time I fully comprehended its meaning as a strategy for survival. This specific instance, while distressing, illuminated not only existential aspects of the traders' work, it also brought the parameters of my own work into relief. The experience strongly resonated with Jauhola's, who writes:

Experience of conducting street ethnography ... has been a major process, personally, of undoing and unlearning the practices of a neoliberal university geared towards mindless multitasking, and the inherent goal of output orientation of being a scholar. It has resulted in dealing with the feelings of being frustrated and bored in the face of not being able to evaluate the usefulness of certain daily research practices, such as walking in the rain, taking shelter, and waiting for hours. (Jauhola 2015: 89)

Being confined to hanging out had turned the power relations which I had anticipated between researcher and researched upside down, at least for a short period of time. There is, of course, a fundamental difference between feeling powerless and being powerless,²³ and the uncertainty of my work never equated

²³ I am grateful to Marsha Giselle Henry for pointing this out to me.

with the struggles faced by my interlocutors. How to make sense of the temporary loss of authority is the focus of the next section.

2.5 Writing as formalization

Given the uncertainties and imbalances of the research process, in which—often informal—encounters provided the bright spots of listening, learning and discussing, precisely because they temporarily destabilized structures of authority, what does it mean to bring authority back into play by formalizing the insights derived from them into a written text? What is at stake in this discussion is nothing less than the ability and the authority of the researcher (and her readers) to speak about and know others. This also has important implications for conceptions of ‘good’ research, which often enough continue to centre on the research outcomes and the abilities and skills of the researcher. This section presents an effort to sort out the confusion with the use of academically informed thinking and writing tools, but the hindsight displayed here must not obscure the fact that my fieldwork choices were often erratic and produced a gallimaufry of data and knowledge rather than conclusive results. Organizing them into a thesis is itself part of the formalization process of “improvising theory” (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007).

The difficulty, if not impossibility, for researchers to hear the voices of others in the face of power inequalities is prominently discussed by postcolonial scholar Gayatri Spivak in her well-known paper “Can the Subaltern Speak?”. She warns that the self-interests ingrained in (Western) institutions of knowledge production stand in the way of engaging in eye-level exchange with subjects living in what is commonly referred to as the Third World. Instead, intentionally or not, knowledge production is complicit in the construction and perpetuation of power disparities. This already begins with the choosing and categorizing of ‘native informants’, a process, often based on essentializing assumptions, that tends to overlook the heterogeneity of social groups and—careful attempts to differentiate notwithstanding—thereby privileges those groups and subjects who are already more advantaged than others (1988: 284f.).

Spivak’s critique is undeniably relevant to my work. I did travel to Tanzania and met with people with the intention to gather ‘data’ and ‘to hear Tanzanians’ side of the story’ in order to contribute to ‘better’ knowledge and thus earn academic credentials; these experiences and stories are now flowing into a study which is written in English and must fulfil the criteria of social scientific inquiry. With limited time and language skills, I had brought with me a set of theoretical assumptions which worked as a frame for interviews and participant observation, and as “fieldworker-theorist”, I now re-present what I learned in terms of more generally applicable knowledge (Clifford 1983: 124).

Being an outsider to Tanzanian society and culture, with limited access to officials and experts, as well as only rudimentary knowledge of everyday Tanzanian life, meant that I had to orient myself via pre-established conceptions and institutions,

at least initially. While Spivak shows how efforts to let the subaltern speak often end up silencing them, Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out how, from the perspective of indigenous communities, the results of 'proper' research into their culture and lives are hardly discernible from simple traveller's tales. The benefits of research largely remain aloof from the communities themselves, irrelevant at best and harmful at worst (2012: 3; 226).

As described in the previous sections, in the spaces of the 'informal city' I was often unaware of the local customs and dependent on friendly advice and help. My academic degree, affiliation or research interest had little meaning to most people. The scepticism or hostility towards researchers that Smith describes were absent in my experiences with Tanzanians, but I nonetheless found it extremely difficult to explain how my research could be relevant to the people who spent time with me. As the use of my conceptual discussion of the 'informal economy' is likely to have limited impact on the Tanzanians who assisted me, the question remains: for which audience do I write these lines?

In correspondence with Spivak, who moves from her original question of 'who speaks?' to 'who knows?', Sara Ahmed addresses the perennial troubles of 'strangeness' and authority in ethnographic research by asking the question, 'who works *for* whom?' (Spivak cited in Ahmed 2000: 61, emphasis in original). She warns that the ultimate purpose of the ethnographer, the 'professional stranger' in Agar's words, is to make the experience of the strange and the stranger accessible by re-establishing its relation to the master discourse and translating it into the language of those who claim to have knowledge. Simply disavowing one's authority or sharing authorship with one's interlocutors makes the appropriation no less; on the contrary, it confirms and extends it (ibid.: 64).

Albeit from a different perspective, Ahmed's thoughts correspond with Ingold's in their critique of the relation of 'strange(r)ness'/'the other' and the production of knowledge in postmodern ethnography. Doubting that collaboration between the researcher and others in 'fieldwork' can be fully inclusive and one among equals, Ahmed ties the possibility of speaking or listening to the question of labour in the production of knowledge. Much like Ingold, Ahmed contends that, in order to count as successful ethnography, the writing must "*return home*" (2000: 59, emphasis in original), understood not necessarily in the geographical sense from 'there' to 'here', but from the foreignness back into the language the ethnographer uses to make the strange knowable to other ethnographers.

It is the exercise of translation which reconfirms the authority of the ethnographer, the "professional stranger", who remains the subject of knowledge among those strangers which remain to be known as objects (ibid.: 60). Ahmed is further critical of the potential of intimacy and friendship between the researcher and the researched, as long as these primarily function as expert techniques to make the strange more accessible and to overcome power relations on the surface (ibid: 66f.; 70). But while authority and power are intrinsic to 'knowing', Ahmed hints at the power of being aware of failure: "[T]he impossibility of the 'we' that

would place the ethnographer alongside the natives *is the knowledge of that which the ethnographer fails to know*. At the same time, the knowledge of failure *belongs to the ethnographer*" (ibid.: 72, emphasis in original). Rather than sticking to the idea of the ethnographer as "professional stranger" and to "stranger fetishism", Ahmed argues, acknowledging the limits of knowledge allows for the possibility of "knowing differently" and knowledge which does not belong to the community of ethnographers or academics more broadly (ibid.: 73).

While both Ahmed and Ingold make it clear that the double impasse of authority and representation cannot be overcome, they constructively point out paths towards accepting and working with these limitations. They invite us to open up these possibilities by unpacking the authority and knowledge which is assumed to be held by the ethnographer. However, whereas Ingold emphasizes the contingent nature of participant observation, Ahmed underlines that authority cannot simply be discarded at will or as a matter of technique. Bringing together their thoughts and drawing on my own research experience in Dar es Salaam, I suggest that the potential of ethnography, understood as a way of working with others, does not lie in gathering better or more 'authentic' knowledge. Rather, the uncertainties involved in working with others offer a valuable disruption of the knowledge and authority of the researcher. This disruption usually remains confined to 'the field'; as Ahmed warns, ultimately, even failure belongs to the ethnographer, and, like Ingold asserts, the uncertainty of ethnography for the most part is eagerly banned from the sanctuary of academia itself.

Yet, although dilemmas of power, authority and representation persist, experiencing perplexity and the need for 'muddling through' presents a fruitful challenge to knowledge that is taken for granted: firstly, it forces the researcher to reconsider pre-established frameworks of thought and necessitates learning to learn anew. This view diverges both from accounts which depict fieldwork as a rite of passage for established ethnographers or which highlight the improvisational skills of an individual researcher; rather, I wish to draw attention to exactly those moments when the researcher finds herself at a loss, which cannot easily be fitted into categories of 'good' or 'bad' research techniques but remain ambiguous and contingent.

Secondly, such instances of uncertainty and open-endedness force the researcher to admit to the personal, partial and emotional limitations of his or her knowledge. Reading through my notes months later reveals how ethically and emotionally confusing moments served to confront my own partial, often stereotypical thinking and encouraged what Spivak calls "un-learning our privilege as our loss" (1990: 9): literally at a loss in an unknown environment, I depended on the willingness of others to welcome me, and in return, their openness called on me to be open towards unfamiliar and counterintuitive points of view. Considering our different backgrounds, the hospitality of Tanzanians who answered and asked questions, discussed politics and culture, practiced Swahili or simply hung out with me was all the more astonishing. Although limited by language and cultural barriers, these encounters allowed the discovery of

connections across personal, material and political divides, a process which Chandra Mohanty refers to as the exploration of “common differences” (2003: 503). Although in light of those divides, the encounters rarely qualify as fully reciprocal, they contained valuable elements of un-learning and learning from each other.

Thirdly, ‘muddling through’ requires that reflection on (academic) authority and ethical responsibility becomes a constant and dynamic element of the research process, rather than a set of fixed guidelines or a matter of ex-post reflection. Recalling the dilemmas with which she grappled during her own fieldwork, Cerwonka emphasizes that they are only inadequately addressed by ethics committees or codes. She admonishes that guidelines for ethical behaviour are still often presented by ethics boards and committees as a set of static rules to be acquired before going to ‘the field’ rather than a “daily engagement with ethics as a process” throughout the entire research procedure (Cerwonka 2007: 4). Instead of objectifying ethics, Michael Lambek (2015: n.p.) envisages “an anthropological approach [that] requires an appreciation of the kinds of worlds in which people do live ... but here understood not as static structures (as they too often have been) but as dynamic orientations for acting in the world”. Uncertainty may encourage the researcher to submit to such an approach.

The uncertainty inherent to the practices of floating, flirting and hanging out, while quite stressful at the time, ultimately turned out to be most enriching. It lifted the research process away from narrow expectations and unquestionably affected its outcomes. The problems of knowing and representing others indubitably persist. However, based on my research experiences in Dar es Salaam, I suggest that the strength of ethnographic approaches lies less in its promise of finding ‘better’ data than in the sincerity evoked by face-to-face encounters.

Despite the power imbalances, stereotypes and role play tainting both formal interviews and more informal conversations, the views I heard always came with a voice, a face and a name. Having looked into people’s eyes and remembering their names encourages me to represent what I learned from them as diligently as possible, though perhaps not ‘how things are’. Albeit not all encounters were friendly or respectful, it is far more difficult to criticize a human voice than an abstract political agenda or a document. While I attempt to share the text for comments wherever possible, only a few of my interlocutors will have an opportunity to read and hold me accountable for what I write about their work and lives, and many of the voices are referenced only by institutional affiliation and pseudonyms to safeguard the identity of those who wished to stay anonymous. However, even if they cannot access or respond to my work, I see my task as speaking *to* the people who welcomed me in Tanzania, rather than *about* or *for* them. This is how I understand Ahmed’s opening up of the possibility for others to “know differently to the ‘who’ that knows” (Ahmed 2000: 74): the Tanzanians I write about know (quite) differently, as do others who set out to study the ‘informal economy’.

3. PROCESSES OF INFORMALIZATION

3.1 Structure, agency, processes

The aim of this chapter is to provide the theoretical and conceptual foundations for understanding the 'informal economy' as a socially constructed, essentially contested, political and social concept and economic imaginary, one that is elemental to the discursive processes of informalization and formalization and, relatedly, to struggles over social order. The chapter addresses the need to focus on processes instead of either structure or agency when studying 'informal' work. I argue that in addition to economic dynamics, discursive shifts play an equally important part in rendering work 'informal'. The focus on discursive processes requires, firstly, the unpacking of the term, concept and imaginary of the 'informal economy'. Secondly, it demands locating the 'informal economy' in between the dualisms of legal and illegal, 'formal' and 'informal', legitimate and illegitimate. This, I suggest, is best achieved by the framework of intersectionality which highlights the interplay between legal categories and multiple, intersecting social categories. Such an understanding allows the informality of work to be viewed as dynamically constituted and as relative and relational, rather than static, absolute and detached from its contexts. Thirdly, processes of formalization and informalization need to be seen within their global context but nonetheless require attention to their specific local formations.

The main competing theoretical perspectives on the 'informal economy' were introduced in Chapter 1 and the key lines of conflict between them elaborated. One more issue of contestation, which has not yet been mentioned but is nonetheless crucial, concerns the weighing of structure and agency. As the name implies, proponents of the structuralist perspective frame the 'informal economy' primarily in terms of structural constraints which are put in place by economic organization that follows the logics of capital accumulation and market competition. Although workers do have agency, it is often limited to survivalist struggles and kept in check by powerful capitalist interests (e.g. Castells and Portes 1989; Roberts 1989; Breman 1996). Similarly, in the dualist view, agency exists but actors' choices are tied to the progress and development of political and economic institutions (e.g. ILO 1972). The neoliberal and the postmodern perspectives, in contrast, underline the agency of those generating an income in the 'informal economy'; working outside of the purview of state regulation is presented as a matter of (rational) choice that offers multiple benefits (e.g. Cross 2000; de Soto 2001; Perry et al. 2007). This contrasting juxtaposition is perhaps overly crude, especially as well-informed analyses of the 'informal economy', regardless of persuasion, pay attention to both, and balance agency with structural constraints (e.g. K. Hart 1973; Williams 2004; Centeno and Portes 2006;

Lindell 2008). Literature emphasizing either structure or agency therefore presents opposite poles rather than the whole debate.

However, whether to prioritize structure or agency is not only a dividing issue in the discussion of the ‘informal economy’ as an empirical phenomenon in the life-world; its ontological, theoretical and methodological implications also cause a rift in scholarly analyses on the subject. On the one hand, some academic research—often in attempts to counter a negative bias towards the ‘informal economy’ and to highlight its beneficial sides—stresses the agency of people and their capacities to make use of, rather than being constrained by, rigid divisions and hierarchies. The ‘informal economy’ and ‘informal’ urban spaces are hereby cast as sites of resistance and activism, of contestation of an oppressive political order (e.g. MacGaffey 1991; Bayat 1997; Tripp 1997; Pieterse 2008; White and Williams 2014). On the other hand, this appreciation of the agency of individuals and groups risks overstating the difference of the ‘informal economy’, particularly in the context of the postcolonial city. It further tends to miss the links as well as the unequal power relations between the ‘formal’ and ‘informal economy’. As Matteo Rizzo puts it, the inattention to political and economic structures in this literature is problematic as “the steady flow of romantic and unsubstantiated celebrations of the choices and repertoires of ‘people at the grassroots’ crowds out an understanding of the concrete realities they face, and thus any possibility of assessing the meaning and impact of their actions” (Rizzo 2017: 7).²⁴

From these opposing views, it can be seen that the question of structure and agency, both with regard to its theorization by the respective perspectives and as a standpoint of research, is central to assessing the ‘informal economy’. It partly overlaps and cuts diagonally across the question of whether to view the ‘informal economy’ as a ‘problem’ or a ‘solution’. Research is hence implicated in the political and ideological debates on the ‘informal economy’; the used concepts, theories and methods are primary ingredients of a politicized discourse, influencing, shaping and justifying interventions.

Against this background and for reasons elaborated in the following sections, rather than a priori giving precedence to either structure or agency, I propose to direct attention to *processes of formalization* and *informalization*. Previous studies have already pointed out the dynamic as opposed to static character of the ‘informal economy’ and considered its observable features an outcome of processes of economic and social reorganization. For instance, in light of the unequal distribution of the advantages and disadvantages of informality, Banks, Lombard and Mitlin (2019: 4) urge for “a broader understanding of ... how similar economic, spatial, and political processes can lead to ... different outcomes for different groups”. Recognition of social struggles, they argue, invites breaking with the formal-informal dichotomy and understanding the ‘informal economy’ as embedded in dynamic and political change (ibid.: 5).

²⁴ I revisit this discussion and its implications in more detail in chapter 8.

Others (Castell and Portes 1989; Barnes 2010) similarly conceptualize informalization as a process in which production and employment relations undergo transformations. In line with a structuralist perspective, informalization is thereby seen as a by-product of capitalist accumulation processes (ibid.; Chang 2009). Although a few studies have made note of the changing conceptions and measurements of the ‘informal economy’ and their political implications (Bhattacharya 2007; Rizzo and Wuyts 2014), the main focus of previous analyses of processes of informalization lies on changes in the size, composition and power relations of and within the ‘informal economy’ as an actually existing sphere of economic organization in the life-world.

By contrast, I propose to understand informalization and formalization not merely as referring to economic and social dynamics in which income-generating activities are shoved out of—or, respectively, into—the purview of state regulation. Changes in material and macroeconomic conditions, as well as political choices regarding economic regulation, indubitably play a decisive role in the emergence, growth and transformations of ‘informal’ economies, as the above cited research on the changing dynamics of labour markets has made evident (see also Tempkin and Veizaga 2010; ILO 2013e, 2018). However, these factors alone cannot always explain why some ways of working and living are framed as ‘informal’ and others not. If we accept that ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ work are poles of a continuum rather than opposites, and that the ‘formal’ and ‘informal economy’ are interlinked (see section 1.2), and if, as I illustrate in the following chapters, informality of work is a relative and relational rather than an absolute, standalone category, the questions of how and why work is represented as ‘informal’ and to what effects move into the focus of analysis.

Informalization and formalization are products of immense discursive efforts and political interventions that serve to establish certain ways of working as integral and others as peripheral to the functioning of the economy, including some and excluding others from regulation and protection; they describe processes in which the legality and legitimacy of specific types of income-generation become contested and struggled over. To put it differently, I suggest that the ‘informal economy’ is *not only* a result of material factors and economic restructuring, *but also* constituted by its discursive conceptualizations. It is not simply a realm ungoverned by state institutions but, simultaneously as a concept and an empirical phenomenon, an element of certain governance rationales and techniques. Interventions into the ‘informal economy’, both in scholarly analyses and in real life, are footed on competing standpoints of whether to prioritize macroeconomic and social structures or individual agency, as well as on the identified loci of problems and solutions.

Shifting the gaze towards the discursive processes through which work becomes ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ in the first place brings to the surface how the concept and economic imaginary of the ‘informal economy’ and of ‘informal’ work are themselves embedded in the contestations of social order and power relations. The details of these processes are theorized in the following sections. The next

section discusses the notion of concepts as ambiguous and open to contestation, as put forward by Reinhart Koselleck and John Gray. I further draw on elements of the Cultural Political Economy (CPE) school of thought to conceptualize the 'informal economy' as an imaginary and move the focus towards the processes involved in the definition of its boundaries. Section 3 deals with the relations between 'informal' work and questions of legality and legitimacy, and draws on the framework of intersectionality to conceptualize informalization as taking place at the nodes of legal and multiple intersecting social categories and norms. The fourth and final section locates processes of informalization at the conjunctures of global discourses and conceptions and their contestation and concrete manifestations in local contexts.

3.2 In/formalization as conceptual contestation

From the discussion of the literature in Chapter 1, it transpired that the meaning of 'informal sector' or 'informal economy' is all but clear. Their ambiguity turns them from descriptive words or terms into social and political concepts, as prominently put by historian Reinhart Koselleck: "Each concept is associated with a word, but not every word is a social and political concept. Social and political concepts possess a substantial claim of generality and always have many meanings" (Koselleck 1982: 418). Despite their ambiguity, social and political concepts contain substance. Although they refuse to be defined 'correctly', their (many) meanings can nonetheless be captured and traced (Koponen 2017: 3). Concepts are central to our making sense of and structuring the world by linking words with facts, thereby creating relations and order; they are, however, also more than a link between words and facts. Koselleck argues that concepts have "autonomous space", in the sense that they are "tied to words, but they are not one with the words; concepts refer to facts, but they are not identical to the facts, because the concepts provide the surroundings with meaning – not the reverse" (Åkerstrøm Andersen 2003: 36).

Concepts fulfil a wide array of functions in everyday language, but their main significance emerges when they are used to achieve social and political goals. With their usage ranging from keyword to scientifically defined term, concepts may serve as "*Aktionsbegriff*" (action term), "*Zielbegriff*" (goal term) and "*Kampfbegriff*" (combat term) when they become enmeshed in social and political struggles (Koselleck 1995: 111, 113). Contestation over meaning and order through the use of concepts works across time; as Koselleck maintains, the history of concepts is always also integral to social history (ibid.; Koselleck 1982). The use of concepts for political goals, however, is not confined to the past and the present. By defining, asserting and enforcing certain political or social positions, semantic struggles over the use and meaning of concepts also reach into the future (Koselleck 1995: 114; 1982: 413f.). The deployment of, and a preference for, certain concepts at the expense of others, carry forward ideas and visions of how current social and political order should be maintained or transformed. Concepts, in other words, shape the world in which we live.

Political philosopher John Gray similarly argues that concepts are essentially contested. Like Koselleck, he asserts that concepts do have meaning, but their contestability implies that their meaning cannot be unequivocally distilled as they have more than one 'correct' meaning. Moreover, Gray maintains that an essentially contested concept does not stand by itself. It always appears in the context of a number of likewise contested concepts and meanings to which its interpretation is tied:

An essentially contested concept is a concept such that any use of it in a social or political context presupposes a specific understanding of a whole range of other contextually related concepts whose proper uses are no less disputed and which lock together so as to compose a single, identifiable conceptual framework'. (Gray 1977: 332)

Getting a sense of the meaning of the concept hence requires more than merely taking into consideration the temporary and spatial context in which a concept is uttered, relations between speaker and audience and the political and social situation, as well as the previous and contemporary usage of the concept in a given epoch and language community (Koselleck 1995: 110). Following both Koselleck and Gray, grasping the underlying meaning(s) of a concept further implies connecting its usage to a set of other concepts which are likewise interlinked with the horizon of experience and the wider thought and value systems of speaker and audience. Concepts and their meaning are inherently tied to social and political orders as well as their preservation and transformation.

Understanding the usage of apparently neutral, descriptive terms as essentially contested, political concepts sets the stage for what international relations scholars Christopher Hobson and Milja Kurki (2012; see also Kurki 2010) call "conceptual politics". They define the term as

the ways in which contested concepts ... are interpreted, used and fought over by actors, and how certain meanings and definitions come to influence real world phenomena. From this perspective, the way concepts are understood is not somehow prior to, or removed from, politics, but is an unavoidable component. (Hobson and Kurki 2012: 3, emphasis omitted)

Importantly, their discussion of 'conceptual politics' implies that conceptual contestation is not confined to the life-world of social and political actors, whose utterances can be observed and analyzed from the distanced view of the conceptual historian or linguist. It likewise applies to the establishment of epistemic communities and social scientific analysis. The choice and usage of certain concepts, their uncritical acceptance or alternatively their critical deconstruction, following Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, is founded on ontological commitment. Conscious and deliberate or not,

Ontological commitments, whether philosophical or scientific, logically precede substantive claims, and serve as the often unacknowledged basis on which empirical claims are founded. In this sense, ontological

commitments are 'foundational' – not in the sense that they provide unshakable grounds that universally guarantee the validity of claims that are founded on them, but 'foundational' in the sense that they provide the conditions of intelligibility for those claims. (Jackson 2010: 41; see also Bruff 2011: 82)

The discrepancies between the 'informal economy' conceptions of the competing perspectives (modernist, structuralist, neoliberal, postmodern, see section 1.2) can be traced to their divergence in ontological commitment. Their fundamental differences in making sense of the meaning of the 'informal economy' as well as disagreements over its nature as 'problem' and 'solution' create rifts in the academic debate that overlap with the struggles and contestation in the life-worlds being analyzed.²⁵ 'Conceptual politics' were, moreover, also part of my own research experiences, embedded in the 'formal' and 'informal city' that I described in the previous chapter. To add to the methodological reflection, it thus needs to be acknowledged that the conceptual analysis and contestation in which my research takes part, just like any kind of social theory, "in virtue of the essential contestability of its constitutive concepts ... is a form of moral and political practice" (Gray, 1983:77; Kurki 2010: 371).

However, it is important to emphasize that conceptual contestation and the politics surrounding it are by no means solely discursively constructed. As Koselleck makes clear, contestation centres on the multiple meanings of a concept which are not devoid of substance. Establishing the relation between concepts, or language and signs more broadly, on the one hand, and social and material structures on the other, is a key challenge and major task of the social sciences. One attempt to bridge this gap is undertaken by proponents of the CPE school of thought, most prominently Ngai-Ling Sum and Bob Jessop. They propose to bring together Marxist political economy with Gramsci's and Foucault's analyses of hegemony and power in a transdisciplinary approach in order to establish relations between the semiotic and structural (material) dimensions of social organization. Presenting a rather complex macro-theoretical framework, their aim is to make the 'linguistic' and 'cultural turn' fruitful for a study of political economy. In this analysis, the usage of language and signs is interdependent and co-evolving with the material structures of social order (Sum and Jessop 2014:184ff.).

Instead of concepts, Sum and Jessop identify a central role for "imaginaries" that "have a central role in the struggle not only for 'hearts and minds' but also for the reproduction or transformation of the prevailing structures of exploitation and domination" (ibid.: 165). Imaginaries differ from institutions in that the latter describe mechanisms which regularize expectations and conduct amid complexity while the former present "semiotic systems that shape lived experience" (ibid.: 26). Imaginaries are used by various actors to establish a hegemonic or dominant 'frame', a process which, however, remains contested and incomplete as long as it

²⁵ Examples of this are given in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

is resisted. On the other hand, once they become accepted as self-evident, imaginaries also become institutionalized and fortified in, among other sites, the economic relations of production (ibid.: 168). Acknowledging the multiple sites and fields in which imaginaries become manifest also allows a recognition of the role of intersectionality (ibid.: 174ff.), to the importance of which I return below.

Although Sum and Jessop do not discuss the relation between imaginaries and concepts, inferring from the examples used in the respective theoretical texts, imaginaries appear to be broader in scope than concepts in so far as hegemonic economic imaginaries, as captured by Sum and Jessop, resemble paradigmatic agendas involving multiple sites of simultaneous contestation and transformation.²⁶ The difference is, however, not sharp; the discussion above indicates that the two are interlinked and at least partly overlap: both concepts and imaginaries serve to give meaning to facts and structures, challenging 'old' meanings and replacing them with 'new' ones. The meaning of neither concepts nor imaginaries is pre-given, but dynamically co-produced by material and semiotic practices which they in turn shape; both operate within wider networks of other discursive constructs; both always have multiple, contestable meanings; and both are elemental in establishing hegemonic frames of meaning which are, however, always prone to contestation.

As I argue throughout the thesis, the 'informal economy', while having a material foundation and structure as well as a substantive meaning 'out there', is simultaneously a concept and an imaginary with normative and political content. As such, it has performative and transformative power. Specific interpretations and ways of imagining the 'informal economy' come to dominate the discourse but are also always resisted and challenged. Drawing on these diverse theoretical thoughts from multiple disciplines, I aim to break open the 'informal economy' as an essentially contested, political concept and imaginary used both in knowledge production and by political actors in the life-world.

Taking seriously its interdependence with other contextually interrelated concepts and imaginaries as proposed by Gray and Koselleck and Sum and Jessop, in the subsequent chapters I look at how the 'informal economy' is tied to intersecting legal and social categories as well as to conceptual debates surrounding the notions of labour, work and class, the distribution of rights and responsibilities, and relations between state and society.

3.3 Intersections of legal and social categories

As already discussed, the main criterion for defining and characterizing the 'informal economy', at least in conventional literature, is its uneasy relations with the law. The definition of the 'informal economy' by the ILO states that economic

²⁶ The discussed concepts are, among others, 'class', 'citizenship' (Koselleck 1995) and 'democracy' (Hobson and Kurki 2012) whereas some of the imaginaries referred to are the 'knowledge-based economy' and the 'New Green Deal' (Sum and Jessop 2014).

activities are 'informal' when they operate outside the reach of 'formal' frameworks due to their not being covered either by the letter of the law or its practice. This may be caused by the inappropriateness of the law or lack of enforcement mechanisms, by non-compliance of various actors in the 'informal economy' or a combination thereof (see ILO 2002a: par. 3). Outside the law does not, however, mean unregulated or illegal: 'informal' economic activities across different sectors or unauthorised or unregistered settlements are usually regulated through multiple rules and norms, social networks and power relations which exist parallel to and intertwined with 'formal' laws and regulations (ILO 2002b; see also Lourenço-Lindell 2002; Chiodelli and Moroni 2014). Excluding the production and trafficking of illegal goods, deliberate tax evasion or criminal activities, 'informal' income-generation refers to selling goods or services on the market which are by themselves considered legal, while the activity of producing or selling these goods or services is not regulated or protected by 'formal' institutions.

'Informal' activities are hence "at the fringes of the law" (ILO 2002b: 3). The 'informal economy' presents an extra-legal grey zone, marked by legal and political uncertainties both for the public authorities and for individuals and groups holding 'informal' jobs. In the absence of definite legal boundaries, specific representations of the 'informal economy' as legal or illegal, along with practices of law enforcement and law evasion, are embedded in questions of perceived legitimacy, and tend to be heavily contested. Quite often, economic activities which are considered illegitimate or illegal (or both) from an official, bureaucratic viewpoint enjoy considerable legitimacy and are considered 'normal' among the people engaging in them (Tranberg Hansen and Vaa 2004: 7f.).

Relations between the law and the 'informal economy' need to be scrutinized in more detail. As argued by Marxist, Gramscian, feminist and critical legal scholars, among others, the law is not a politically or socially neutral institution but embedded in politico-economic conflict, social struggles and power relations (e.g. Balbus 1977; Frug 1992; Litowitz 2000). Legislation and law enforcement are central to branding 'informal' activities as illegal or criminal acts and touch upon questions of legitimacy. Legal arguments concerning 'informal' economic activities and their interpretation are thereby involved in the politically and ideologically informed disputes between the different perspectives discussed earlier. The fundamental question of the 'informal economy', whether it represents a solution to inadequate regulation or a problem that must be corrected by better regulation, hinges on legislation and its enforcement.

In sum, the categorization of 'informal' activities in terms of legality, illegality and legitimacy is part of the conceptual and symbolic politics of informality (see also Potts 2008; Lindell 2010: 7). However, the ambiguity of the definition of 'informal' activities, their documented heterogeneity and diversity, and, not least, the interconnections between the 'formal' and 'informal economy' (see section 1.2 and Chapter 2), complicate binary categorizations of legal versus illegal, regulated versus non-regulated or legitimate versus illegitimate. What is needed is a more

contextualized and nuanced understanding of legal regulation and its interrelation with social structures and power relations. More precisely, the now widely accepted conception of ‘informal’ economic activities as located between the poles of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ calls for a better understanding of how legislation and law enforcement contribute to placing certain sectors, labour relations and workers along this continuum.

Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1994) argues that the law is embedded in social stratification and unequal power relations along the lines of multiple intersecting and oppressive social categories. Her intersectionality framework derives from the work of feminist scholars who, from the 1980s, have emphasized the overlap of political, economic and socially unequal power relations, originally with a focus on gender and race (e.g. Davis 1983; hooks 2014). Like other critical analyses of law, this framework is based on the assumption that the law is not neutral but, in establishing dominant norms and ways of thinking, a political and politicized mechanism which can be deployed to produce or to reduce social inequalities (Crenshaw 1989).

Crenshaw uses an often cited analogy to explain the notion of intersectionality: “Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in any intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them” (ibid.: 149). Rather than operating in isolation from each other, categories of oppression and discrimination, such as gender, race, class, sexuality or disability, affect relations between the law and legal subjects in multiple ways. Individuals and groups who are discriminated against and excluded by the law may belong to one or several social categories at the same time (see also e.g. Johnson 2005; Fischer and Tepe 2011:142ff.).

As Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele (2013) argue, intersecting social categories become effective on multiple levels of analysis. Similarly to Sandra Harding’s (1986) exploration of the social construction of genders, they propose studying intersectionality “as a system of interactions between inequality-creating social structures ..., symbolic representations and identity constructions that are context-specific, topic-orientated and inextricably linked to social praxis” (Winker and Degele 2013: 54). Following this approach, the effects of intersecting social categories can be empirically observed on the macro, meso and micro levels, as well as on the level of representation: more specifically, on the levels of organization, institutions and norms, processes of identity construction and cultural symbols (ibid.: 52). This enables law, economic and social organization, and identities to be linked in analyses of the making—or unmaking—of the ‘informal economy’.

The aim of intersectional analysis, according to Rebecca Johnson, is “to see whether or not the experiences of those located at the intersections can provide insights crucial to the construction of better theories” (Johnson 2005: 29). The framework of intersectionality both challenges the assumption of legal neutrality and highlights the mismatch between law and the complexities of daily lives:

[T]he lack of correspondence between legal accounts of the social world and the ‘real experiences’ of ‘real people’ ... is a general problem deriving from law’s tendency to ‘compartmentalise’ — that is, to require experience to fit within ‘prefabricated’ legal categories ... it is of particular concern in an intersectional context because the ‘problem’ of intersectionality appears to flow directly from the limits of the relevant categorical structure... [L]aw derives legitimacy from belief in its capacity to govern the messy complexities of everyday existence. This presupposes that law accurately captures and reflects those complexities (Conaghan 2009: 27f.; references omitted).

In this light, the ‘informal economy’ and questions over the legitimacy of ‘informal’ income-generating activities can be seen in the context of the tendency of the law to compartmentalize complex lived experiences and to fit them into clear-cut, generalizable categories. With regard to regulating work, scholarship has pointed towards the shortcomings of labour law which, even in ‘formal’ economies, excludes large segments of the workforce. The categories for employees or workers who qualify for legal protection are usually narrowly defined and exclusively available only to a limited number of workers (Trebilcock 2006; Davidov, Freedland and Kountouris 2015). This applies all the more to labour relations and workers in the Global South, since labour law is strongly footed on the Standard Employment Relation (SER)²⁷ and historically rooted in the experience of the industrialized North (Sankaran 2011). In a similar vein, the ILO notes that in some countries labour law “applies to *workers in general*” but in others excludes certain sectors or categories of workers (ILO 2013f: 29, emphasis in original).

As already discussed, however, seeing the ‘informal economy’ merely in terms of exclusion from the law falls short of capturing varying degrees of informality. This issue has so far not been addressed in the industrial relations and labour law literature with respect to the ‘informal economy’, perhaps due to the reluctance of these fields to engage with the ‘informal economy’ (see Trebilcock 2006; Sankaran 2011). By contrast, the importance of social categories for legal regulation has been noted with regard to precarious work which is on the rise in Western countries²⁸ (e.g. Fudge and Owens 2006; Vosko 2010). For instance, Leah Vosko defines precarious employment as

work for remuneration characterized by uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements. Precarious employment is shaped by the relationship between *employment status* (i.e. self- or paid employment), *form of employment* (e.g. temporary or permanent, part-time or full-time), and *dimensions of labour market*

²⁷ The SER is defined “by a full-time continuous employment relationship, where the worker has one employer, works on the employer’s premises under direct supervision, and has access to comprehensive benefits and entitlements” (Vosko 2010: 1).

²⁸ For a discussion of the relation between ‘informal’ and precarious work, see Siegmann and Schiphorst (2016).

insecurity, as well as *social context* (e.g. occupation, industry, and geography) and *social location* (or the interaction between social relations, such as gender, and legal and political categories, such as citizenship) (ibid.: 2; emphasis original).

This definition underscores the interplay of multiple structural, institutional and social categories, which, in turn, are intersectionally constituted. It highlights that coverage of legal and social protection depends on where, when, how and what work is being done and, importantly, by whom; put differently, it draws attention to both context and identity (see Hunter and de Simone 2009). Such an understanding also acknowledges that absent or insufficient regulation and protection are not absolute but relative and relational. Both precariousness and informality of work are relative in that, depending on multiple factors and intersecting categories, some work and workers are more precarious or ‘informal’ than others²⁹; they are relational in that how precariousness and informality affect workers depends on the context and on the wider social relations in which workers are embedded.

Acknowledging workers’ position in the ‘informal economy’ as intersectionally constituted offers an opportunity to go beyond the formal-informal and North-South binaries to pay attention to diversity and difference. This is of particular relevance in the study of workers’ experiences in Southern and postcolonial contexts. Established analytical frameworks and concepts in the fields of industrial relations and labour law only inadequately capture non-standard forms of work; meanwhile, understanding legal discrimination and exclusion in terms of single-issue frameworks risks privileging one category of disadvantage over others, thereby missing a more complete picture of why and how work is rendered ‘informal’. For instance, it has been pointed out that focusing on class alone ignores important questions of gender (e.g. Mezzadri 2016), race/ethnicity (Wilson 2011) and postcolonial power structures (Obeng-Odoom 2020). Theorizing thus needs to take into consideration multiple, intersecting forms of exclusion and discrimination, particularly in non-Western contexts.

Moreover, the framework of intersectionality connects questions of legality with those of legitimacy. As stated above, the legitimacy of the law is tied to its capacity to capture complex and messy social realities. This is key to understanding the ‘informal economy’ which, in essence, arises from the disparities between state regulation and economic and social organization. In exploring how well laws are able to account for the experiences and needs of those affected by one or several categories of exclusion, an intersectional approach links legal with social norms. It helps to illuminate how legal regulation of the economy—or its absence—is not merely a matter of neutrally existing laws and their enforcement, but of political, normative and, at times, ideological discourses and practices.

²⁹ On the distinction between precarious work and precarious workers, see Campbell and Price (2016).

Thus conceptualized, legal and social categories can be seen to interact in the political processes of informalization and formalization, contributing to social hierarchies in which some types of work and some workers are less protected and more ‘informal’ than others. Along these lines, Chapters 4 and 5 illustrate that the informality of street vending and domestic work is an outcome of the interplay of historical trajectories, legal institutions, spatial organization of work in the two sectors and the intersecting categories of gender, race/ethnicity, class, age and marital status, as well as skill and education level.

3.4 Local-global conjunctures

Last but not least, the constitution of the ‘informal economy’, as a political concept and economic imaginary, as well as a place and space in the life-world, can be theorized as a continuous process occurring at the nodes of local and global discourses and practices. This theoretical conception corresponds with the methodological commitments involved in experiencing and exploring the relations between the One-Third and Two-Thirds Worlds described in section 2.3, and with my aim to link general and global discussion on the ‘informal economy’ with grounded, particularized analysis (see also Mohanty 2003: 501). It further reflects the need to account for both structure and agency, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

While the ‘informal economy’ is a global and globalized phenomenon interlinking ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ economies across the world (Carr and Chen 2001; Tempkin and Veizaga 2010; ILO 2018), it is important to clarify that connectedness and continuities do not imply sameness. The research literature notes that the ‘informal economy’ is undergoing changes across time and space; for instance, Miguel Centeno and Alejandro Portes (2006: 40) observe that “[i]n the past, it was the sector where those excluded from the modern economy found employment; in the present it has become a place for those escaping the degradation of formerly secure jobs”. Geographic location likewise matters for economic organization since, from a structuralist point of view at least, “the difference between the global economic centers and the peripheries ... lies in the imperfect development of modern capitalist relations in the latter and, hence, the coexistence of different modes of production—modern, petty entrepreneurial, and subsistence (Portes and Hoffmann 2003: 43; footnotes omitted). Similarly, Jan Breman points out that, when analyzing precarious and ‘informal’ labour in Asia and Africa, attention needs to be paid to long-term colonial and postcolonial patterns of exploitation between the capitalist centres and peripheries. Importantly, Breman highlights the adverse effects which improvements in labour regulation in the centres had on the colonies where, in response, exploitation even intensified. There is, he concludes, “not one but a variety of regimes of informal/precarious labour” (Breman 2013: 137).

These contributions direct attention to the different political, economic and social contexts in which specific formations of ‘informal’ work are embedded. In light of

the argument made here, however, they suffer from two shortcomings: first, they understand the ‘informal economy’ in the limited terms of an actually existing space of economic organization, neglecting the conceptual politics and contestation surrounding its meaning in such different contexts; second, and relatedly, they interpret variation in local formations of the ‘informal economy’ as an outcome of larger economic imperatives and an impact of globalized capitalism. Although the empirical material presented in these studies speaks strongly in favour of couching the ‘informal economy’ in terms of the latter, theorizing processes of informalization from the outset in such a manner risks framing them as one-directional, thereby ignoring important nuances in local discourses and practices in which meaning is contested. It further results in associating the ‘informal economy’ with specific places, economic stages or people, part of the ‘othering’ that was discussed in section 1.2.

To avoid these pitfalls, I draw on anthropologist Gillian Hart’s conception of ‘space-time’ as “actively produced through situated, embodied material practices, and their associated discourses and power relations” (Hart 2006: 994). Hart’s approach, building on the work of Antonio Gramsci and Henri Lefebvre and envisioned as a method of critical ethnography, offers useful elements to theorizing formalization and informalization as *ongoing* and continuously contested processes. Similar to my understanding of the ‘informal economy’ as both a concept and a real-life sphere of economic and social organization, for Hart, “material ‘facts’ ... are as important as their meanings—and they must be understood together in terms of multiple historical/geographical determinations, connections, and articulations” (ibid.: 984).

Hart cautions against viewing local practices, processes and politics merely as variations or impacts of global dynamics and other pre-given forces. While they are interconnected with wider, global processes, they are not pre-determined by them; rather, they may play out quite dissimilarly even in comparable and similar contexts. Nuances in historical trajectories, specific local geographical circumstances, political institutions and, not least, in the identities of political subjects may lead to sharply diverging outcomes. Further, political struggles and contestation in specific locations do not take place independently of each other, but overlap and connect with struggles in other arenas, sometimes even those at considerable geographical distance. There is, thus, not a simple connection between the global and the local; rather, global and local social forces interconnect in multiple local, regional, national and transnational arenas (Hart 2002, 2006). The importance and interplay of social categories—such as gender, race, class and nationality—likewise vary in different contexts, shaping political struggles in unique ways (ibid.).³⁰ This postulation is consistent with the discussion of the relevance of both identity and context in the previous section.

³⁰ Hart (2002, 2006) backs these claims with rich ethnographic details of a longitudinal study of interconnected processes of dispossession and capitalist accumulation in Taiwan and South Africa.

The emphasis on the open-endedness of processes at the conjunctions of the local and the global—or, more fittingly, the extra-local (Burawoy 2000:29; see Hart 2006: 995)—is central to my attempt to capture the conceptual politics surrounding the ‘informal economy’, a Western-based political concept and imaginary, in their concrete articulations in two dissimilar sectors in Tanzania. It offers to “illuminat[e] power-laden processes of constitution, connection, and disconnection, along with slippages, openings, and contradictions, and possibilities for alliance within and across different spatial scales” (Hart 2006: 982). Following the conjecture that it is what is made of it, as already suggested by Keith Hart’s original article (see section 1.1), it remains to be seen how a variety of actors in Tanzania interpret and enact the ‘informal economy’, thereby leaving their own, unique footprint on informalization and formalization as ongoing discursive processes.

Moreover, Gillian Hart’s interlinking of local and extra-local political processes with space-making usefully brings into relief the close ties between the discursive and material dimensions of informalization and formalization. To Hart, the production of place arises from particular interrelations at specific junctures in space and time. Place, connected to people’s identities and experiences, presents “nodal points of connection in wider networks of socially produced space” (Hart 2006: 994), and its boundaries, as well as those of space, are socially constructed and continuously contested (ibid.: 995); as with other processes of contestation, they occur simultaneously, with manifold interlinkages, in multiple spatial arenas and at the intersections of multiple social categories. In this sense, the ‘informal economy’ with its vaguely defined and always contested boundaries presents a fluid space, the concrete enactment of which becomes an ‘informal’ workplace.³¹

To conclude this chapter, “particularities or specificities arise through *interrelations* between objects, events, places, and identities; and it is through clarifying how these relations are produced and changed in practice that close study of a particular part can generate broader claims and understandings” (ibid.: 996; emphasis in original). With that, I turn to dissecting the ‘informal economy’ of street vending and domestic work into its constitutive parts and processes.

³¹ I discuss the social construction of ‘informal’ workplaces of street vendors and domestic workers, along the lines of the construction of visibility and invisibility, in Chapter 5.

4. 'INFORMAL' BECAUSE AND DESPITE OF THE LAW

4.1 Meeting street vendors and domestic workers

On a weekday evening in February 2015, when dusk was setting and the hectic rush hour traffic had begun to calm down, a violent commotion erupted close to Kariakoo Market. Plainclothes *wagambo wa manispa*, as members of the municipal auxiliary police are called, were raiding makeshift sidewalk stands amidst the traders' screams of panic and despair as they rushed to escape. Under the watch of uniformed and armed policemen, the auxiliary police kicked and pushed the carefully arranged piles of foodstuff into the street, where heaps of fresh fruit, vegetables and spices were instantly crushed to mud-spattered pulp under the wheels of the crowded *daladalas* that slowly rolled towards Msimbazi Street. Arrested traders were shoved into a police vehicle while commuters and bystanders curiously gaped at the brouhaha. As I approached a group of a dozen vendors who had taken refuge at a safe distance in a narrow shopping arcade, the expressions on their faces left no doubt that the destruction amounted to more than merely the hundreds of thousands of Tanzanian Shillings worth of food tossed to the ground: the men stood sternly with clenched fists; two women cried and lamented loudly about how to feed their children; one young man, his eyes rolling and hands waving wildly, implored me to "go tell the people in [my] country about this injustice".

Incidents like this are no rarity and have a long history in Dar es Salaam, and it was a raid similar to this one which first triggered my interest in the conditions of street trade. Notwithstanding the omnipresence and centrality of street vending in city life, at the time of my research it was treated as an aberration from legal and social norms by city authorities and, until late 2016, by the national government as well. This raises the questions of how and why the law clashes so sharply—and in many instances violently—with the everyday lives of tens of thousands of people.

The setting of domestic work stands in stark contrast to my encounters with the *machingas* on the streets, encouraging reflection on the legal and social recognition of domestic work and its value. My quest to learn and understand more about domestic work in Tanzanian society, and its conception and representation in existing laws and rights discourses, was at least partly influenced by the awkwardness of unexpectedly acquiring the services of a domestic worker: Melinda was employed by the landlady of my Kariakoo apartment and came to clean on weekdays. On the day we first met, I had just moved in, thrown a plastic bag full of dirty clothes into the corner and, in a hurry, left the room and kitchen in a disorderly state. When I returned to the apartment

later in the afternoon, I saw Melinda hanging the hand-washed clothes on the line on the balcony. She had also cleared and washed the used cups and plates from my desk, made the bed, scrubbed the bathroom and shower and arranged my strewn clothes and books neatly on the shelf. I was embarrassed to the bone. I thanked her many times—she responded with a smile—and from that day kept the room, dishes and laundry tidy to make sure I did not unnecessarily add to her chores.

In the following weeks, I tried to get to know Melinda better through small conversations about our families and home villages. Melinda, a woman in her mid-thirties, always answered my questions politely and accepted chocolate as a gift for her three children, but declined my offers of a cup of tea or joining me for a meal I had cooked. I was not the first *mzungu* tenant she had met and she understood some English, but made a point of consistently speaking Swahili to me. Communication was difficult, especially in the beginning; when asking which market places, laundry soap or *ugali* (porridge) recipes she would recommend, I was always at pains to clarify I was by no means expecting—or ordering—her to go buy groceries or wash and cook for me. Nonetheless, despite my attempts to create a collegial atmosphere, conversing openly and on eye-level appeared to remain impossible. Although I was not her employer, I could not change the fact that I was the one in command.

Holding this position of power and delegating personal household tasks to somebody else felt unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Yet why was I so distressed by the asymmetry between me and Melinda? It was not only because the relation between me, a *mzungu* tenant, and Melinda, an African domestic worker, rang with colonial undertones—I was profoundly upset by being so obviously part of a pecking order in which a less wealthy person has to clean up after a wealthier one. I passionately cited Bertolt Brecht³² one day in my work journal while Melinda was sweeping the floor in the next room: “[A human being] wants no servants under him and no masters above.”

I also learnt, however, that Melinda had been employed by my landlady for more than a year. They were on good terms and Melinda received a salary above the minimum wage. So what was it that made the situation different from, say, accepting housekeeping services in a hostel or hotel, where I would usually not perceive myself as a ‘boss’ and staff as ‘servants’? Was my relation with her indeed more hierarchical, or did the privacy and intimacy of having Melinda work in my temporary home lay bare an intrinsic inequality between the one who pays (in my case, the rent) and the one who gets paid? Did I simply fail to notice unequal power relations elsewhere because they were obscured and normalized by the professional distance associated with contractual wage labour?

The aim of this and the next chapter is to delve into the discussion of what it means to work ‘informally’ in two dissimilar sectors: small-scale trade and domestic work (see section 1.4). What distinguishes the two sectors in

³² The line is taken from “*Einheitsfrontlied*” (Workers’ United Front Song).

Tanzania—to put in a nutshell a set of very complex relations that are elaborated in the coming sections and chapters—is that domestic work is legally protected, at least by the text of the law, and it is performed in the seclusion of the private home, whereas small-scale trade, taking place in publicly accessible space, is excluded from legislation.

Small-scale trade and domestic work are addressed by the law in almost diametrically opposing ways, although the lines between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ as well as between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ are unclear in legislation and law enforcement. As I argue in the course of the following chapters, informality in the two sectors must instead be understood as a result of the complex interplay between legal norms on the one hand, and multi-layered power relations on the other. Giving an overview of the legal frameworks and their frictions in this chapter thus serves to set the stage for the discussion to come.

I structure this chapter as follows: The next section provides a very brief overview of the history of the ‘second economy’ in Tanzania and changing perceptions of it over time. In the third and fourth sections, I examine the legislation concerning street vending and domestic work in Tanzania, focusing on the legal limbo created by national and municipal laws that are biased against street traders, and on the implications of treating domestic work as ‘work like any other’ in Tanzanian labour law.

4.2 The ‘second economy’, law and legitimacy

The different ways in which informality is conceptualized for street trade and domestic work (see section 1.4) need to be contextualized within past and present discourses on the ‘informal economy’ in mainland Tanzania. The purpose of this very brief overview³³ is to illustrate the long-standing omnipresence of ‘informal’ income-generation and the shifts in discourses and policies over time. Generally, while ‘formal’, regulated employment presents the exception rather than the rule in Tanzania, the ‘informal economy’ has meandered from “bad to good (and back again)” from the viewpoint of different governments, as Deborah Potts (2008) observes. However, both discriminatory policies and favourable recognition never applied to all sectors alike. As I discuss in this and the following chapters, street traders and hawkers in particular have been exposed to penalties and relocations while domestic workers have faced little or no discrimination.

The rapid economic and social transformations during first the German and later the British colonial eras, the Depression of the 1930s, the Second World War and later the struggles towards independence saw the emergence of a class of wage labourers, many of whom left their home regions to search for employment in the

³³ A proper introduction of the historical emergence and development of the ‘informal economy’ in Tanzania, backed by macroeconomic data, official statistics and in-depth analysis, would exceed the scope of this section and is provided elsewhere (see Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990; Tripp 1997; Coulson 2013).

cities (for details, see e.g. Shivji 1986; Koponen 1994). From the independence of Tanganyika in 1961 and its unification with Zanzibar in 1964, to the mid-1970s, the urban labour force grew rapidly but, resonating with Keith Hart's (1973) findings in Ghana, met with insufficient opportunities for 'formal' employment. The oversupply of labour led to a drastic fall in incomes and a sharp rise in poverty among households which had to rely on incomes from 'informal' work (Coulson 2013: 237).

Legislation and the response of the state were not in favour of poor rural-urban migrants. The "problem of vagrancy" was inherited from colonial times, as were penal laws concerning "'idle and disorderly persons' and 'rogues and vagabonds'" (Shaidi 1984: 83f.).³⁴ Since their rough-and-ready occupations and services were not registered with the government, Tanzanians struggling to survive in the cities were in a vulnerable position, tolerated at best and criminalized at worst. Urban dwellers without 'formal' employment were frequently cast as the enemies of hard-working rural peasants and the socialist state. They were labelled as 'undesirable', 'unproductive' and, in the words of President Julius Nyerere, "criminals and idle parasites" (cited in Burton 2007: 131). The alleged idleness and disorderliness of people in unregistered employment was prosecuted as criminal offense (see *ibid.*; Shaidi 1984).

Harsh rhetoric was coupled with urban raids followed by forced relocations to rural villages or being sent to labour on plantations. From the mid-1970s, the government attempted to relocate urban residents without 'formal' employment back to the villages, sometimes by force. It also pursued policies encouraging young Tanzanians to take up life in rural communities. However, both the so-called "Operation Kila Mtu Afanye Kazi" (every person must work) and "education for self-reliance" initiatives failed to stop the influx of job seekers into the cities (Shaidi 1984: 84; Mwaiselage and Mponzi 1999: 6f.).

Government attempts to curb rural-urban migration and 'informal' employment notwithstanding, the lack of 'formal' job opportunities, low agricultural output, rural poverty and, not least, the restrictive economic policies of the socialist state continued to propel waves of Tanzanians, especially the young, to take up low-entry, unregistered work in the cities. The 'informal sector', originally limited to survivalist and legal self-help schemes in urban contexts, swelled to become what T.L. Maliyamkono and M.S.D. Bagachwa (1990) call the Tanzanian 'second economy'. Fuelled by the severe economic crisis of the 1980s, unregistered activities extended to rural areas and across all sectors, including "direct production, distributive services, communication and transportation" and,

³⁴ Tripp (1989: 25f.) identifies the source of this legislation as located even more deeply in history: "The Penal Code amendment and the variations on it that followed had their origins in British vagrancy laws which date back as far as 1349. They were enforced by the authorities more vigorously in 18th and 19th century England as a means of securing cheap labor for industry and to round up so-called criminals. These laws were transferred to Tanzania in the form of the Penal Code, which targeted prostitutes, beggars, gamblers, suspected thieves, rogues and vagabonds."

moreover, “illegal objectives such as drug trafficking, smuggling and poaching”. In consequence, the “overexpansion of the informal sector pose[d] a challenge to the state legitimacy of many African countries” (ibid.: 35), including that of the Tanzanian state.

In 1983, in a nationwide “war against economic saboteurs and marketeers”, the government attempted to restore its authority and power, return to its economic development path and quell all unauthorised economic activities, often by desperate means (ibid.: ix ff.). Amidst high levels of unemployment and crackdowns on all unregistered and ‘hidden’ economic activity, the government passed the *Sera ya Nguvu Kazi*, known in English as the Human Resources Deployment Act (ibid.: 32). The Act aimed for the “establishment of a machinery designed to regulate and facilitate the engagement of all able bodied persons in productive work and for connected matters in the best economic interest of the nation” (URT 1996: n.p.). It required all Tanzanians to register with their local government branch and be issued a labour identification card. Local authorities could then classify economic activities as lawful or unlawful. In Dar es Salaam, the entire spectrum of ‘informal’ activities was initially declared to belong to the latter category. All those found offering goods or services without a license were considered ‘loiterers’, and offenders so classified could be forcefully deported to rural areas or sent to work on the sisal plantations (Shaidi 1984: 84f.).

Three views ingrained into the Human Resources Deployment Act are noteworthy: firstly, unused labour power was to be directed to rural areas with the goal of increasing agricultural production; secondly, both “clandestine employment” (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990: 32) and unemployment were seen by the government as a threat to ‘formal’, licensed activities and economic growth; and thirdly, it affirmed that the definition over what counted as ‘productive’ work lay with the government and its administrative bodies and depended on the perceived economic interest of the nation. Though under different names, conceptions of ‘informal’ income-generation thus have a long history of being tightly interwoven with ideals of national economic development and notions of productive labour.

These views were quite out of touch with the social realities faced by the majority of Tanzanians. Contrary to the negative stereotyping in official discourse, Tanzanians taking up unregulated occupations saw themselves compelled to resort to ‘informal’ activities due to low agricultural output, an absence of employment opportunities and sinking real wages (Burton 2007). Low productivity and real wages further urged those in ‘formal’ employment to resort to ‘informal’ activities in addition or as alternative to their registered work, thus expanding ‘second economy’ activities to middle-class, white-collar employees and bureaucrats (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990; Tripp 1997). Implementation of the Human Resources Deployment Act enjoyed little legitimacy across most of society, proved to be unreasonably costly for the already overburdened state bureaucracy and was largely ineffective, since urban dwellers usually returned not long after they were deported (Shaidi 1984; Tripp 1989).

Researchers have paid attention to how, in postcolonial contexts, governance of the cities, often accompanied by violence and corruption, is deeply enmeshed with struggles and everyday negotiations over citizenship and the legitimacy of the state (Bayat 1997; Seppänen 1999; Anjaria 2011; Wafer 2014); importantly, conflicts between authorities and the urban poor express incompatible conceptions of social order and economic development. A key issue here concerns state attempts to govern economic activities (see Shaidi 1984). The urban ‘informal economy’ is at the centre of the question of “how much control the state should have over how people pursue their livelihood” (Tripp 1989: 7; see Chapter 8).

The roots of the conflict surrounding that question partially lie in colonial history. Looking back in time, Andrew Burton notes that the same lines of division were already apparent in Dar es Salaam under the British administration in the 1940s :

Much criminal activity arose from the incongruity of colonial legislation and customary and subsistence activities engaged in by urban Africans. In Dar es Salaam, laws and by-laws that prohibited activities such as the tapping of palm trees, which without a permit was disallowed, or a mendicant’s right to beg in a society that retained alms-giving traditions, were widely disregarded. To colonial officials these activities were held to be disorderly. To Africans engaged in them it was simply a matter of ‘getting by’. (Burton 2005: 153, footnotes omitted)

Burton (*ibid.*) fittingly identifies the widespread practice of unregulated economic activities as “legitimate lawlessness”, that is, a breaching of colonial law which was fully justifiable in the eyes of the governed. Legislation and other state efforts to restrict ‘informal’ activities continued to suffer from a lack of legitimacy during the socialist and post-socialist period, especially since the ‘formal’ economy was incapable of providing adequate livelihoods for the majority of Tanzanians. In this vein, studies have noted the necessity for small-scale industry, manufacturing and trade as indispensable subsistence strategies during the declining Tanzanian economy of the 1980s and liberalization policies of the 1990s (Bagachwa 1982; Havnevik 1986; Kerner 1988; Tripp 1989; 1997), as well as in the context of rural-urban youth migration and poverty alleviation (Mbilinyi and Omari 1996; Liviga and Mekacha 1998).

However, the defamation and criminalization of the urban poor and operators in the ‘second economy’ more generally did not only follow long-standing trajectories dating back to the colonial era and the post-independence period. Negative attitudes among the political elite are also strongly influenced by the dualist conception of a modern capitalist sector as opposed to a backward peasant and ‘informal’ sector, paired with modernist theories of economic development. As with other African countries, post-independence development prescriptions in Tanzania dismissed ‘informal’ activities as unproductive and as stumbling blocks to the introduction of new types of production and employment (Potts 2008:

152f.). Commenting on the tensions between the socialist state and society, Aili Mari Tripp writes:

In spite of its ideological emphasis on 'bottom-up' grassroots participation, in practice, the state leadership has often adopted a paternalistic, all-knowing attitude towards people and sees its obligation to enlighten and bring 'modernization' to the 'traditional' sector from 'top-down'. (Tripp 1989: 7)

Resonating with other parts of Africa, Latin America and Asia, experiences in Tanzania refuted the modernist perspective and the belief that unregistered and unregulated small-scale production of goods and services was bound to disappear. This kind of theorizing ignored the realities on the ground, as 'informal' employment was common and alternatives were few in African cities. It is thus no coincidence that modernization theory and its take on the 'informal economy' was heavily criticized in the 1980s from structuralist and neoliberal perspectives (see section 1.2; for discussion see Potts 2008: 155f.).

Irrespective of growing international recognition of the 'informal sector', the policies of the Tanzanian government towards 'informal' income-generation remained restrictive in the decade following the economic liberalization of the mid-1980s. Meanwhile, structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes, designed by International Financial Institutions (IFIs), further dismantled 'formal' employment and compelled hundreds of thousands of Tanzanians to seek incomes from 'informal' activities to compensate for declining real wages, inflation and soaring food prices and living expenses. These survivalist self-help schemes were repeatedly met with repressive government measures as it attempted to maintain control over the economy, without, however, providing sufficient income alternatives (Tripp 1997: 39ff.). Towards the end of the socialist era, both domestic economic developments and policy agendas imposed by IFIs were contributing to the enormous expansion of the Tanzanian 'informal economy' (ibid.: 2). As elsewhere across the Global South (see Connell and Dados 2014), the neoliberal agenda-setting of the IFIs coincided with and cross-fertilised nationally defined development policies.³⁵

The late 1990s saw a course change in government policies towards greater acceptance of the 'informal economy'. Whether the main reason lay in the sheer size of the challenge of providing livelihoods and services for millions of Tanzanians working in unregistered occupations, the sweep of neoliberal ideology in the global policy arena or the active resistance of the urban population to state restrictions on self-employment and small-scale production, as Tripp (1997) claims, portrayals of the 'informal sector' were cast in a significantly more positive light (see Potts 2008). Slowly, 'informal' activities came to be seen as part of the Tanzanian economy. Reflecting at least to some extent the heightened international attention paid to the 'informal economy' after the millennial turn

³⁵ I discuss the influence of neoliberal discourses on policies towards the 'informal economy' in Tanzania in Chapter 8.

(ILO 2002a), the change became visible in official statistics which began to include 'informal' occupations and small-scale production:

Estimates on the size of the informal economy in Tanzania have radically changed over the years. This change seems to have been driven, above all, by political authorities who initially viewed the informal economy as a problem and later as a potential for growth ... Whereas during the state-led economic period, Tanzanian authorities had a hostile attitude towards the informal economy, it came to be seen as a potential for growth in the wake of liberalisation. (Rizzo and Wuyts 2014: 4)

As with statistics more generally, official figures for the Tanzanian 'informal economy' need to be treated with caution, not only because of the nature of 'informal' activities but also because of the political agendas they harbour. Yet even when taking the statistics with a grain of salt, the 'informal sector' today indubitably makes up the lion's share of the economy: The ILO estimates that more than three-quarters of all non-agricultural employment count as 'informal' in Tanzania (ILO 2012: 9). According to a study by UN Habitat, the young are especially drawn to work in the 'informal economy', which offers employment to approximately 70 per cent of young women and 60 per cent of young men in urban areas (UN Habitat 2007: 9).

Notwithstanding these impressive figures, the position of the government towards the 'informal economy' remains ambiguous. Political leaders and decision-makers disagree on what to make of its vast size, which is viewed negatively by some as a symbol of disorderliness and deficient economic progress, while others see it positively as an opportunity for self-help as well as economic growth (interview with MoLE 12.02.2015; see also Lyons and Msoka 2010: 1087). I discuss in the later chapters how these competing perspectives lead to quite different policy prescriptions. The Second National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (Swahili acronym MKUKUTA II, *Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umaskini Tanzania*)³⁶ addresses the 'informal sector' in passing, predominantly as an issue for tax and revenue collection (URT 2010a: 23; 39), and mentions the need for its reduction by promoting "easy transformation of informal sector to formal sector and for creation of productive and decent jobs" (ibid.: 51). The election of John Magufuli as president in 2015 has given these policy goals more urgency. As former Minister of Works, Magufuli ran his campaign under the slogan "*Hapa kazi tu!*" (Let's get to work! Lit. here is only work!), and has since repeatedly emphasized the hard labour of working Tanzanians, both 'formal' and 'informal', as central to economic progress. His policies represented a sharp turn from previous years, especially in regard to street trade; the notion of 'informal' income however remains embattled (see Chapter 8).

³⁶ MKUKUTA I was implemented from 2005/2006 to 2009/2010, and was continued by MKUKUTA II which was to be implemented from 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 (see URT 2005; 2010).

4.3 “Legitimate lawlessness”: street trade and the law

Just as in many other countries, street traders in Tanzania find themselves in a gruelling position somewhere “between tolerance and clearance”, as Alison Brown, Colman Msoka and Ibrahima Dankoco aptly describe it (2015: 2244). Despite street traders’ decades-long and pervasive presence in the city, their way of generating an income is not covered by either commercial or labour laws and thus falls outside the boundaries of existing laws and regulations; rather, street vending has been in legal limbo for almost a century.

Since the colonial periods, unlicensed street traders have borne the brunt of laws and by-laws penalizing unregistered economic activity (described in the previous section). Above all other unregistered occupations, street vending has been seen to epitomize ‘vagrancy’, ‘loitering’ and ‘idleness’. Street trade has grown rapidly in Dar es Salaam since the 1930s, although the municipal authorities have been eager to limit the number of traders by issuing few licenses and removing those operating without one. This has particularly applied to male African traders, long seen as a threat to orderly urban development, the businesses of predominantly Indian shopkeepers and, importantly, to European women and property. Not unlike today, the presence of street traders symbolized unwanted rural-urban migration as well as un- and underemployment and, crucially, affronted strict hierarchies of race, gender and class (Burton 2005, 2007).

After the Human Resources Deployment Act (see above) yielded few results, it was successively amended to recognize small-scale business as a means to combat unemployment. Under the changed by-laws, ‘informal’ vendors could obtain the so-called *Nguvu Kazi* licenses, which were easily available and allowed peddling in the streets. This solution proved to be temporary, however. Since migration steadily outgrew urban capacities to accommodate the flow of newly arriving traders, distribution of the licenses stopped again in 1993 (Mwaiselage and Mponzi 1999: 7), leaving the legal status of street vendors once again in limbo. Formerly issued peddling licenses effectively became void ten years later with the passing of the Business Licensing Act of 2003 and the Finance Act of 2004. The tolerance towards traders’ unregistered businesses in public space ended as license categories were restructured and it became obligatory for businesses to be registered (Lyons and Brown 2013).

Current legislation eschews the wording of earlier laws such as the Penal Code or the Human Resources Deployment Act, according to which ‘idle and disorderly persons’ could be forced into ‘productive’ work in the national interest. It nonetheless continues to discriminate against ‘informal’ small-scale trade, specifically street trade and hawking. Without an official business license, small-scale traders enjoy no legal protection even when located in a designated market area. Street trade in unauthorised areas is rendered illegal and criminalized as a violation, firstly, of city by-laws on the use of public space and, secondly, of business registration and licensing laws (Lyons and Msoka 2010: 1081; Ackson 2014; Msoka and Ackson 2017).

In terms of the first aspect, a set of laws regulates the use of land and public space along roads and highways as well as in urban areas.³⁷ Local government authorities (LGA)—that is, regional and municipal councils and town planners—hold considerable power over the design and implementation of by-laws. Tulia Ackson critically examines how, throughout the legislative process, little attention is paid to the needs of street traders:

Although laws relating to land and planning take cognisance of the commercial aspects in land planning, they do not expressly provide for issues pertaining to street vendors. Land designated for commercial purposes surprisingly confines itself to markets which are established and managed by the LGAs. Falling within their jurisdiction, LGAs are able to easily collect charges and fees at these markets. While this arrangement is attractive to the LGAs, it leaves street vendors on the periphery of the protection given by law and the Constitution (Ackson 2014: 152)

When found in violation of the laws and by-laws, traders face penalties which can be considered “draconian” (ibid.), usually a fine of 50,000 TZS (approximately 25 USD) or three months in prison. What is more, violations are tried under criminal rather than civil law and, once convicted in court, traders carry the stigma of a criminal record. Whenever possible, traders hence forfeit their right to trial and agree to paying the fine (ibid.: 159; interview with Kinondoni Municipal Council 06.03.2015). As noted by Ackson, the laws and by-laws thwart fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution, such as the right to work and the right to life, as well as the national policy goals of employment creation and poverty reduction. The contradictions and conflicts between national and municipal laws bar street vendors *de jure* and *de facto* from recourse to legal protection against displacement or confiscations, as well as from social protection.

The second aspect turning street trade into an illegal activity is its almost entirely unregistered and unlicensed nature, which is in violation of business, financial and tax laws on the national and municipal levels. To a varying extent, this also applies to small-scale traders occupying plots in designated market areas. Most market traders have a license issued by an LGA or a privately managed market, yet these agreements are usually temporary and can be revoked on short notice. The Business Licensing Act of 2003 and Finance Act of 2004, which effectively replaced the Nguvu Kazi licenses, require all business activities to be properly registered but, just like the vast majority of street traders, market traders rarely have their business registered with the national registration agency, BRELA.

Although the objective of the Business Licensing Act was to simplify business formalization and encourage registration, it does not sufficiently account for the situation of small-scale traders. Despite further simplification of the registration process in recent years, obtaining a license remains tied to extensive efforts and

³⁷ These are the Highways Act, the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act of 1982, Land Act of 1999, and the Land Use Planning and Urban Planning Acts, both of 2007. For a detailed discussion see Ackson (2014).

costs which are too high for many traders to meet (Lyons, Brown and Msoka 2014: 1602f.; interview with BRELA 05.03.2015). Importantly, a fixed physical and postal address continues to be a condition for business registration (URT 2007: par. 13[m])—a requirement which, by definition, excludes all street vendors operating in non-designated areas and, moreover, all hawkers.

The enforcement of laws and by-laws remains sporadic, with several large-scale evictions making headlines. Clearances mandated by the Prime Minister's Office took place in all major Tanzanian cities in 2006, for example, with an estimated one million traders losing their livelihoods (Lyons and Msoka 2010: 1088). In 2011, roadside markets were demolished in Dar es Salaam along Morogoro Road on the eleven-kilometre stretch between Magomeni and Kimara to facilitate construction of the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) Project (Ka'bange et al. 2014: 181). In 2013, a visit by US President Barack Obama prompted Dar es Salaam regional and municipal authorities to purge vendors from major roads and the city centre (*The Citizen* 24.06.2013; 02.07.2013a;b). During my stays in 2014 and 2015, clearance raids were a daily routine across Dar es Salaam, particularly in the hot spots of street trade (see section 5.3); indeed, the fear of evictions was common among vendors.³⁸

Change was underway in 2015 when street vendors were anticipating 'the political season', the period before an election in which candidates and party leaders press LGAs to abstain from evictions in order to win traders' votes. Yet, despite Magufuli's promises to protect small-scale traders, LGAs carried on with the crackdowns after his election. In December 2016, traders vehemently protested the destruction of a street market in the city of Mwanza. In a TV broadcast making big headlines, Magufuli invoked the promises the ruling party, *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM), had made to street vendors during his 2015 election campaign. He emphasized the industriousness of street traders and ordered municipal authorities to grant them suitable trading space (*Global TV* 06.12.2016). His praise for street vendors, his decree to halt evictions nation-wide and the order to LGAs to provide suitable alternative spaces for traders was welcomed not only by traders but across Tanzania. In 2018, street vendor identification cards (IDs) were introduced (see Chapter 8 for details).

These moves have, however, been disputed by regional and municipal authorities, leading to confusion and further conflict with traders (ibid.; Kitembo 2017; *The Citizen* 28.02.2017a), while the extent to which the new policies will result in more long-lasting solutions is still unclear (*The Citizen* 28.02.2017b). The introduction of the—'semi-formal'—street vendor IDs has further complicated the issue of what counts as street trading (see section 8.3). At the time of writing, the policy changes have not become codified in law, vendors' legal status is still insecure and they depend on the word and good will of the president (Steiler and Nyirenda forthcoming).

³⁸ The hostile urban policies need to be seen as having their roots in agendas that reflect modernization and neoliberal perspectives on the 'informal economy', as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 8.

4.4 Work like any other or no other? Domestic work in labour law

Unlike in the majority of other countries (see ILO 2013d: 46f.), domestic workers in Tanzania enjoy the same rights as workers in other sectors under the Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2004.³⁹ General labour law applies to domestic work, including the fundamental principles and rights at work which the ILO in 1998 declared as Core Labour Standards, namely, freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, all of which are specified under Part II, “Fundamental Rights and Protection”, of the Employment and Labour Relations Act (ILO 1998; URT 2004: sect. 5-11). Moreover, under existing legislation, the rights of domestic workers include the essential right to strike (URT 2004: sect. 75).

The Situational Analysis of the ILO lists in detail how domestic work, equivalent to other sectors, is regulated in terms of working hours, overtime and night work compensation, daily and weekly rest, as well as maternity, sick, compassionate and annual leave with pay (ILO 2016: 69-78). According to Tanzanian law, domestic workers are guaranteed a minimum wage depending on their employers’ income.⁴⁰ Since they qualify as employees, according to the letter of the law, domestic workers are also entitled to contribute to and benefit from social security schemes (ibid.: 84f.).

Importantly, Tanzanian law places the burden of proof on employers. Employers are legally required to supply a written contract which specifies the job description, workplace, working hours and remuneration, *inter alia*, to the employee, and to inform the employee about the details of the contract in a manner the employee understands. The employer is further obliged to document all matters relevant to the conduct of employment, such as actual hours worked, leave taken or remuneration paid, and be able to produce the contract as well as

³⁹ The following description applies to mainland Tanzania, as Zanzibar has its own labour laws and regulations.

⁴⁰ Employers are categorized into three groups: Diplomats and Potential Businessmen, Entitled Officers, and all other households, the latter including high to low income households. Minimum wages for domestic workers were previously set at 90,000 TZS, 80,000 TZS and 65,000 TZS (approx. 45, 40 and 33 USD), respectively. Live-in domestic workers could have up to 68 per cent of their salaries deducted for accommodation and food (ILO 2016a: 79f.). Since 2013, minimum wages for domestic work have been set in four categories: 150,000 TZS (75 USD) for domestic servants employed by Diplomats and Potential Businessmen; 130,000 TZS (65 USD) for domestic workers employed by Entitled Government Officers; above 80,000 TZS (40 USD) for live-out domestic workers not employed by those in the first two categories; and above 40,000 TZS (20 USD) for live-in domestic workers not employed by the first two categories. The reduction of 68 per cent for live-in domestic workers is no longer applicable (ibid.: 7); however, if employed in a household other than in the first two categories, a live-in domestic worker still only receives half the wage of a live-out domestic worker.

the employment details in case of a labour dispute or conflict. It is also the duty of the employer to inform the employee of his or her rights (URT 2004: sect. 15-16).

Covered by these provisions, domestic workers can seek redress through mediation and arbitration mechanisms and the Labour Court, according to the Labour Institutions Act of 2004, even and especially if their contract is oral or has not been specified to them (interview with CHODAWU 02.02.2015). In the view of Vicky Kanyoka, African Regional Coordinator of the IDWF, guaranteeing legal equality with other sectors and thereby an extensive set of rights to domestic workers as early as 2004 makes Tanzania a pioneer in this field. The country can serve as a positive example which shows that giving protection and rights to vulnerable groups of workers, such as those in the domestic sphere, is not a luxury confined to middle or high-income countries (Kanyoka 2010; interview with IDWF 16.03.2015).

Legal clarity makes it possible for the trade union to settle labour disputes at an early stage. A representative of the trade union CHODAWU explained that mediation is often successful since “we do not only talk to [the employers] in simple words, but the employer is shown the text of the law”.⁴¹ The law is very clear that compliance with labour standards and workers’ rights is first and foremost the duty of the employer. Placing the burden of proof on the employer is vital, especially for domestic workers, whose labour in private homes makes them more vulnerable to deceit and abuse. Once they are made aware of their obligations, inscribed in written law, employers usually comply with the demands of the employee and agree to a settlement before the domestic worker, supported by the trade union, needs to take the issue further up the arbitration chain. Even if an employer refuses to comply, the labour court will rule in favour of the employee unless the employer can provide proof of having acted in accordance with the employee’s rights as stated in the Labour and Employment Relations Act (interview with CHODAWU 02.02.2015).

Despite the generally high level of legal protection granted to domestic workers, however, the law falls short of fully accounting for their needs. Four deficiencies can be identified: First, private households are indirectly exempted from the regulations under the Tanzanian Occupational Health and Safety Act of 2003 due to legal procedures which would require official registration of the household as a designated workplace. The law does not provide for the specificity of private homes as employment sites to be open to labour and safety inspection while simultaneously respecting the employers’ right to privacy; this loophole potentially leaves domestic workers exposed to unsafe and unhealthy working environments. For live-in domestic workers, this may also mean being accommodated in unsafe and inadequate quarters (ILO 2016a: 83, 87).

Second, if abuse, harassment or violent treatment of workers occur on grounds other than discrimination, they are not subject to labour but to criminal law. While labour law recognizes domestic workers as employees and places the

⁴¹ I say more about the effects of legislation in Chapter 6.

burden of proof on the employer, criminal law requires the prosecution to present proof of the crime. Contrary to other sectors, abuse, harassment or violence in domestic work are likely to take place behind the closed doors of a private home, making it extremely difficult for victims to provide witnesses or proof in court. Prosecution procedures, moreover, tend to be lengthy, and domestic workers, particularly live-in domestic workers, might continue to be dependent on their employer for the duration of the lawsuit and hence refrain from filing a complaint altogether (interview with ILO 18.03.2015; ILO 2016a: 65).

Third, given that it applies generally to workers in different sectors, the law neither fully addresses the distinct nature of domestic work nor takes into consideration groups among domestic workers who are more vulnerable than others. Women, child, live-in and migrant domestic workers—both international and rural-urban—often face specific forms of vulnerability, involving specific forms of discrimination and exploitation based on structural factors like gender, age, dependency on the employer and lack of local social support networks (cf. Mattila 2011: 57; 184f.). As legal scholars using an intersectionality approach (e.g. Crenshaw 1994; see section 3.3) argue, the law tends to address the needs of different categories of vulnerable workers separately while insufficiently considering the challenges which arise when these categories overlap. Such vulnerabilities are further compounded when the workplace is a private home with no external regulation and supervision mechanisms in place (interviews with ILO 18.03.2015; interviews with domestic workers).⁴²

Fourth, any legal framework requires at least minimally stable employment relations and clear job descriptions, and therefore cannot account for the fluctuation and multifaceted income strategies often involved in domestic work. The Labour and Employment Relations Act defines both employers and employees broadly⁴³ but the Regulation of Wages and Terms of Employment Order of 2010 distinguishes between a business employee, a domestic servant and a family member.⁴⁴ The details of the employment contract are tricky to pin down and often blur these categories. Oral contracts between domestic workers and their employers may be based on informal agreements or family or kinship commitments, and they may include work both in the employer's private home

⁴² As I argue in section 5.5, the invisibility of domestic work likewise needs to be understood as intersectional.

⁴³ “[E]mployee’ means an individual who- (a) has entered into a contract of employment; or (b) has entered into any other contract under which- (i) the individual undertakes to work personally for the other party to the contract”; “employer’ means any person, including the Government and an executive agency, who employs an employee” (URT 2004: sect. 4).

⁴⁴ “[D]omestic servant’ includes any person employed wholly or partly as cook, house-servant, waiter, butler, maidservant, valet, bar attendant, groom, gardener, washman or watchman, but an employee shall not include any such employee employed wholly or partly in connection with or in relation to any commercial or industrial enterprises”; “family’ means an employee and his or her spouse and the children of such an employee” (URT 2010b: para. 2).

and registered or unregistered business, as well as multiple and frequently changing job duties (interview with CHODAWU 02.02.2015).

At the same time, certain rights and regulations, such as those concerning paid sick and maternity leave or social security schemes, only apply to employees who have been in an employment relationship for a given time period, usually six months (URT 2004: sect. 29). Different regulations covering the minimum wage apply, depending on whether labour is categorized as domestic work or an employment relation in a commercial enterprise (ILO 2016a: 17; URT 2010b: para. 4). The law is therefore difficult to apply when domestic workers are hired casually or as day labourers, or when job descriptions and living arrangements do not fall squarely into prescribed categories. Thus, much domestic work is rendered 'informal' by falling into legal grey zones and loopholes.

In short, whereas in many other jurisdictions the domestic work sector is excluded from labour law, in Tanzania, the deficiency of legal norms stems from treating domestic work as 'work like any other' (Mundlak and Shamir 2011; see section 1.4). The extensive protection and the commitment to domestic workers' rights notwithstanding, the existing laws do not sufficiently account for the specific nature of domestic work. The limitations to legally protecting domestic workers result from the application of general labour laws that were originally conceptualized with a view towards the SER and the separation it introduces between the productive tasks of the workplace and the reproductive tasks of the home. As I discuss in the next chapter, however, domestic work complicates categories of public and private as well as mainstream conceptions of employment relations. Hence, a discussion of the informality of domestic work also touches on the question of the adequacy of (labour) laws to address gendered, non-standard forms of work more generally.

The public-private distinction further leads to the exclusion of domestic work from regulatory frameworks in practice as private homes are directly or indirectly exempted from labour inspections, impeding implementation of the law (Mantouvalou 2012a: 140). This affects both inspections with regard to the occupational safety and health of domestic workers' working and living environment, as mentioned above, and also the effectiveness of all regulations concerning fundamental rights at work, working conditions, collective organization and unionization, as well as the protection of domestic workers from abuse or exploitation more broadly. Hidden from the purview of the labour inspectorate, law enforcement bodies and wider public scrutiny, the seclusion of the household creates an extra-legal and invisible space and thwarts following up the domestic workers' rights which are enshrined in the Labour and Employment Relations Act and other relevant pieces of legislation.

Since domestic work, in this sense 'work like no other', is confined to the private home, what happens behind closed doors is often quite different from the situation anticipated by the legal norms. In Tanzania, as elsewhere, employers' compliance with the law is found to be generally low: domestic workers are paid

too little or denied their wages entirely; working conditions are more often than not in violation of domestic workers' guaranteed rights along with the whole spectrum of employment standards and social protection; and domestic workers further report many instances of hazardous child labour, discrimination and forms of unfree and forced labour, as well as physical or sexual abuse and violence. In the focus group discussions I conducted, some domestic workers corroborated stories of diverse and widespread abuse, as well as violation of their rights, which are documented in detail in empirical research (focus group interviews; ILO 2016a). Despite the legal protection offered to domestic workers by Tanzanian labour law, in practice only a small fraction of domestic work relations have been brought into compliance with the law or subjected to public scrutiny. This draws attention to the notion of invisibility of work, to which I turn in the next chapter.

5. DISSECTING THE ‘INFORMAL ECONOMY’ AS IT MEETS THE EYE

5.1 The intersectional in/visibility of ‘informal’ work

The observed differences in legal regulation of the two dissimilar sectors—street vending and domestic work—calls attention to the connection between the law and the visibility of the respective workplaces, which appear to be two contradictory sides of the same coin: For street traders, visibility in public spaces puts them in conflict with restrictive laws and by-laws, whereas the invisibility of domestic workers in private homes prevents their access to legal protection. The questions that arise are how and why domestic work, with its legal recognition, largely continues to remain hidden while street trade is criminalized and penalized despite its long-standing omnipresence in Tanzanian cities.

Many studies on ‘informal’ small-scale trade and domestic work focus on the notion of in/visibility in public and private space. The literature on street trade highlights the struggle over public space as a central issue in the incompatibility of street vending with urban policies and municipal by-laws (e.g. Tranberg Hansen 2004; Brown [ed.] 2006, 2017; Grant and Thompson 2015; Morange 2015; Roever and Skinner 2016; Broadway 2017). Research on domestic work similarly explains the informality of the sector as a result of its being closely connected to the invisibility of the private home; reports speak of the “invisible suffering” (Caritas 2009) and “invisible exploitation” (OSCE 2010) of the “invisible labour force” (ILO 2015c: viii). A report by Human Rights Watch exemplarily summarizes the predicament of domestic work:

Categorized as ‘informal labor,’ most governments consider domestic work beyond the scope of regulation and scrutiny. Hidden in private households, domestic workers may remain unregistered and uncounted—literally invisible. (HRW 2006: 2)

With a closer look, however, in/visibility in both sectors can be seen to overlap with highly politicized issues such as migration, citizenship and legal and social inclusion, and to intersect with multiple factors such as gender, class and race/ethnicity.⁴⁵ Both visibility and invisibility carry with them restrictions as well as opportunities, and may, hence, also be actively sought by vendors and domestic workers.⁴⁶ Invisibility, like informality, is not objectively given by the

⁴⁵ For discussions on street trade and the politics surrounding public space, see e.g. Anjaria (2011), Kamete (2013), Morange (2015), Spire and Choplin (2018), Jennische (2018) as well as contributions to Brown (ed.) (2006, 2017). On the hiddenness of domestic workers in private space, see e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo (2007); Mattila (2011); Mantouvalou (2012a).

⁴⁶ I am grateful to Jesper Bjarnesen for pointing this out to me.

material conditions of the workplace alone, but constituted on multiple levels; it is thereby central to the conceptual politics surrounding the 'informal economy'. Processes of visibilization and of invisibilization, which determine if and how street vendors and domestic workers are seen in private and public space, need to be seen as closely intertwined with processes of formalization and informalization, though not necessarily in a straightforward or unidirectional manner.

Following this line of thought and drawing on the work-life stories of street vendors and domestic workers, I dissect notions of visibility and of invisibility as they are associated with 'informal' work. This chapter discusses conceptualizations of 'informal' places of work with the use of ethnographic notes on spatial and social hierarchies in small-scale trade and domestic work, and analyzes the intersections of in/visibility with gender, class, education and skill levels, age and family status, as well as race/ethnicity.

Specific attention, I suggest, needs to be paid to underlying labour and employment relations in the two sectors. The importance of labour relations is commonly overlooked in the literature on street trade. The focus on struggles over urban space often leads to a neglect of questions concerning ownership of capital and the means of production among street vendors. With regard to Tanzania, with a single exception (Brown and Lyons 2010), recent literature on small-scale trade conceptualizes the daily chores of street vendors as the profit-seeking of micro-capitalists rather than the wage-earning of workers. Street vending is frequently referred to as "micro-enterprise" (Lyons and Msoka 2007: 10; Lyons, Brown and Msoka 2014) or "Street Vending Business" (Mramba 2015a) and traders as "micro-entrepreneurs" (Tripp 1989: 29) or "small-business entrepreneurs, generally own-account or self-employed" (Brown, Lyons and Dankoco 2010: 667). Following the conceptualization of vendors as 'entrepreneurs' and of street trade as 'business', public urban space tends to be perceived in somewhat limited terms as potential market space; policy interventions are understood as part of managing the streets as a business environment (e.g. Brown [ed.] 2006, 2017; Grant and Thompson 2015; Broadway 2017).

Access to space is indubitably vital to traders, yet, especially if we are to conceive of public space as market space, it is important to ask how small-scale trade is organized and how access to, and profits from, public space are distributed. These details are crucial to reaching a better understanding the on-going legal and political discrimination of street vendors and, furthermore, the limitations of policy interventions in the sector, which I analyze in the later chapters of the thesis.

In contrast to the literature on street trade, research on domestic work in Tanzania (Bujra 2000; Kiaga 2007; Pariser 2015; ILO 2016) has addressed both its legal regulation and the complexities of its specific labour relations; however, the connections between the former and the latter warrant deeper exploration. I

suggest that, rather than being inherently invisible, domestic work as ‘work like no other’ (see sections 1.4 and 4.4) complicates the clear-cut distinctions between public and private space, professional and personal relations and productive and reproductive work, which lie at the heart of mainstream definitions of labour and employment. While the private household as a workplace hampers the enforcement of labour law, the in/visibility of domestic work also depends on the extent to which it is recognized as productive work, which, as I illustrate below, is firmly rooted in long-standing notions of gender, overlapping with race/ ethnicity and class.

I structure the argument in this chapter into the following sections: I begin by looking at the diversity and hierarchies among street traders, with a particular focus on the relations of capital and labour. In the third section, I use ethnographic notes depicting the distribution of different types of street vendors across Dar es Salaam to explore the contribution of structural factors such as gender and age to the use of public space and tolerance towards vendors. Section 4 draws on the life stories of domestic workers, illustrating how the in/visibility of domestic work is constituted by an overlap of professional and personal relations. The fifth section explores the invisibility and informality which result from the interplay of gender, age, marital status and skill levels of domestic workers, as well as from the class status and race/ethnicity of their employers.

5.2 Labour and capital in small-scale trade

Since small-scale trade offers an entry-level income-generating opportunity, it is not surprising that traders are ubiquitous in Dar es Salaam and other major Tanzanian cities. Their exact number is unknown since only a few have their presence and activities registered. The Basic Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile Report of the Tanzanian government lists the number of “Street Vendors and Related Workers” in 2012 as 546,436 of whom 424,577 operate in urban areas (URT 2014: xi). In contrast, for Dar es Salaam alone, recent studies estimate the number to range between 700,000 traders in 2008 (Lyons and Msoka 2010: 1082) and over one million in 2014 (Mramba 2015a: 120). This discrepancy may exist for both statistical and political reasons, and the numbers are impossible to verify. In any case, it can be assumed that around 10-20 per cent of Dar es Salaam residents depend on small-scale trade for an income for themselves and their families, even when considering that actual residence numbers might be much higher than in the official census.⁴⁷

Contrary to the widespread, simplifying categorizing of small-scale traders as self-employed entrepreneurs (see above), I found considerable variety in terms of labour relations and ownership of capital in the sector. The vendors with whom I conversed displayed a broad spectrum of income levels and livelihood strategies.

⁴⁷ Dar es Salaam is the largest city as well as the commercial centre of the country, counting officially 4.4 million residents and growing at a rate of 6.5 per cent annually (Wenban-Smith 2014: 7; URT 2013).

Among the small-scale traders I interviewed, five *machingas* were selling merchandise for other traders or retail shops, and one of the stationary traders was employed by the owner of a street kitchen. These vendors were casually hired, earning a low wage or commission on sales. Another three *machingas* depended on additional sources of income to acquire the necessary capital for their street vending business or to compensate for low sales. Eleven traders (six *machingas*, one stationary trader and four market traders) shared their production materials and other facilities, such as equipment or storage space, in a group or collective. Two vendors ran their business together with unpaid family members. In sum, of 33 interviewed traders, 27 could be categorized as self-employed, of whom only eleven were the sole and independent owners of their 'micro-enterprise' (see Annexes).

For many small-scale traders, being a self-employed micro-entrepreneur presents an ambitious goal, not a condition *ex ante*. The ideal-typical path to success described by optimistic traders includes the following steps: most vendors, especially youth migrating from rural areas to Dar es Salaam, begin with low or no starting capital at all. Peddling low-cost items such as single cigarettes or roast ground nuts, assisting more experienced vendors (often kin or acquaintances from the same region or village) or selling wholesalers' merchandise on commission allows traders to accumulate small savings which can then be invested in more pricey merchandise with larger returns, such as small electronics, or in buying equipment like a pushcart or a table. Ideally, with experience and age, incomes and savings increase while the initial mobility of a *machinga* makes way for a fixed business under a roof and, ultimately, one's own shop or restaurant. This path presents a hierarchy among small-scale traders, with high mobility and low capital at one end and the reverse at the other. As pointed out in the literature on the 'informal economy', the lines between survival and accumulation, wages and capital, and employment and self-employment are, thereby, often blurred (Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur and Ostrom 2006; Chen 2007).

The intricate relationship of starting capital, employment and commercial premises also preoccupied Lawrence, who made a living with the sale of *mitumba* (second-hand clothes) which he bought wholesale at Karume Market. In his mid-twenties, he had just graduated from college with a degree in accounting and was pondering his plans for the future:

I've done this business while I studied at the college. It was very hard, the conditions are bad, I had to fight a lot. Now my plan is to get employed. When I get employed, I get the capital, then I can continue the business. My target is to construct that business, to reach the highest point, then I'll have my own shop, my own company ... There is not enough employment ... It's better to be self-employed, because you're free. To find yourself a job in this country is too hard ... But I studied a lot of things, research methodology and marketing. You have to do anything, whatever is needed, you cannot choose. Later, I'll start my own firm.

Lawrence was very well informed on the workings of the Tanzanian *mitumba* market, had acquired useful sales skills and reinvested his profits to secure himself a slot at a popular market. With a degree in higher education, he was hoping to find ‘formal’ employment, and to invest his wages in the expansion of his business.

For many small-scale traders, however, the path from hawking to successful shop ownership does not follow a straight line and is fraught with risks. Family responsibilities, sickness, accidents, theft and, not least of all, confiscations and evictions can set traders’ work back years, forcing them to start all over again or even return to their home villages empty-handed and in need of support. On their way to becoming independent businessmen and women, small-scale traders experience many hardships. Frederick, for instance, a *machinga* in his late thirties who had been selling wall maps and posters to commuters for more than ten years, found himself unable to expand his business since his revenue was too small to accumulate; in addition, he had to spend much of his income on the care of his ailing parents. Clement, about the same age as Frederick and a single parent, was forced to take up shoe shining from scratch after his kiosk was demolished during the 2006 evictions. The loss of his income and status produced a fundamental rupture: his wife left him and their small child, and he had been obliged to live hand to mouth ever since. “All I had was destroyed ... I lost my life that day”, he remembered.

While some traders, like Lawrence, accumulate savings and expand their business over time, Frederick’s and Clement’s incomes were insufficient to consider developing their precarious work arrangements into fully-fledged businesses. Differences in education also played significant roles here. Unlike Lawrence, both Frederick and Clement had dropped out of secondary school; both had taught themselves English after coming to Dar es Salaam. Their attempts to find a niche in small-scale trade had kept them alive but not evolved into successful, secure businesses. Clement’s accomplishments had been ruined by eviction, while Frederick was struggling to overcome the vicious cycle of poverty.⁴⁸

Along the continuum from survival to accumulation, incomes and profit margins varied significantly among small-scale traders. Low entry costs and capital requirements, and the advantages of hawking and peddling for wage or commission, have the downside of low returns. The average profits of the traders I interviewed ranged between 4,000 TZS and 60,000 TZS (between 2 and 30 USD) per day, and were significantly higher among older and stationary traders. This reflects the findings of an earlier study by Michal Lyons and Colman Msoka (2007), according to which 17 per cent of small-scale traders earned less than 3,000 TZS and 27 per cent more than 11,000 TZS per day.

The same study also found that women were overrepresented in the poorest group of traders, and that profit margins were higher for older traders as well as for traders from the region. Traders aged 25 years and above tended to earn more

⁴⁸ I return to Frederick’s struggles in Chapter 7.

than traders below that age. Lyons and Msoka concluded that this hints at the potential for growth in the sector of small-scale trade (ibid.: 19f.). My conversations and participant observation corroborated these findings, revealing that the poverty, incomes and profit margins of small-scale traders are affected by gender, age and education.

While street vending does offer upward mobility, it needs to be noted that opportunities to accumulate and expand are not distributed evenly among traders; rather, livelihood strategies are constituted by multiple intersecting factors. As the examples of Frederick and Clement show, not all traders are able to expand their businesses, and failure to do so is often perceived as shameful. Similarly, Rashidi, a fifty-year-old, door-to-door *mitumba* trader, experienced hawking as a degrading income strategy for a man of his age, whereas for many younger *machingas*, hawking was associated with opportunities and ambition.⁴⁹ Street vending and hawking generally classify as precarious work. In line with the discussion in section 3.3, the extent to which this affects vendors, and who fits the description of ‘precarious worker’, is contingent on several intersecting factors (see also Campbell and Price 2016).

These intersections are neither new nor coincidental but, rather, present a continuation of long-standing developments in the Tanzanian economy as well as the relative position of traders in the labour market. Conducting an analysis of the urban ‘informal economy’ during the mid- to late 1980s, Tripp reported:

Women and men, however, engage in different kinds of enterprises. Women are mainly involved in the making and selling of pastries, fried fish, porridge, beans, tea, soup, retail charcoal, firewood, kerosene and flour. Men, on the other hand, tend to be the tailors, market sellers, carpenters, masons, launderers, mechanics and shoemakers ... One constraint that keeps youth and women locked in certain low income generating projects (e.g., street vending) and keeps them from branching out into more lucrative ventures is lack of capital, which in turn is reflected in the low incomes derived from their projects. Men, for example, reported four times higher starting capital than women and had 5.4 times higher returns from their businesses (Tripp 1989: 14f.).

While small-scale and street trade in Dar es Salaam has enormously expanded and diversified since Tripp’s study, two of her observations carry continued validity: first, among a broad range of income-generating activities, street vending ranks low in terms of capital requirements and income levels, and is hence an attractive entry-level occupation to the poor, predominantly youth and women.⁵⁰ However, this section has demonstrated important differences among street vendors,

⁴⁹ Lately, the notion of the term *machinga* has shifted, no longer denoting hawking but owning a small business, see section 8.3.

⁵⁰ At the same time, unregistered and untaxed street trade also offers a lucrative business model for well-established owners of formalized shops. This trend has increased with the recent introduction of vendor IDs (see section 8.3).

indicating that hawking is the most common occupation for those lacking starting capital. Contradicting the view of ‘informal’ income-generation as an active choice of ‘exiting’ the ‘formal’ economy’ (e.g. Maloney 2003; Perry et al. 2007), for many, street trade is not an ‘enterprise’, but a job.

Second, the relative security and lucrateness of street vending are contingent on traders’ capital, income margins and position in the hierarchy of small-scale traders. These differences in terms of gender, age, income levels or mobility are often overlooked in academic discussions on the use of public space for street vending. Prananda Luffiansyah Malasan (2019: 53) notes that “the dichotomy between formal and informal activities in urban development discourse has somehow positioned street vending as a static activity, which inadequately addresses the heterogeneous and complex interests and conflicts reflected in the activities of street vending”. This heterogeneity also affects vendors’ visibility in public space, to which I now turn.

5.3 Contested visibility: public order and social hierarchies

Street traders are active in all parts of the city, including residential areas, but the most prominent locations for traders are near major roads and in the commercial centre (see Map of Dar es Salaam): in downtown Dar es Salaam, these are the Posta, Kisutu, Upanga, Kivukoni, Kariakoo, Ilala and Buguruni areas (all in Ilala Municipality); along Morogoro Road towards the north-east of the city in the Magomeni, Manzese, Ubungo and Kimara areas; along Bagamoyo Road towards the north and the Makumbusho and Mwenge areas (all in Kinondoni Municipality).⁵¹

Conflicting conceptions of the connection between ‘informal’ street vending, visibility and the legal regulation of public space were brought into stark relief during two interviews, one with a street trader and the second with the legal officer of Kinondoni Municipal Council. The perspective of many traders was summarized in the spontaneous reaction by Lazaro, who sold baseball caps and beanies which he displayed on a small mat next to Uhuru Road. When I asked him why he chose to work informally, he exclaimed, “Informal? But I’m here, on the street! Everyone can see me. How can I be informal?” After I clarified that my question referred to official registration and licensing procedures, he claimed that, apart from the infrequent clearance raids by the *wagambo wa manispaa* when he had to pay fines or bribes, the government did not care about a business as small and unsteady as his.

Lazaro’s response captures how for most street vendors—and Tanzanians making a living in the ‘informal economy’ more generally—the concept of ‘informal’ work

⁵¹ At the time of my research, Dar es Salaam was divided into three administrative districts: Ilala, Kinondoni and Temeke. Due to my limited research capacities, I focused on Ilala and Kinondoni Municipalities; however, as documented by other research, traders have a strong presence in Temeke Municipality as well (Lyons and Msoka 2007).

has little meaning and is rarely applied to themselves, since they perceive their unregistered occupations as ‘normal’ (see also Hansen and Vaa 2004: 7): similarly to Lazaro, who connected the English term with invisibility, other street vendors and domestic workers would associate both the English and Swahili terms with a broad range of issues. Throughout my conversations, I had to clarify my questions regarding the status of their work as ‘informal’—*kazi isiyo rasmi*, ‘unofficial’ work—by concretizing which aspects I was referring to, for instance, the existence of a contract. Presumably because it presents such a “blanket concept” (Saaritsa 2008: 317), the term, either in English or Swahili, did not turn up at all in most of my interviews with workers (see also section 8.5).

Lazaro’s response further shows the double-sidedness of the relation between visibility in public space and legality for street vendors. On the one hand, being visible exposes street vendors to the surveillance of the authorities, with considerable risk of severe fines and physical abuse as well as criminal persecution; on the other, they depend on high visibility in prominent locations to advertise and sell their goods, and there is constant competition among traders for the most visible spots along busy roads and intersections, bus stands and popular market areas. Visibility is both a necessity and a status symbol for traders; Lazaro, for example, took pride in having occupied a prominent spot on a main road in Dar es Salaam for almost two years, paying high maintenance costs in fines and bribes to retain it.

These popular locations are, however, also the most congested and, importantly, those from which the municipal administrations most urgently want the traders removed. Interviewing Kinondoni’s municipal solicitor, I received an answer ringing with anger and frustration when I inquired about the clearance raid I had witnessed in Kariakoo. The official admitted that some of the methods used by the auxiliary police were questionable but insisted that harsh measures were inevitable. In his view, the fault did not lie with law enforcement. “So you ask why the fruits were thrown into the street. But why don’t you ask why *we see them* selling the fruits on the streets? The vendors are stubborn!” (interview with Kinondoni Municipal Council 06.03.2015, emphasis added). His choice of words hinted at what, from the viewpoint of the authorities, aggravated the traders’ recalcitrance: selling their merchandise in broad view, especially in a crowded hub like Kariakoo during rush hour, constituted ostensible and unacceptable defiance of public order.

The official described the utilization of non-designated space for ‘informal’ trade as a criminal act. The law was clear: “[The street traders] are breaking the law when they are doing informal business”. To my consecutive question—what precisely distinguishes ‘informal’ from ‘formal’ street trade?—the prompt and somewhat tautological response was, “What makes these traders informal is that they don’t comply with the law. When they get a license and go to the market areas it’s not illegal” (ibid.).

The solicitor pointed out that it was possible for the government to change the laws and legalize street trade. The feasibility and desirability of such legal changes were, however, another question, given the limitations of the city's infrastructure to accommodate large numbers of traders, as well as the need for more long-term solutions to the root causes of rural-urban migration. In the meantime, the municipal authorities were obliged to implement by-laws in accordance with government laws. The city's administration was hence confronted with the "problem" of street trade which could be solved only through "money and force" (ibid.).

The responses by Lazaro and the municipal official, and the sharp contrast between their perspectives, show how the informality of street trading and the use of public space by unlicensed vendors are not only matters of legal definitions but also embedded in normative presumptions and questions of legitimacy. From the position of the city authorities, street vending in undesignated areas is illegal and illegitimate. As expressed by the circular reasoning of the Kinondoni municipal solicitor, 'informal' is seen as synonymous with illegal and associated with disorderliness. This view, and the legislation and urban policies that result, reflect not only long-standing prejudice but also modernist thinking whereby street trade is an anachronism that has no space in a modern city (see Sections 1.2, 4.2 and Chapter 8). Negative attitudes towards 'informal' income-generating activities, particularly street vending, follow the long tradition of banning the unregistered activities of the urban poor from the cities and are widespread in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa (see also Burton 2007; Kamete 2013; Young 2017).

Local authorities have an interest in managing small-scale trade in formalized market settings, where fees and taxes can be extracted. Yet, compared to the actual number of small-scale traders, officially designated market areas are often unattractive to street vendors and inadequate in terms of size. The views of vendors are not heard in municipal decision-making processes, and they strongly resist attempts by the city administration to remove 'informal' street vending from the urban centres to newly designated market areas, since such trading spaces are often far away from traffic hubs and lack the footfall on which the traders depend (see also Lyons et al. 2012, *The Citizen* 26.05.2016).

The existing markets each provide space for several dozen vendors but are far from accommodating the hundreds of thousands of traders in the city. Official trading space is thus limited to vendors who have the necessary disposable capital for rents and fees. Restrictive by-laws discriminate against those with less capital and lower incomes, and especially poor traders who live hand to mouth. The by-laws and evictions ignore the fact that most street vendors have no alternative to trading in non-designated areas (interview with LHRC 21.01.2015; see also Ackson 2014: 152).

The competition for attractive trading space reflects the diversity and hierarchies among vendors in terms of capital and mobility, discussed above, which are, in

turn, affected by intersecting social categories as well as social norms which apply to different groups. On my occasional visits to the Mwenge, Ilala, Boma, Kariakoo and Mjinga (Kisutu) Markets (see Map of Dar es Salaam), I noticed that the stalls were usually run by both men and women over thirty years of age, with a slight majority of male traders, particularly those for second-hand and new clothes, which appeared to be the domain of male vendors. However, as many stationary vendors hire (often younger) traders to watch over their stalls for them, I could not assess the gender or age composition of the owners themselves.

Market traders like Lawrence reserve a fixed stall or spot, for which they have to pay a fee on a daily or weekly basis, and usually return to the same workplace every working day. The fees are either paid to a private market management company, a traders' association which has an agreement or contract with the market management or directly to the municipal administration. Markets may be inside permanently built structures and thus offer some protection from sun and rain, or located outside, where traders display their wares on semi-permanent or makeshift stands or directly on the ground. Despite paying fees and rents, market vendors usually do not have their business formally registered, and the trading licenses issued by the market management can be withdrawn at any time. Though insecure, however, trading in a designated market space offers protection from the threat of clearance raids and evictions (interview with Migahawa 13.02.2015).

Outside of designated trading spaces, warm food served by Mama Lishe (lit.: Mother Nutrition), in what resemble 'pop-up restaurants',⁵² is a common sight. These pavement kitchens may be housed in semi-permanent structures, such as under a makeshift roof, or just appear at the same street corner at specific times of the day, making use of commuters' movements during the rush hours in the city. The roadside chefs keep small stoves, chairs and tables stored nearby and

⁵² I use this term deliberately to draw attention to conflicting representations of street kitchens. Whereas street kitchens are connected to low incomes in Tanzania, they are considered an innovative and fashionable dining experience in middle-class urban settings of the Global North (see Frost et al. 2016: 137ff.). The difference in class status may also be one factor to explain different government responses to the phenomenon: Helsinki's annual "Pop-up Restaurant Day", for example, instigated as a protest against the city's food hygiene and business regulations in 2011, "was a roaring success from day one. And yet it was also illegal, or semi-legal at best; none of the participants had a permit to make and sell food on their premises, in their homes, in the street. But the scale of the activity meant that the city government could not touch it for fear of a gigantic public relations disaster" (Hill 2015: 37). While the celebration of pop-up culture in the Global North mirrors and normalizes the rise of precarity (Harris forthcoming), the omnipresence and popularity of street kitchens in Dar es Salaam rarely protects vendors from evictions and penalties. I discuss the relevance of the class and social status of vendors and their customers in the following chapter.

quickly set them up to accommodate hungry customers, often selling food they have previously prepared in the kitchen of a private home.⁵³

Baba (father) Lishe street restaurants exist as well, but the street kitchens offering cooked full meals to seated customers appeared to be the domain of women street vendors: sweet and savoury breakfast (pastries served with tea or hot milk, or hearty soup and pancakes), lunch or dinner (usually consisting of rice, *ugali* or bananas, served with beans and a small side of vegetables, meat or fish) were commonly sold by women. In contrast, snacks like smoked or grilled fish and seafood, meat kebabs or grilled maize, which are eaten while standing—eating food while walking is frowned upon in Dar es Salaam—are sold by men. Chips and samosas are sold by both women and men, and both genders can be found tending the tables serving tea throughout the day.⁵⁴

As the name ‘mother’ or ‘father’ indicates, the vendors selling prepared meals are seen to provide the comfort of home cooking to their customers and to be deserving of the respect paid to parents; they often tend to be at least slightly older than the *dada* or *kaka* (sister or brother) who are working together or alongside the *mamas* and *babas* running the kitchen. Moreover, the cooking skills and equipment, such as wooden benches, grills, pots and tableware, indicate that the traders have already been able to acquire some capital. Like other street vendors, Mama or Baba Lishe restaurant owners may have accumulated this from both ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ work, once again illuminating the blurred line and interdependencies between the two (see also Hart 1973).

In addition to prepared foods, almost any goods can be found for sale on the pavements, ranging from vegetables and fruit to new and used clothes and shoes, cosmetics and soaps, books and stationary supplies, handicraft and artwork, ovenware, dishes and household utensils. Even makeshift photo studios can be found occasionally. Vendors display their merchandise on racks, tables, mats or on the ground; clothes, fabrics and hats may be draped on nearby fences and walls to attract customers. Some traders peddling fruit and vegetables use pushcarts and bicycles to transport and exhibit their wares, while others maintain permanent kiosks selling candy, bottled water and soda. Once roadside traders have found and successfully occupied a lucrative spot, they prefer to return to it every day; however, both the threat of evictions and competition from other traders may force them to switch their workplace from time to time.

⁵³ Permanent kitchens inside a house or under a roof are called *hotels*. Although even *hotels* often have no official business registration, the owners pay tax and are usually not targeted by clearance raids.

⁵⁴ On visits to Morogoro and Mwanza, I learned that the gender division slightly differs from city to city.



Image 3. Textile and shoe vendors on a street in Kariakoo.



Image 4. Coconut and freshly cut fruit sold in Kisumu.

The mobility of roadside traders also depends on the size and quantity of wares they have to offer. While larger, stationary kiosks attract more customers and tend to sell at slightly higher prices, they are also more exposed to the municipal authorities. Traders with fewer wares make use of their flexibility. Street vendors selling clothes and other small items in the busy, narrow streets of Kariakoo (see Image 3), for instance, spread out their merchandise on specifically tailored mats, which allows the swift packing of wares into a portable sack. Roadside stands are run by both men and women. More permanent stalls or kiosks are often maintained by several people throughout the day, usually members of the owner's extended family, but also casually hired vendors. As with the food vendors, it is possible to identify a tendency for mobility to correlate with age and gender: more mobile stands were operated by younger, predominantly male traders whereas stalls with more permanent structures are owned by older traders and women.

According to my observations, the majority of roadside traders were male, while the vendors using vehicles are almost always men. Prominently, along Bibi Titi Mohamed Road, Bagamoyo Road, Uhuru Road and Morogoro Road, especially at the Ubungo intersection, as well as in Mnazi Mmoja, Posta and Kariakoo, I noted that three out of four traders were male. These are, however, also the noisiest, busiest and most prominent spots in which to trade. According to statistical surveys and previous research (Tripp 1997; UN Habitat 2007; Lyons and Msoka 2007; ILO 2013e), women are overrepresented in small-scale trade and in 'informal' employment more generally, so it can be assumed that female traders have a stronger presence in quieter areas.

This trend is most prominently exemplified by the *marching guys*, the mobile traders or hawkers. As implied by the name, *machingas* carry their wares around with them when walking along the streets. Again, the range of merchandise they offer comprises almost everything: clothes, fabrics and shoes, small electronics, household utensils, cosmetics, CDs and DVDs, and so forth. Others sell bottled water and soda or small snacks like samosas, smoked octopus and, prominently, spoonfuls of roasted ground nuts and single cigarettes.

The sales strategies of *machingas* are heavily gendered. Hawkers who walk along busy roads, make use of the frequent traffic jams to approach customers in cars or in overcrowded *daladalas*, and the traders selling groundnuts and cigarettes, are always men. This group of *machingas* usually tries to attract the attention of customers in hectic and noisy spaces by shouting, making hissing sounds or clanking coins between the fingers of one hand. Female *machingas*, on the other hand, carry their wares somewhat concealed in a basket or backpack, approaching customers individually to show their wares on demand. Although there were exceptions—young female *machingas* who used brazen behaviour like whistling and singing to stir amused interest among crowds of commuters—it appeared to be the rule for women hawkers to stay more quietly in the background. Indeed, several female *machingas* told me that they avoided trading on the streets, and instead located their customers in office buildings, hotel lobbies, beauty parlours or restaurants.

Choice of sales strategy depends on age as well: on average, *machingas* appeared to be significantly younger than stationary traders. Young men display their wares openly in crowded public spaces, whereas older and female hawkers tend to have a less outgoing approach towards customers. While this owes to norms of appropriate behaviour for men and women of different ages, the sales strategy also depends on individual self-esteem and temper, as King Said, a twenty-five year old *machinga* selling sunglasses, explained. He insisted that to be a successful *machinga*, one must not be shy in front of customers or afraid of being ridiculed or bullied. These skill requirements for *machingas*, encouraging bold sales strategies in public spaces, are at odds with the social norms for female gender and mature age, and confine women and older traders to a position of considerable disadvantage.

Noticeably, four types of services and goods that are elementary to Dar es Salaam street life and exempt from evictions and penalties, are all provided by men. These permanently tolerated trades are both stationary and mobile and include the stationary newspaper stands and cobblers' *ofisi* ('office', usually consisting of a wooden table or box) which can be found near bus or taxi stands. Their owners often, though not always, pay fees to the municipality or ward. The men in these two lines of work are considered professionals: newspaper traders must be literate in Swahili and English in order to be able to recommend newspaper editions to a customer; a shoe repairman or shoe shiner is *fundi wa viatu*, skilled and trained in the craft of fixing and shining shoes. As Bujra (2000: 32) notes, a *fundi* (craftsman or artisan) is always male.⁵⁵

The two other exempt services are provided by the vendors carrying coal-heated coffee pots along the streets, selling single shots of strong *kahawa*, and vendors on foot or on bicycles selling ice cream from portable ice chests. Unlike the newspaper traders and shoe shiners, the coffee and ice cream vendors are usually unskilled youth, and both trades, particularly the sale of *kahawa*, are considered entry-level jobs in the urban labour market. My interviews indicated that *kahawa* traders usually co-operate in small groups, sharing the coffee kitchen, whereas ice cream vendors are individually hired by a local ice cream factory or large supermarkets.

These ethnographic notes illustrate that, in light of the omnipresence of street trade in Dar es Salaam and other Tanzanian cities, access to and tolerance towards vendors in public space are hardly a result of clear-cut lines between 'formal' and 'informal', or legal and illegal street vending. Visibility in both designated and non-designated urban space needs to be understood as fraught with competition, hierarchies and insecurities among traders. In the same vein, legislation, law enforcement and urban policies do not apply to 'informal' street vending as a whole, but affect various groups and individuals differently. While in general terms, older and male traders tend to have higher incomes and occupy the

⁵⁵ *Fundi* is a respectful title, usually referring to a man who has the knowledge and skill to manufacture or repair items.

more prominent spots on the streets, the distribution of advantageous positions is not straightforward. This diversity must be kept in mind in the discussion of 'informal' street trade and public space, to which I return in Chapter 8.

5.4 Personal and professional relations in domestic work

The empirical survey provided by the ILO Situational Analysis gives the official number of domestic workers in mainland Tanzania as 883,779 (203,622 in Zanzibar) in 2013, making up about five per cent of the total working age population in the whole of Tanzania. However, the ILO calculates that the actual number is 1,728,228, representing as much as seven per cent of the total working age population, and cautions that many domestic workers are not captured by the empirical survey but are "hidden in *very informal* arrangements" (ILO 2016a: 1, emphasis added). The trade union CHODAWU lists 5,200 members as domestic workers, out of a total of 36,000 members as of 2013 (IDWF 2014a). The vast discrepancies between the number of domestic workers who are represented in the survey, their estimated actual number and the number of unionized domestic workers hints at the difficulty and reluctance to clearly identify roles in this sector, not only by officials and the trade union, but also by employers and domestic workers themselves.

Research by the ILO suggests that many employers are aware of their legal role and obligations but intentionally hide their domestic workers from the public, and their knowledge of rights and obligations from the domestic workers, in order to keep the costs of the employment relation low and control over the worker high. The Situational Analysis quotes one domestic worker's statement that employers' concealment of working conditions in their homes shows "they know what they are doing when they treat us unjustly" (ILO 2016a: 10). However, there are also those who do not consider themselves employers, since the term is associated with 'formal', contractual labour which is perceived to be quite different from the often close and intimate personal relationships with their domestic workers. A report by the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN 2013: 5)⁵⁶ states that domestic work "is often embedded in practices of reciprocity, support, and interdependence between relatives, friends or people belonging to the same community."

The resulting legal and social grey zones create an environment for a variety of asymmetric and mostly hierarchical relationships between employer and employee, which can be located along a continuum ranging from exploitation to reciprocity (ILO 2016a). Domestic workers may conceal their work relation for any of three reasons: the employers of live-in domestic workers prohibit any contact with outsiders; workers are not aware of their status and their rights; or they are ashamed to be associated with work that is socially stigmatized (interviews with CHODAWU 02.02.2015).

⁵⁶ The International Domestic Workers Network was the organization preceding the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF).

The overlap of professional and personal relations between the employer and employee is a central and often addressed element that renders domestic work invisible. A 'work like no other', it is performed in private households rather than in clearly demarcated workplaces. This not only impedes labour inspection and law enforcement, particularly in live-in arrangements, it also often makes it difficult to distinguish between the personal activities and occupational tasks of a worker, while relations between employer and employee may be guided by mutual trust and intimacy instead of clear-cut job descriptions (Mundlak and Shamir 2011: 293). Although labour relations and live-in arrangements in private households are often disguised as family relations for strategic reasons, especially if the worker has migrated from another area or country (Michel and Peng 2012), the personal bonds between employer and employee may also be genuine. The ambiguous relations between work and private life featured in many stories recounted by domestic workers, including those by Melinda, Emanuel, Bisuna and Neema.

Starting with Melinda, it was clear that cleaning my apartment and fulfilling my wishes was a job for her. Since I was one of her boss's tenants, I was aware that she might find questions from me intrusive, and avoided probing into her personal life or opinions about her work. However, in loose conversations she spoke of her tasks as *kazi* (work) and of her remuneration as *mshahara* (wage). Melinda spoke positively about her work, the landlady and her wage, although I took this with a grain of salt given my position as tenant. One day, I practiced Swahili by reading from a trade union leaflet on domestic workers' rights to her and she smilingly corrected my pronunciation and explained the leaflet to me, obviously familiar with its content. She made a clear distinction between work and leisure time by rejecting my offers of after work dinners or drinks since her evenings were reserved for *pumzika* (rest), as were holidays and weekends when she was not available. I also interpret the polite but impersonal manner in which she conversed with me and my flatmates as her way of keeping relations at the workplace at a distance from her private life.

Melinda's employer and the landlady of my apartment, Namiko, likewise emphasized the importance of professionalism in work relations. A businesswoman from Japan, she had lived and worked in Tanzania and other African countries for many years, and employed several other Tanzanians in her office. Namiko explained that when hiring Melinda, as well as the other employees, the contracts had been clarified and negotiated in detail. To her, good work relations entailed two components: one was fulfilling her role as boss, which meant that she had the final say on all points at issue but also the responsibility to care for the workers' wellbeing. This could include providing support beyond her obligations as employer by paying for the treatment of a worker's sick family member, for instance. This went hand in hand with the business rationale, the second component. Namiko stressed that taking her employees' concerns seriously and paying salaries and bonuses above average were not only matters of professional and social responsibility, but also investments in loyalty and

reliability that led to a win-win situation, as satisfied employees did their work better. Namiko also knew that word spread quickly in Dar es Salaam, and good work relations thus meant a good business reputation. She trusted her employees and cared for them, but business acumen was a central element in her work relations.

In comparison to Melinda, the separation between workplace and home was far less clear for Emanuel, who worked as a live-in watchman for the landlord of a block of flats in Kisutu. A man in his mid-twenties, he had not finished secondary school, holding several jobs in his home region of Mbeya—doing “this and that”—before coming to Dar es Salaam, where he first guarded the house of a relative’s family on the outskirts of the city. The family had been good to him, treated him “like their own child” and given him food and clothes, but since they had four children, they could not afford to pay him in cash and the house was crowded. Emanuel was grateful to them, but had other hopes for his life in the city. With little money and a three-hour bus ride away from the centre, he felt that he was missing out on all the opportunities Dar es Salaam offered. He wanted to find a good job that paid cash so he could “grow and expand”, and one day have a house and a family himself. After two years, he left the family and started working as a guard for a private security company which offered services to small business and shops.

His wage, however, turned out to be barely sufficient to cover the daily expenses of life in the city, even though he worked six days a week and sometimes even an entire month without a break. To save money, he forwent accommodation and instead slept at or near the shop which he was to guard. Despite being in employment rather than in a family relationship, he again had no home other than his workplace. Then, after another year, Emanuel was offered the job by his current employer and accepted. The pay was less than with the security company, but the conditions were better. Together with another watchman with whom he split the twenty-four-seven work shifts, he was given food and a small room with a washing facility. The work sometimes also involved additional tasks which remained unpaid, such as carrying loads for the employer’s wife or washing the car. To Emanuel, this was unfair and a nuisance, but he always kept quiet because the work offered unique advantages: he could allow people to sleep in the backspace or use the water hose in exchange for a bit of cash, and received extra rewards in cash or in kind for running errands for the tenants of the house. In addition, it allowed him to stay in the city centre, buzzing with life and opportunities. The way Emanuel put it, in the two-and-a-half years he had worked there, the employer had come to appreciate and trust him; he was now “like a relative”. The most important thing was that, due to his close relationship with the owner of the house and the steady job, he had been able to save up a considerable sum of money which he planned to invest in a business.

A similar story of combining personal and work duties was told by Bisuna. She came to join one of the focus group interviews together with her friend Deborah, who was also a domestic worker. Bisuna spoke very little English herself, so I got

bits and pieces of her story in Swahili while Deborah translated and paraphrased other parts for me. Bisuna was in her late twenties and had two small children. Her family was from the Morogoro area, and had sent her to stay with a related married couple in Dar es Salaam when she was still a teenager. The elderly woman had taken Bisuna in to help her and her husband with the household and with taking care of their grandchildren. In return for the childcare, both the elderly couple and Bisuna's parents received support in cash from the children's parents, who worked in Dar es Salaam. Bisuna herself received accommodation, food, clothing and an allowance. After some years, the couple's grandchildren were old enough to stay at their parents' home without supervision, and Bisuna had found a man to marry and live with.

The employers helped her to find work as a live-out cleaner and cook in another household closer to her new home. She quit that job when she became pregnant with her second child, mainly because, although her employer was flexible about her working hours, she did not pay enough for Bisuna to hire a nanny for her children and have money left to feed them. Since her family could not live on her husband's income, she was now looking for part-time work. However, even though she was busy with casual job assignments as a cook, washer or cleaner, she would visit the elderly couple who had first taken her in whenever possible. The couple was becoming frail and Bisuna saw it as a matter of respect and gratitude towards the *wazee* (elderly) to support them. She explained that just as they had helped her, she was now helping them.

The overlapping of employment and reproductive familial care and reciprocity were also central to relations between Neema, a twenty-one-year-old domestic worker from Singida, and her employer Grace, an unmarried bank assistant. Grace owned a house on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam in which she lived with a female tenant and Neema; in addition to Neema, she had also hired a watchman who lived in an outbuilding in the yard. Neema had worked on and off for Grace for a number of years; she had gone home to help in her parents' house several times, and once had left to start an apprenticeship with a tailor. The tailor had not been able to pay enough, however, and she had returned to Grace. Neema explained that the work was good; Grace was not a strict employer and paid her 120,000 TZS a month (about 60 USD, one and a half times the minimum wage for live-in workers) plus meals. She needed the money to support her parents and siblings, but she did not want to be a *housegirl* for the rest of her life or for any other employer than Grace, and still hoped to learn tailoring instead.

Whenever I visited Grace's home, I noticed the relative absence of hierarchy between the women: Neema's tasks were to clean and cook while Grace and the tenant were at work downtown but meals were taken together at the table, always saving a generous portion for the watchman;⁵⁷ the women also watched news and soap operas on TV together. Grace and the tenant helped with clearing the table and washing the dishes, and on Sundays after church, each woman

⁵⁷ Except in the case of an emergency, the watchman was not allowed to enter the house.

would wash her own clothes; Grace insisted that work had to be shared fairly and laundry was an intimate and personal task.

Being older and successful in her own job, Grace considered herself more of a parent than a boss. She had taken Neema in following the recommendation of the girl's relatives whose opinion she trusted. Grace acknowledged that Neema came from a poor family, had little formal education and was still young, but she was also worried that Neema was "full of dreams", believed that "life is like TV" and had not yet understood that she would have to work hard to succeed in life. She thought it was good for Neema to stay in her house where she was safe, especially from men making false promises. Grace wanted to help her make the right choices, explaining the overlap of professional and family ties in their relationship in this way:

In Tanzania, it isn't the same as in Europe; we are more like a family. We are a poor country so we have to care for each other. When you give money, it must be in order, there can be no corruption. You see what happens with the government with all the corruption. But it isn't all about money. When you go to work, things must be in order but we must also give support.

While the reciprocity in the relations between Melinda and Namiko, Grace and Neema, as well as between Emanuel, Bisuna and their employers is perhaps exceptional and not representative of the majority of domestic labour relations in Tanzania,⁵⁸ some points concerning perspectives on domestic work can be generalized. First of all, family and emotional bonds matter; although Melinda and some of the workers in the group discussions testified to domestic work's being 'work like any other' which was done in return for a wage, overall a picture emerged in which professional and family relations strongly overlap. Not only is the workplace the private home of the employer but, as in the case of live-in domestic workers, it is the home of the worker as well.

Moreover, while some domestic work positions are filled through procurement of workers by registered or unregistered agents, often workers are recruited on the basis of personal recommendation or kinship relations (see also ILO 2016a: 113f.). Many of these relations involve a rural-to-urban "care chain" in which care responsibilities are delegated down the income ladder (see Hochschild 2000). This was exemplified by Bisuna, who first earned money for her own parents by taking care of another couple's children, and later paid a nanny to watch her first-born child so she could continue working as a cleaner. The situation of Grace and Neema can be seen as a reversed version of this care chain, in which Neema sent a share of her wages to her parents and siblings, and Grace considered it her responsibility not only to pay for Neema's services but also to tutor and protect the *housegirl*.

⁵⁸ I discuss domestic workers' rights in Chapter 7.

Such chains are part of an “invisible human ecology of care” and involve a complex set of emotions; although workers are motivated by “better pay, they do not become money-making machines” (ibid.: 131, 133) and often develop emotional bonds with employers and their families. The same can be said of employers like Namiko and Grace, for whom the extraction of their domestic workers’ labour allowed them to dedicate more time to their own professional careers, but who also cared for their maids beyond their duties as employers. Even in less reciprocal and more exploitative domestic labour relations than those described here, familial orientation and emotional ties are determinant factors. Mattila (2011: 49ff.) discusses how infusing emotions into employer-employee relations may often simultaneously entail a benevolent and an exploitative side, leading to a spectrum from rather hierarchical paternalist or maternalist to more reciprocal personalist relations.

Importantly, the personal traits of the relations diametrically interact with the regulation of working conditions, as Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2007: 162) argues. “In the absence of fair wage, reasonable hours, and job autonomy, personalism alone is not enough to upgrade domestic work; but conversely, its absence virtually ensures that the job will be experienced as degrading.” In this vein, Emanuel’s reluctance to protest against being burdened with tasks by his employer’s wife on top of his already extensive working hours and low pay stemmed from his recognition of the benefits of his workplace as well as his appreciation of the close and respectful relation with his employer. Hence, the domestic work environment does not simply obscure the private from the public; finding themselves entangled in both personal and professional relations, employers and employees are balancing—to use Grace’s words—the need for public ‘order’ with that for personal ‘support’.

5.5 Facets of in/visibility

The relative invisibility of domestic work to law enforcement derives not only from its nature as ‘work like no other’, it also needs to be understood as intersectionally constituted: during my stay in Dar es Salaam, stories of the mistreatment of domestic workers turned up repeatedly—as hearsay and warnings in conversations with and among domestic workers, but also as an often emotionally stirring topic in everyday conversations with my Tanzanian acquaintances.⁵⁹ Everybody had heard of appalling working conditions for

⁵⁹ My informal, unsystematic approach (see Chapter 2) resulted in spontaneous and insightful discussions but did not aim to provide a representative overview of the demographics and conditions of domestic work in Dar es Salaam, let alone Tanzania. Detailed information on this is given by the Situational Analysis of the ILO (2016a). The common obstacles to making contact with live-in domestic workers with abusive employers were exacerbated by my position as a foreign researcher. In my own research encounters, I did not directly come into contact with the most exploitative sides of domestic work, and my portrayal is hence biased towards more positive accounts of reciprocal relations between domestic workers and their employers.

housegirls or *houseboys*,⁶⁰ and there was general agreement that such practices were abominable.

What stood out from these popular storylines was that the exploitation and abuse of domestic workers were closely connected to gender, location, age, class and race/ethnicity: the reported victims were almost always female or child domestic workers and very rarely adult males; mistreatment of domestic workers was believed to be worse abroad than in Tanzania and also worse in Zanzibar than on the mainland; non-white and non-African upper-middle class employers had a reputation of being abusive whereas *mzungu* or Tanzanian employers were believed to be more benevolent and kind.⁶¹

It is, therefore, no coincidence that the stereotypes which were most persistent in these daily commentaries on rights violations and abuse referred to those aspects in which labour relations between workers and employers have transformed most significantly in recent decades: gender, class and race/ethnicity, as highlighted by the literature on paid domestic labour in Tanzania (Bujra 2000; Kiaga 2007; Pariser 2015). Contextualizing my conversations with employers and domestic workers against a background of these previous studies, I suggest that the same factors are also central to the in/visibility of domestic work beyond its hiddenness in the private home, as they impact on its social status and recognition.

Gender, age, family

Domestic work, both paid and unpaid, was and still is predominantly performed by women in most African homes. Yet during the German colonial period and under British administration, in Tanganyika as in many other African countries, paid domestic labour also became respectable work for men (Koponen 1994: 656f.; Pariser 2015). Working in domestic service was held in good repute for a variety of reasons: contracts were more long-term and stable and incomes higher than in other jobs; domestic workers were able to build close relations with high-ranking colonial administrators and foreign business elites; and they had access to luxurious European goods and amenities. In short, employment in domestic service was seen as dignified work and male servants took pride in it (Pariser 2015: 111f.).

⁶⁰ These expressions are commonly used by many Tanzanians, irrespective of the age of the workers, and indicate the presumed family and kinship relations between employers and workers.

⁶¹ The most appalling stories circulated about the abuse of female Tanzanians migrating to Arab countries or working for Arab employers in Zanzibar or mainland Tanzania. While this stereotype certainly owed to some extent to the heightened media attention paid to working conditions in Qatar in preparation for the football world cup, some of the rumours of domestic workers' abuse were corroborated by a report by Human Rights Watch on working conditions in Oman and United Arab Emirates published in late 2017 (HRW 2017).

Performing domestic labour was not perceived as a threat to workers' masculinity as long as it could be kept at a distance from the worker's own home and received a decent wage (Bujra 1993: 76f.; 2000: 176f.) This changed, however, in the 1940s, when economic bottlenecks curbed employment amidst rapid urban population growth, driving labour supply up and wages down. "Rather than paying premium wages for numerous, highly specialized and experienced workers, [employers] hired inexperienced servants or youths who would perform more work for less money rather than join the ranks of the unemployed", summarizes Robyn Pariser (2015: 113).

With rising levels of rural poverty following Independence, in the 1970s the competition for low-skilled and usually low-paid jobs in domestic service was increasingly extended to migrant women from rural areas (Bujra 2000: 110f.). Thus, while domestic work did not necessarily count as women's work, once it had turned into an occupation for "getting by" rather than a "ticket" to a career and success (ibid.: 33f.), it became a closer fit with the life trajectories expected of both single and married women than with the aspirations of men. This trend continued and today the ILO estimates that about ninety per cent of all household work in Tanzania is performed by female domestic workers. However, more than half of this work remains unpaid, underpaid or paid in kind, since domestic workers are often considered members of the household or family (ILO 2016a).

Gender is central to the blurring of employment and family relations, as the vast majority (ninety per cent) of domestic workers live in the same household as their employers, particularly in urban areas; among live-in arrangements, women domestic workers make up almost two-thirds and men one-third (ILO 2016a: 99). Bujra observes a gendered division of labour concerning 'inside' and 'outside' tasks and stereotypical norms concerning 'men's work' and 'women's work'; driving, gardening and guarding, for example, remain specialized 'male' occupations (2000: 74ff.). By contrast, the ILO Situational Analysis found that women nowadays perform these tasks as well but are, overall, burdened with bigger workloads than male domestic workers (ILO 2016a: 100f.). Although the gendered inside-outside division of domestic work is becoming increasingly indistinct, perceptions of 'male' and 'female' tasks continue to be significant to the social recognition of domestic work.

Regardless of whether domestic work is paid or unpaid, the combination of the 'private' and gendered nature of domestic work perpetuates its perception as 'labour of love' rather than 'real' wage work. Domestic work is devaluated both in monetary and non-monetary terms, earning workers low wages as well as little social recognition (England 2005: 382ff.; Romero 2014: 119). During the focus group interviews, domestic workers shared their frustration over low wages and the absence of respect for their work. However, they saw domestic work skills—quite literally—as 'paying off' when they earned them good money, which would in turn earn them respect. The ILO Situational Analysis confirms the undervaluing of feminized domestic work as well: notwithstanding the significant diversity in domestic labour relations, domestic work is predominantly carried out by female

live-in workers who, often due to the alleged or actual kinship relation with the employer, remain under- or unpaid (see ILO 2016a: 98ff.).

Further, corresponding with other studies on domestic work (e.g. Cock 1980; Pollert and Charlwood 2009; Mattila 2011), Bujra (1993) argues that gender tends to aggravate vulnerabilities brought about by marital status, family responsibilities and a lack of other means of support. Comparing the attempts to resist unfair treatment by a married male and a widowed female domestic worker, she points out that the female domestic worker had “more to lose here – nothing to sell but her labour power, no land, and no spouse to keep the home fires burning and her children fed while she insisted upon her rights” (Bujra 2000: 35).

In my conversations with workers, however, I learned that vulnerability was not entirely a result of gender. The perception of the value of domestic work, and the recognition of the domestic worker, also changed with the worker’s age and position on the labour market. While Bisuna, Deborah, Neema and other young women who joined the group discussions had gone into domestic work because this was encouraged by their families, they did not see it as work they were presupposed to do as women, but as the nearest available job opportunity. Like Neema, the young women in the group discussions talked about their hopes of switching to other lines of work which would pay better and offer more independence, such as tailoring or hairdressing, or of taking their acquired skills as cooks and cleaners from private homes into a business environment. For instance, Deborah and Esther, who both were in their mid-twenties, unmarried and had attended secondary school, considered training as accountants once they could afford to return to school. Contrarily, Mama Sarah, Mama Amani and Felecia, three women in their forties and early fifties who all had children, saw no alternative to domestic work combined with other occasional work, such as seasonal sales of farm produce at Kariakoo market.

The combination of domestic work with other jobs or business activities—like selling home-cooked food at markets, as well as the investment of skills and wages in a business of their own, whereby domestic workers sometimes become employers—exemplify the interconnections between the categories of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’, productive and reproductive, wage labour and work on one’s own account. They further indicate that the in/visibility of domestic work does not result from gender roles alone. Gender is not a singular category in domestic work but, rather, intersects with other social categories (see also Mohanty 2003).

Both changes and continuity in gender roles, brought about by age and family responsibilities, became clear when comparing my conversations with Emanuel to that with Issa, another male domestic worker. Issa had come to Dar es Salaam from the Tanga region more than thirty years earlier, and was now about to return to his home village and family. After having lived with and worked for the same family for more than twenty years, he was himself getting too old to take care of his ailing employers and they had laid him off and replaced him with a

younger man. Issa had sought help from CHODAWU in reaching an agreement with his former employers over the payment of outstanding wages, severance money and his bus fare home.⁶²

He described his previous work as being in charge of the house and all tasks related to it, but without giving details. When I asked whether they included cooking, washing, cleaning, gardening and shopping, he merely nodded to each. He became more talkative when I asked about his family in Tanga. He was very proud of his three children, who were prospering in life. During the many years he had worked in Dar es Salaam, he had travelled to Tanga to see his family whenever possible and had sent them money. From our short conversation, I gathered that, as his work life in the big city was coming to an end, Issa was not returning home as a rich man—he had to sue his employers for his final wage and bus fare—but he had done well as a husband and father. He was looking forward to leaving the loud and hectic city and announced that, all in all, he was “satisfied”.

Already an older man, Issa’s reserved, quiet and polite ways of answering my questions contrasted with the self-assertive and outgoing manners Emanuel displayed in our meetings. Issa was shy about asking questions in return, whereas Emanuel wanted to know everything about life in Europe; Emanuel was also eager to demonstrate his self-acquired English skills. However, my exchanges with both men strongly reflected Bujra’s observation that, in Tanzania, domestic work is an acceptable bread-winning occupation for men, although a distinction is drawn between the skills of a domestic worker and the skills which are typically considered masculine (Bujra 2000: 32).

While domestic work certainly requires skills, the hierarchy to which Bujra calls attention here is based on the distinction between productive and reproductive work (Duffy 2007; Federici 2012). Both Issa and Emanuel were uncommunicative about their tasks in their employers’ homes and, although it was just around the corner from where we shared *kahawa* breaks, Emanuel did not want to show me where he lived and worked. When I asked whether he thought his boss or co-worker would mind me visiting, he responded evasively that he had “no house to show to a lady” and that he much preferred meeting me outside for coffee or drinks. By contrast, when telling me of a dangerous incident during his work for the private security company, he went into great detail on how he and his colleagues had gotten into a violent fight with a group of hooligans and succeeded in driving them away. Perhaps Emanuel was emphasizing masculine work tasks which conformed with his male identity, particularly to a female listener, and was opposed to my visiting because the way he worked and lived did not represent the social status to which he aspired. But the avoidance of his workplace was less striking than his eloquence when describing how and why he worked: he was hard-working and reliable; he was clever and knew how to make some extra Shillings; he had good relations with others; he had come from the village to the

⁶² Unfortunately, in my conversation with Issa, I neglected to ask about the professional backgrounds and social position of his employers.

city to find opportunities; he did not spend his money pointlessly and would put it to good use.

Emanuel appeared to be content with his work as long as it helped him move in the right direction and paid well enough, but he was not going to be a watchman forever. Although it was his boss who gave the orders, he represented himself as more of an independent fortune seeker than a dependent worker, a self-image which reminded me strongly of that drawn by hopeful young *machingas* (see above). Comparing the notes on my conversations with the two men later, I was left wondering whether a young Issa had first come to Dar es Salaam with similar ambitions as the younger man, and whether Emanuel would one day have to fight to receive severance pay and a bus fare home. Speculations aside, the two stories illuminate that, to Tanzanian men, their work in an employer's home is not a public matter, and that the visibility and invisibility of their work is tied to gendered conceptions of breadwinning on the one hand, and notions of productive work on the other.

Class, skills, race/ethnicity

Together with gender, both the class affiliation and ethnic composition of domestic workers and employers have become more diversified since the emergence of domestic service in the colonial era. Like Rehema, the fictional young woman introduced in Chapter 1, domestic workers still tend to come from a peasant or low-income, working class background, having to sell their labour power in order to make a living. More than two-thirds of domestic workers are migrants, moving from rural areas to work in the cities. Less than one per cent of domestic workers in Tanzania are from abroad, mostly from neighbouring countries Rwanda, Uganda, Malawi and Swaziland (ibid.; interview with IDWF 16.03.2015).⁶³

Since the emergence of paid domestic labour in Tanzania, workers have mostly been Africans from lower-income strata and from different regions of Tanganyika/Tanzania. By contrast, employers' profiles have changed and vary in terms of ethnicity, income and social status. Up until Independence, the employers of *houseboys* were predominantly Europeans, Asians⁶⁴ and Arabs: that is, upper-class members of the colonial and business elites. Employing domestic workers is still highly common for members of these ethnic groups, regardless of whether they are foreign diplomats, Tanzanian citizens or non-citizen businesspeople or employees.

⁶³ Insufficient legal protection for international migrant domestic workers is a serious concern and still under-researched in Tanzania. Due to the small percentage of non-Tanzanian domestic workers in mainland Tanzania my analysis excludes this issue.

⁶⁴ In East Africa, 'Asian' usually refers to ethnic Indians. In recent decades, the Chinese presence has grown but to date there appears to be no research on relations between Chinese employers and Tanzanian domestic workers.

Yet, with the emergence of an African-staffed state apparatus and African middle class following Independence, the proportion of African employers has grown as much as the sector itself; Bujra (2000) describes in detail the diversity found among them, and their motivations in hiring domestic workers. While for some members of the “new ‘ruling’ class”, having domestic workers is matter of displaying wealth, to others it permits petty accumulation (ibid.: 112). However, it is noteworthy that, in contrast to *mzungu*, Asian or Arab employers, African employers do not necessarily belong to the upper-middle class. For lower-middle and working-class Tanzanians, and indeed for the majority working in the Tanzanian ‘informal economy’, delegating household tasks is a necessity in order to manage daily life. The differentiation of minimum wage categories (see fn. 40) indicates that employers’ incomes range from low to high. It is not unusual, for instance, for live-out domestic workers to hire nannies or cleaners to help with their own household or family obligations (ILO 2016a: 108f.; focus group interviews).

Class matters to the visibility as well as status of domestic labour relations. This begins with the recruitment process: the ILO Situational Analysis notes that only seven per cent of domestic workers in Tanzania are hired through ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ professional recruitment agencies as opposed to personal or kinship relations (ILO 2016a: 112). The process of employment itself is

largely determined and shaped by income and status of employer’s [sic]. High income employers in Tanzania prefer to recruit a contractual live-out domestic worker while low income prefer non-contractual live-in domestic worker. The higher income employers are mostly expatriates, Indians, rich business people and high government officials. Some of the household [sic] have two domestic workers, ... live-in and live-out or both live-outs depending on their choices and the nature of work. (Ibid.: 114)

A higher level of professionalism involved in the recruitment process usually also indicates a more professional, rather than personal, relationship between the employer and domestic worker. This, in turn, is linked to the worker’s education and skill level: domestic work in households of upper middle-class, high income and expatriate employers requires a different set of skills than that in lower-middle-class or working-class households, including language skills, particularly English, in the case of foreign employers; knowledge of the preparation of diverse diets; skilful cleaning and ironing of expensive clothes and fabrics; and importantly, competent use of an array of electronic household appliances. Working for a high-income employer thus shows that a domestic worker is knowledgeable, experienced and trustworthy. As the younger participants in the focus group discussions maintained, when working in such a respectable environment a domestic worker could gain a “good reputation” and later put the acquired skills and experience to commercial use.

As in the colonial era, employers from diverse, non-African ethnic groups usually belong to the upper and upper-middle class. Ethnicity and nationality, however, present important divisions and hierarchies in terms of the recruitment process and, at least according to rumours and the views of the interviewed domestic workers, the relationship between employers and workers. A carry-over from the colonial period, having worked for an expatriate employer provides a domestic worker with the best references and the highest status on the domestic labour market. The image of the professionally distant but kind *mzungu* living in a clean, spacious house full of amenities is a common stereotype among Tanzanians; Northern Europeans in particular have the reputation of paying well, treating workers with respect and being charitable.⁶⁵ Employment with Tanzanians of Asian and Arab ethnicity is viewed in more ambiguous terms. Although these are commonly high-income households, the recruitment process is limited to domestic workers familiar with specific religious rites and diets who, therefore, often continue employment within these ethnic groups.⁶⁶ Household members in these groups, I was told, prefer to keep to their ethnic communities and rarely mingle with African Tanzanians, even when they are neighbours. In addition, class bias and racial stereotypes overlapped in frequent accusations of racism, abusive behaviour and arrogance towards African workers directed at employers belonging to these groups.

It has been discussed in other contexts how employers balance the cost of domestic labour with the cost of labour- and time-saving household appliances, and how these calculations are intertwined with the supply of labour on the one hand, and an interest in demonstrating class status on the other. In the Western world, the mass diffusion of household appliances decreased the demand for paid domestic labour and enabled women to take their labour power to the market (see Coen-Pirani, León and Lugauer 2008); however, the proliferation of household appliances confirmed rather than abolished the gender division of household labour, and their actual time- and labour-saving effect is called into question (Bittman, Rice and Wajman 2004). Thus, household labour, paid and unpaid, never disappeared; indeed, the demand for domestic workers is rising again in industrialized countries, particularly in response to the increased need for care work (Romero, Preston and Giles 2014). Case studies set in India and the Middle East, conversely, have noted that domestic workers are hired in the context of patronage relations (Jureidini 2009), less for their utility than for serving as a status symbol and “class marker” (Mattila 2011: 135).

⁶⁵ This stereotype had allowed me to make contact with domestic workers: Mama Amani and Mercy, a live-out worker who took on job offers to clean apartments in Kariakoo, had approached me at the market and offered their services. Although I could not hire them, they had subsequently helped me to set up the focus group interviews.

⁶⁶ The interviewed experts and officials did not consider the role of ethnicity as well as of religious and tribal affiliation relevant in the domestic work sector. To my knowledge, it is not addressed in the research literature on domestic work in Tanzania. As it was a common theme in daily conversations but heavily imbued with unfounded stereotypes, it is touched here only briefly.

In Tanzania and many other African countries, in contrast to the industrialized West, appliances are expensive imports, whereas labour is usually cheap (Bujra 2000: 38). With the increasing feminization and monetary devaluation of paid domestic labour, paralleled by the growing participation of women in the labour market and rural-urban migration, domestic work has become available to low-income households (Bujra 2000; Kiaga 2007). In this setting, a domestic worker, often a young relative with limited work experience working for board and lodging, is the affordable alternative to expensive or inapt electronic appliances. This is all the more so as household appliances are ill-designed for housing in poor areas, which often lack sufficient water and electricity connection and provide little indoor space for larger appliances such as washing machines or dishwashers. Further, several tasks, such as care for children or the elderly, gardening or cooking fresh foods, can only be simplified but not replaced by the use of household appliances. For heads of low-income households, hiring a domestic worker is hence a necessity rather than a choice, particularly for female employers who are responsible for the family household in addition to their own jobs.

Working men and women who have the least amount of time to do their own household work also tend to have the fewest means to purchase expensive appliances. From the many informal conversations I had with Dar es Salaam residents, I gathered that working days tended, overall, to be lengthy, with an inverse relationship between the length of the working day and income level. While the majority of people spent more than ten hours per day at work, of which an average of three hours consisted of commuting to and from the city, businesspeople and office workers in higher positions could choose to have fewer and more flexible working hours, thereby avoiding rush hour traffic. By contrast, lower-middle and working class Tanzanians—for instance, taxi or *bodaboda* drivers, *machingas*, market women or shop assistants—often worked from seven in the morning to seven in the evening to compensate for low incomes. With these long work days, household chores like laundry and cleaning had to be postponed to the evening hours or weekends. Responsibilities which could not wait, such as caring for children or preparing food, usually had to be delegated to a neighbour, relative or affordable ‘informal’ domestic worker. Perhaps for this reason, my acquaintances with higher incomes would proudly show or tell me about their spacious, newly built and fully refurbished homes, but hardly ever mention domestic workers. Confirming the observations by the ILO (2016a: 114), they usually hired live-out cleaners or nannies who received an hourly or task-based wage.

In sum, the invisibility and informality of domestic work varies greatly, depending on a range of overlapping and intersecting factors. The lack of protection for domestic workers, notwithstanding progressive and extensive legislation, is hence an effect of being ‘invisible’ and ‘informal’ in the sense that both of these categories are constituted by wider macroeconomic and social conditions, class, the income and ethnicity of employers and the gender, age and skill levels of

workers, all of which are embedded in complex labour relations informed by both professionalism and personal bonds. The complexity behind the notion of domestic work as part of the 'informal' sector, exactly as with street vending, affects workers' organization and power, to which I turn in the next chapter.

6. REDEFINING THE WORKING CLASS AND STRATEGIES OF LABOUR STRUGGLE

6.1 An 'informal' class?

The number of street traders and domestic workers in Tanzania is impressive, accounting for no fewer than two and a half million people, perhaps significantly more, and comprising a substantial part of the Tanzanian workforce: potentially, therefore, also a formidable political force. Yet, in both sectors, the level of organization in trade unions or other professional associations is quite low. In 2015, of the 36,000 members of CHODAWU, 5,200 members were domestic workers as of 2013 (IDWF 2014a), while TUICO had 70,000 members of whom only 1,500 were small-scale traders. The latter, however, do not include street traders working without fixed locations, that is, traders running stalls in non-designated market areas and *machingas* (interviews with TUICO 30.01.2015, 11.02.2015). VIBINDO, an umbrella organization for microbusiness associations, counted 65,000 individual members, of whom approximately one third were occupied in small-scale trade, which VIBINDO further divides into the sub-sectors of manufacturing, vending and services (VIBINDO 2014; interview with VIBINDO 19.12.2014).

These figures appear indicative of the obstacles to labour organization in the 'informal economy' (see Section 1.3). As demonstrated in the previous chapters, however, informality is composed differently in different sectors, not least due to legislation. Domestic work counts as 'informal' due to the practice rather than the text of the law, whereas the legislative insecurity of street trade exposes it to the volatile enforcement of by-laws and changing political trends. This gives rise to the question of how labour organization and struggles for rights at work are linked to legislation and specific forms of informality in each sector.

In more general terms, the analysis in this chapter responds to the need to investigate in greater detail whether and to what extent people labouring in the 'informal economy' present a distinct class, and the degree to which such a class might be able to transcend "its many divisions and particular experiences of political, social and cultural repression" (Campling et al. 2016: 1758). Moreover, the chapter scrutinizes the role of trade unions in organizing labour in the 'informal economy', exploring whether the trade union movement is "representative of the 'working poor'" or "of a 'labour aristocracy' of formal, core workers", and whether unions "have an interest in organizing the semi-formal, informal and unemployed sections of the working class" (Pillay 2008: 54).

Although my insights into the two sectors in Dar es Salaam are certainly context-specific and do not suffice to answer these questions conclusively, they invite

consideration of two aspects which have so far received little attention in debates on labour struggles in the 'informal economy'. Firstly, class formation and labour power, both structural and associational (Wright 2000a; see below), depend in no small part on conceptualizations of, and practices within the 'informal economy' itself. In Chapter 2, I recalled how the lines between the 'formal' and the 'informal city' reflected class divisions; in Chapter 5, I illustrated how in/visibility in the two sectors is tied to legal and social status, constituted by intersecting and at times conflicting legal and social norms. This chapter shows that social stratification and hierarchies render some street vendors and domestic workers more 'informal' than others. Both informality and class, then, are not fixed categories but must be understood as relational and relative concepts.

With regard to the associational power of street traders and domestic workers, I found that labour organization, especially in the sector of small-scale trade, suffers from the same conceptual 'division of labour' that characterizes mainstream academic debates on the 'informal economy' (see Sections 1.2 and 1.3): 'old' concepts of class and labour organization tend to be treated as things of the past, confined to the experience of the industrialized countries of the North. The 'informal economies' of the developing South, in contrast, are deemed to require 'new' forms of class identities and struggles. The initial successes of labour organization in the domestic work sector, as well as the emergence of new transnational alliances in both sectors, challenge this line of thinking, however, and, once more, the conceptual utility of distinguishing between 'formal' and 'informal' work.

Secondly, contrary to the assumption (see *ibid.*) that the 'informal economy' implies the absence or insufficiency of the law and of rights, particularly of *labour* law and rights, legislation and conceptions of rights matter just as much to people making a living in the 'informal economy'; their representation—both in the sense of 'speaking of' and 'speaking for'—is profoundly affected by whether work is rendered 'informal' by the text of the law or by limits to its enforcement. The law, in other words, also enables and disables labour struggles in the 'informal economy'. Rigid conceptions of what constitutes an employment relation, providing the basis for a great deal of labour law and many trade union strategies, are, however, rarely applicable to labour relations in the 'informal economy'.

In Tanzania, the framing of street traders as entrepreneurs at best and petty criminals at worst, both in legislation and public discourse, impedes trade union involvement in the sector and has led to long-standing differences between the union and associations of small-scale producers and traders. Conversely, defining domestic work as a 'formal' employment relation enables trade unions to recruit domestic workers, heighten the visibility of their work and promote their legal and social protection, despite considerable obstacles to law enforcement. Again, in both sectors, wider global discourses on rights at work and emerging new practices of organising in the 'informal economy' play a key role.

The argument in the chapter is structured as follows: in the next section, I reflect on the concept of class in the ‘informal economy’. Section 3 focuses on how the economic position of street vendors and domestic workers in Dar es Salaam is determined by an overlap of their status as ‘informal’ and the social position of their employers and customers, respectively. In Sections 4 and 5 I take a closer look at the role of legal forms, specifically labour laws, in the organization of labour struggle in each sector. In the final section, I discuss the emergence of new local and transnational alliances in domestic work and small-scale trade.

6.2 Class in the periphery of capitalist labour markets

Before discussing the position and power of street vendors and domestic workers as members of the ‘working class’, a few words on the notions of ‘class’ and ‘worker power’ in the context of ‘informal employment’ are in order. To what extent can we actually speak of ‘class positions’ or ‘labour struggles’ in the ‘informal economy’? For those segments working and subsisting on the periphery of modern capitalist relations, whose labour is not captured by official statistics and regulation, the term ‘semi-proletariat’ has been long used, with semi-proletarian labour considered to be an interim phase in the development of a given society towards modern capitalism (e.g. Shivji 1986).

Generally, the industrial relations and political economy literature assumes various levels of gradation between workers at the core and the periphery of the labour market, overlapping in part with distinctions between ‘formal’ and ‘informal economy’. For instance, Karl von Holdt and Edward Webster (2008: 335) locate full-time work at the core; casualized, externalized and domestic work in the non-core; ‘informal’ work in the periphery, and the unemployed at the outer margin of the labour market. In a prominent example designed to identify contemporary, transnational class structure, Standing proposes to differentiate between the core “working class”; those in ‘formal’ yet casual and insecure employment; the “precariat”, that is, more or less skilled, predominantly young workers in ‘informal employment’; the “unemployed” and the “detached”, an updated expression for the *Lumpenproletariat* (Standing 2009: 109ff.).

In response to Standing’s conception, Erik Olin Wright points out that to be defined as ‘class’, a group of people must have a shared interest which is distinct from that of other classes, and be sufficiently unified in itself. The so-called precariat, he argues, fulfils neither criterion (Wright 2016). Indeed, scholarship hints at the diversity rather than unity of interests of people making a living in the ‘informal economy’. Lindell, for instance, cautions:

[W]ho are these ‘informals’ that trade unions are supposed to organize or enter alliances with? The informal economy encompasses a great variety of labour relations – including self-employment, unregulated apprentice work and casual work – and informal workers in these different categories will have very different needs and concerns. (2008: 226)

This observation confirms the discussion in the previous chapters suggesting that there is no such thing as an ‘informal class’. Yet, as Alejandro Portes and Kelly Hoffmann maintain, contemporary class analysis offers an opportunity to acknowledge heterogeneous labour relations and explore underlying power differentials. Such analysis has moved on from its erstwhile more rigid distinctions in the works of Karl Marx and Max Weber, and now pays heed to other power-conferring resources and forms of control (Portes and Hoffmann 2003: 43), while the concept of ‘class’ itself has, over the years, become pluralist and highly differentiated (e.g. Bourdieu 2011; Wright 2000b; 2015). It is rarely understood as fixed category or structure but, as famously put by E.P. Thompson (1991a), as relational and always in the making. Understanding class as shaped by the interplay of social structures and the actions of people allows for processes of formalization and informalization to be seen as factors in this dynamic, rather than relying on the ‘formal’ and ‘informal economy’ as stratification layers in pre-determined class hierarchies. To use the words of David Seddon, speaking of various class relations across Africa, the “‘working class’ should be seen as it is—a heterogeneous combination and evolving configuration of fractions and strata” (Seddon 2004: 86).

Class, moreover, is highly intersectional. This understanding emerged from the vignettes of street trade and domestic work presented in Chapter 5, where I showed how each sector is rendered ‘informal’ in quite distinct ways, deriving its in/formality and in/visibility from complex intersections of material conditions with legal and social norms. Laws, some of them dating back to the days of colonial administration, pass across hierarchies based on gender and race/ethnicity, as well as age or family status, which in turn affect how workplaces are accessed and organized in both public and private space.

Similarly, in their study on class structures in Latin America, Portes and Hoffmann choose an approach that constructively acknowledges heterogeneity. On the one hand, in the wake of the structural adjustment and neoliberal policies of the 1980s, they observe the growth of a distinctively peripheral

petty bourgeoisie ... dictated by the superimposition of modern capitalist and various informal modes of economic organization. The principal characteristics of this group—commonly labeled microentrepreneurs—is the possession of some monetary resources; some professional, technical, or artisanal skills; and the employment of a small number of workers supervised on a direct, face-to-face basis. (Portes and Hoffmann 2003: 45)

This rather aptly fits the profile of the more successful street traders in Dar es Salaam, who run their own micro-enterprises, employ others and straddle the borderline between the ‘formal’ and ‘informal economy’. Similarly, some domestic workers, especially live-out workers, enjoy relatively stable, high-income employment or might themselves be employers of domestic workers.

On the other hand, a significant share of the traders and domestic workers in my research worked for subsistence rather than accumulation, were casually rather than self-employed and shared the insecurity and precariousness faced by many domestic workers in their employment relations (see Chapter 5). Following Portes and Hoffmann, they can be referred to as “informal proletariat ... defined as the sum total of own account workers (minus professionals and technicians), unpaid family workers, domestic servants, and waged workers without social security and other legal protections in industry, services, and agriculture” (ibid.: 50). It is, however, important to note that neither of these categories can be rigidly separated from the other, and mobility within and between them, as well as between ‘formal’ and ‘informal employment’, is a common feature of peripheral capitalist relations (von Holdt and Webster 2008: 335).

6.3 ‘Informal’ employment and structural power

With these reflections in mind, I consider it not only necessary to overcome the informal-formal dualism and to analyze the power relations in the ‘informal economy’ as class and labour relations, but also justified to do so with the tools usually applied to formalized and regulated economic organization. While the existence of a common class interest remains a question to be explored in further depth, I begin with an analysis of the class power of street traders and domestic workers, building on the useful distinction by Wright, which has been fruitfully operationalized in earlier studies on the Tanzanian ‘informal economy’ (Rizzo 2013; 2017). Members of the working class, proposes Wright, hold varying degrees of

‘structural power’—power that results simply from the location of workers within the economic system. The power of workers as individuals that results directly from tight labor markets or from the strategic location of a particular group of workers within a key industrial sector would constitute instances of structural power [and] may itself influence associational power. (Wright 2000a: 962)

One more qualification is needed here: Wright intends his definition to apply to workers in an employment relationship, who can use their strategic location when bargaining with their employers. Employment relations in the sectors of small-scale trade and domestic work, and in the ‘informal economy’ generally, are arguably far more complicated and require some modification of Wright’s model. Yet, importantly, the model is based on the assumptions that employers belong to the dominant classes in a capitalist society and that workers can use their power to gain a higher status and privileges within the given class structure. I argue below that the same applies to people working in the ‘informal economy’, regardless of their employment relationship: their position and access to privileges and power depend on their relative importance to those in powerful social positions, be they employers, customers or whole communities. Wright’s definition can thus be cautiously applied to street vendors and domestic workers

to analyze their position in the 'formal' and 'informal' segments of the Tanzanian labour market, and in the economic organization of Dar es Salaam.

An assortment of snapshots from Dar es Salaam illustrates the positions of street vendors and domestic workers; one quite typical account was provided by Ezekiel, an approximately forty-year-old fruit trader working in Kariakoo. Upon arriving in Dar es Salaam as a young man with only primary education, he had struggled for many years to set up his own business, consisting of a sturdy bicycle with three large baskets attached to it; he had established himself in a steady network of supply and demand for the mangoes, both whole and freshly cut, which were his stock in trade. Running his business on a shoestring, Ezekiel had been able to accumulate sales profits, which he continually invested in a *shamba* (small farm) he owned with his wife, who sold the farm produce at another market. Yet, despite his moderate savings and good standing in the neighbourhood, he did not dare to take a Christmas vacation and, indeed, had not missed a day of work in years, as absence could mean losing his position in Kariakoo. The insecurities of his workplace and potential loss of his investments—due to drought, heavy rains or crop pests, for instance—deeply worried him.

Unlike Ezekiel, Shafira, a *machinga* of about twenty years, was quite optimistic about her future. Six months earlier, she had started selling Chinese-manufactured, solar-powered phone chargers for a large company.⁶⁷ She received no salary but was remunerated on commission; in addition, meeting the daily and weekly sales targets offered her the opportunity to move up in the pyramid marketing strategy of the company, with higher commission rates waiting at each level. Shafira considered herself a better saleswoman than the other *machingas* working for the company and was confident she would succeed in the enduring competition, but she admitted it was tough; while she could make up for not meeting the target on one day, missing the target for two days in a single week could mean being demoted to lower levels, or dropping out of the race altogether.

Mercy, a domestic worker in her mid-thirties, had been able to gather experience with a variety of employers. Her first two jobs were arranged by an informal agency which had brought her from Tabora to be employed as a live-in domestic worker by middle-class families. She had liked her first workplace, a nice house with a kind employer, but after the first employer moved away, she had been sent to work for someone who was strict and did not pay her fairly. With no prospects of finding better work elsewhere, she had stayed with the same employer for six years, until she became engaged and moved in with her fiancée. During the past nine years, Mercy had worked as live-out cook and cleaner for several employers, most recently for a group of young businessmen who shared an apartment in Kariakoo. She was happy with the work since she was allowed to take time off for her family whenever needed. The boss, she said, appreciated that she was a good

⁶⁷ Like many other casually hired *machingas*, Shafira did not want to reveal any details about her employer.

worker with good cooking skills; however, she was not pleased that she always had to wait a long time to be paid because her employer was frequently out of money.

The stories of Ezekiel, Shafira and Mercy hint at the strict limits to the structural power of street traders and domestic workers: high levels of un- and underemployment lead to a steady supply of unskilled labour in and into the city, competition is harsh, and 'informal' labour is characterized by considerable precariousness. For street traders, whether self-employed like Ezekiel or casually employed like Shafira, job and income insecurity are common. Individual qualities like trustworthiness, reliability and kinship relations are helpful in maintaining good relations with employers as well as customers, yet the fear of being disposable characterized most of the accounts traders provided of their work life. Talk of 'too many traders', 'too much congestion' and 'too many people' were set phrases I heard over and over in conversations with *machingas* and other vendors about the situation in designated and non-designated trading areas.⁶⁸

For domestic workers, the drawbacks of the steady supply of unskilled labour are mitigated by the close relations they have with their employers. Hiring a worker into their private sphere is a strong incentive for employers to build a high level of trust and long-term commitment, making domestic work relations less volatile than those on the street. In the interviews with employers and domestic workers, it transpired that being able to trust and rely on their domestic workers is vital for employers' own daily work and life routines and, having taught a domestic worker their preferences, they depend on the domestic worker's skills and loyalty (see also ILO 2016a). At the same time, as discussed earlier, the close kinship or other personal relationships often involved in domestic labour relations are a double-edged sword for domestic workers; employers may assume a maternal role and personal responsibility, which may actually deepen worker dependencies (focus group interviews; see also Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007).

While the economic relevance of the work and services they provide collectively as a sector is considerable, individual traders and domestic workers hold limited structural power, both vis-à-vis their employers and in the labour market. Closer observation, however, reveals a link between their structural power and the class position of those on the *demand* side of their labour: in Dar es Salaam alone, street traders provide inexpensive goods and services to hundreds of thousands of people every day. There are considerable hierarchies among street vendors based on what and where they are able to sell, as explained in Chapter 5. The location of traders is, however, also interconnected with the disparities in purchasing power and political leverage of their customers. Traders cater to the whole range Dar es Salaam residents, from affluent middle-class customers, who value the convenience of street traders' presence but are also able to afford items and

⁶⁸ Even when assuming that, in many instances, this was the result of a common mistranslation in which Swahili-speakers conflate 'too many' with 'very many', the wording nonetheless indicates the traders' awareness of being part of the surplus labour force.

services from licensed providers, to poor, working-class customers for whom unlicensed street traders are often the only source of affordably priced necessities.

The social position of their customers, in turn, affects the by-laws concerning street trade. For example, vendors selling goods and services to urban middle-class commuters, such as the newspaper, coffee and ice cream vendors and shoe shiners, are permanently tolerated without license or business registration and never harassed by the municipal auxiliary police, even in the CBD. City officials fear that removing these convenient services would be highly unpopular among businesspeople and office workers, especially given the long waiting times at bus stops during rush hours (interview with VIBINDO 11.02.2015).

On the other hand, the effects of clearance raids and traders' evictions on poorer customers tend to receive far less public attention. For instance, in a series of articles following the large-scale, partly violent removal of street traders during US President Barack Obama's visit in early July 2013, the English-language newspaper *The Citizen* commented on the hardships for the traders as well as the inconvenience to commuters of public transport interruptions, but made no mention of how the raids affected those who frequent the traders' unauthorised stalls (see *The Citizen* 24.06.2013; 02.07.2013a,b; 04.07.2013a; 07.07.2013). In the same vein, in several of my interviews with government officials, my respondents reacted with surprise and in rare cases with straightforward hostility when I asked about the importance of street traders to the city's poor. For public officials, businesspeople, white-collar workers and the generally better-off, usually belonging to a small but powerful professional elite holding 'formal' jobs, the presence and services offered by street traders are a convenience, an element of nostalgia or, to some, a nuisance (see also *The Citizen* 04.07.2013b; 30.03.2017; 12.08.2017).

When I discussed the importance of street trade with a businessman, a bank accountant, a lawyer and a government official, all of whom commuted in their own cars from the suburbs to their offices in the CBD, they corroborated the view of street trade as a convenience. They enjoyed the good bargains when buying clothes, small electronics, or luxury items like perfume from *machingas* who approached their offices or cars. Although each of them was sympathetic to street traders and considered street kitchens important to urban life and indispensable for the poor, they were, however, concerned about the low quality and hygiene of street food. For themselves, they preferred to buy meals and groceries from restaurants, shopping malls or established food markets, although these sold their offerings at significantly higher prices than the street traders.

A quite different perspective emerged in my conversations with women and men in 'informal' employment in blue-collar sectors. On a number of occasions, people in low-income jobs, among them *bodaboda* and taxi drivers, a bus conductor, a

shoe shiner, several young men hanging out at *kijiweni*⁶⁹, domestic workers, a student and quite a few *machingas*, explained how daily necessities like drinking water, food and second-hand clothes were unaffordable to them and their families unless they bought them from street traders. Like the traders themselves, however, they felt powerless to protest the evictions by the authorities.

This mutual dependency between street vendors and their customers corresponds with the observations of scholars who see the vulnerabilities of labour relations in the ‘informal economy’ as tightly interwoven with other manifestations of social inequality, in Africa and elsewhere. Examples of this are the necessity of the urban poor to fall back on informal housing (Davis 2006; Odoom-Obeng 2011), informal and frequently unsafe food supplies (Battersby and Crush 2014; Resnick 2017) and off-the-books healthcare (Dickson 2011). It thus appears that many of the shockwaves triggered by prohibiting traders in the city go unnoticed because their more drastic effects are felt by people who cannot make their voices heard in public decision-making.

The domestic work sector presents a mirror image of this situation. As I described in the previous chapter, domestic workers find employment across the range of upper-, middle- and working-class households. The employment options available to them depend on their skills and previous experience, as well as on personal connections and kinship relations. Here, too, the social position of their employers affects the level of vulnerabilities experienced by the workers. High-income households tend to employ highly skilled, live-out domestic workers, whereas younger, less skilled workers with little work experience are commonly employed in live-in arrangements in low-income households. Research by the ILO shows that while the majority of domestic workers in Tanzania receive little or no pay, of those working in middle-income households only 40 per cent receive a salary, whereas approximately 75 per cent of those working in high-income households get paid regularly.⁷⁰ According to the ILO Situational Analysis, “employers who are able to pay domestic workers and pay them regularly, live in permanent structures with good roofing materials, in secure settlement scheme [sic](e.g. low and medium density, surveyed), and have access to electricity, [a] fridge and clean water, among other measures of social status” (ILO 2016a: 110).

This description applied to Namiko and Grace, the two employers I interviewed for my study. Both paid their domestic workers regularly and above the minimum wage. Namiko rationalized this with her professionalism as an employer and her need to trust and rely completely on her live-out domestic worker, Melinda; Grace

⁶⁹ The term refers to the corner of a street or building, and is used to describe a sidewalk spot serving as informal job fair where the jobless wait to be hired.

⁷⁰ The ILO categorized employers into 6 income groups, namely, those making less than 50,000 TZS; those making from 50,000 to 99,000 TZS; from 100,000 to 199,000 TZS; from 200,000 to 499,000 TZS; from 500,000 to 999,000 TZS and those making 1,000,000 TZS and above (ILO 2016: 109). I consider employers with an income spanning from 200,000 to 999,000 TZS as ‘middle-income’ and employers with an income above 1,000,000 TZS as ‘high-income’.

considered it her moral and personal duty to act as a responsible employer as well as surrogate parent for young Neema who lived in her house. This is not to deny that among upper-middle and upper-class households, exploitation and abuse of domestic workers are still widespread, as the research by the ILO as well as the manifold rumours among domestic workers and on the streets in Dar es Salaam indicate. Yet the same sources and the domestic workers I interviewed also associated more affluent households with better working conditions and better pay. Working for high-income employers meant receiving higher salaries and more respect for one's labour (focus group interview).

In working-class and lower-income households, in contrast, the exploitation and vulnerability of domestic workers often reflect the socioeconomic situation of the employer. The "continuum of vulnerability" (Mattila 2011: 57), along which domestic workers can be placed when taking into account intersecting factors such as gender, age or marital status, applies to employers as well. Indeed, the vulnerabilities of the employer and the employee often overlap, something raised in my conversations with domestic workers who often revealed the extent to which dependency between the employer and worker was mutual (see Chapter 5, focus group interview). A domestic worker's poor living and working conditions, low pay and lack of awareness of workers' rights may mirror the employer's own economic and social hardships. Again, the point here is not to paint a euphemistic picture of egalitarian labour relations or to justify exploitation of domestic workers, least of all in cases where the employer plays out a position of power knowingly and intentionally. Rather, what I wish to emphasize is that the power position of domestic workers tends to correlate with the social position of their employers.

My argument, however, goes one step beyond highlighting the link between the differences in structural power among street traders and domestic workers and the class differences among those who they serve; it is important to note that these differences also concur with the boundaries between the 'formal' and the 'informal economy'. To return to the metaphor concocted in Chapter 2, despite the manifold nodes of exchange between the 'formal' and the 'informal city', and however blurry the lines between the two may be, lives in each city are determined by class status and are, at times, entirely different from each other.

The labour of street vendors is truly vital only to those who, like they do, depend on income from work which is almost always 'informal' and often precarious. The informality of *machingas* and other street traders is hence both their boon and bane. To use Amin Kamete's (2018: 168) fitting expression, informality is the "lifeblood" sustaining African cities, making street trade an indispensable institution in Dar es Salaam and other cities in Tanzania; yet little of the vendors' strategic relevance is known in the air-conditioned and neat spaces of the 'formal city' where economic and political power is located. Similarly, the demand for loyal and trustworthy domestic workers can more likely be converted into workplace power when it is found in the "secure settlement schemes" mentioned

in the ILO Report (2016a: 110): comfortable residential areas that usually lodge the inhabitants of the 'formal city'.

The variation in the positions of street traders and domestic workers indicates that the struggles of workers in the 'informal economy' are not separate from the class structures of the 'formal economy', but deeply contingent on them. The conceptual and ideational separation of the 'informals', or in Standing's term the 'precariat', from the 'core' working class appears to be less an outcome of a pre-given material basis than an outcome of, as well as a factor in, the creation of further sub-divisions within the labouring class. Economic informality is not a static category in itself but rather needs to be understood as adding shades to the struggle for access to power and privileges; intertwined with class, it is an equally relative and relational category. The intersections of labour power with the formal-informal divide are also elementary to the associational power of street traders and domestic workers, forms of mobilization to which I now turn.

6.4 Associational power and 'informal' work

As listed in the introduction to this chapter, only a small percentage of Tanzanian street vendors and domestic workers are organized into trade unions. This needs to be seen in the context of a general low union density in Tanzania; less than three per cent of Tanzanian workers and employees can claim union membership (see ILO 2010b: 58). The vast majority of all union members work in the 'formal economy', particularly in the public sector and industry. As the Chairman of the Association of Tanzanian Employers (ATE) put it, a comparison of the workplaces of all registered union members with all formally registered enterprises would likely yield a more or less perfect match (interview with ATE 02.02.2015).

In both my interviews and the research literature, the reasons for this are commonly located in the structural transformations of the Tanzanian state and economy since the mid-1980s: TUCTA's predecessor, JUWATA, gained independence from the ruling CCM in 1991 following the introduction of liberalization policies and a shift to multi-party democracy; TUCTA itself was established only in 2000. During the past three decades, the trade unions have had to confront the drastic shifts from obligatory to voluntary union membership and from a state-run to a market economy, as well as the mushrooming of private enterprises and civil society organizations. Union membership has fluctuated in some sectors and shrunk in others, while unions straddle an uneasy position between the government's continuing influence and control and the need to establish themselves as independent and distinct civil society actors. With dwindling membership, the unions suffer from limited financial and staff capacities, which impose strict limits on their activities (interviews with TUCTA 30.04.2014; 07.05.2014; for details, see also Chambua 2004; Fischer 2011; McQuinn 2011). In addition, sector-specific conditions complicate the unions' efforts. With regard to street trade, the mobility and volatility of both self-employed and casually employed vendors present serious hindrances to the trade

union's identifying, recruiting and organizing them (interview with TUICO 11.02.2015). The main difficulties in approaching domestic workers, on the other hand, lie in their isolation in their employers' private homes and the blurring of family and employment relations (interviews with CHODAWU 02.02.2015a; IDWF 16.03.2015).

Material factors and restrictions indubitably account for much of the low unionization levels in Tanzania, particularly outside of 'formal' employment. Similar difficulties in coping with profound macroeconomic transformations and reaching out to workers in non-standard and non-formal employment are shared, in many forms, by unions across the world. In this section, I seek to tease out an often neglected aspect: the role of legal frameworks in shaping conceptions of, and strategies to engage with, 'informal employment'. Research has shown the relevance of specific configurations of state apparatuses for the prospect of labour organization and class struggle in the context of industrialized countries (e.g. Bieler and Morton 2003). In contrast, much of the literature appears to subscribe to the underlying assumption that the 'informal economy' of developing countries resembles a natural border to both the effects of law and the capacities of trade unions (see Section 1.3).

My counterargument to this assumption is two-fold: on the one hand, unionists' conceptions of 'informal' employment', as well as the potential and strategies to organize workers in the 'informal economy', are to no small extent informed by legislation; on the other, legislation does not only demarcate the boundary between 'formal' and 'informal employment'. Notwithstanding all the limits on its enforcement, the law, along with rights discourses, is also a powerful instrument in shaping workers' associational power beyond the world of 'formal' work.

Again, I draw here on Wright, who defines associational power as

the various forms of power that result from the formation of collective organizations of workers. This includes such things as unions and parties but may also include a variety of other forms, such as works councils or forms of institutional representation of workers on boards of directors in schemes of worker codetermination, or even, in certain circumstances, community organizations. (Wright 2000a: 962)

As above, I wish to stress the applicability of Wright's definition not only to collective organization in 'formal', standard employment relationships but to the 'informal economy' as well. One justification for this can be found in the history of the Tanzanian working class. The colonial period saw the gradual emergence of semi-proletarian, casual and permanent wage labour of varying skill levels. From the 1930s on, workers began to develop and subsequently rally around collective interests, building solidarity and strategies along the way (Shivji 1986: 155ff.). Gundula Fischer points out that when labour struggles began, solidarity between different groups of workers, including casual workers and those with permanent jobs, was very common. This changed significantly with the institutionalization of the labour movement in the 1950s, the increasing shifting of control over the

trade unions into the hands of the state, and the organization of the state along socialist principles following Independence (Fischer 2013: 144; see also Shivji 1986: 223ff.). With the nationalization of the economy, the government became the main employer of Tanzanian workers (Fischer 2013: 150), and remained so—at least officially—until the onset of the liberalization policies of the mid-1980s.

Associational power has thus never been a matter of a standard employee-employer relationship for the majority of Tanzanian workers. Then and now, for people with contracts and without, associational power is not just a workplace affair, but the key to being seen and heard by public decision-making bodies at the municipal and national levels of government, as well as enhancing the status and legitimacy of their work in the perceptions of the wider public. A labour lawyer at the ILO Country Office summarized the challenge in the following terms:

What's the right to strike if you have no contract? You may have the right to collective bargaining, but if you're self-employed, who do you complain to? If you have no business license, how do you claim your rights? The goal is to organize informal workers in groups, so that they can speak with one voice. (Interview with ILO 08.05.2014)

While the ILO Country Office and Tanzanian trade unions have identified the need to organize and unionize workers outside of standard employment, the 'informal' or 'second economy', despite its long-standing presence, is moving only slowly into the focus of official statements and the activities of the trade unions. In TUCTA's assessment of its Role and Membership Profile in 2000, for example, there is no mention of 'informal' or irregular employment. In the 2004 Profile TUCTA recommends the recruitment of 'informal economy' workers (TUCTA 2000; 2004); the strategy and goals of doing so, however, still require clarification (Fischer 2013: 150; interview with TUCTA 07.05.2015). At the same time, interviewed trade unionists repeatedly confirmed trade union commitment and emphasized the benefits of such solidarity and collective organizing for both sides.

In the small-scale trade sector, attempts to identify, recruit and organize vendors have so far been characterized by considerable insecurity and trial and error. In previous years, TUICO has concentrated its sparse resources on conducting surveys among market traders to learn about their needs, providing consultancy and training on occupational health and safety and addressing the issue of income insecurity. In 2010, one of TUICO's major efforts consisted of setting up a large tent for unlicensed traders at Kariakoo market that was intended to protect them from the weather, meanwhile making the presence of the union known in the area. The tent, which TUICO had purchased at the considerable cost of twelve million TZS (6,000 USD), was removed overnight by the Ilala Municipality soon after. TUICO claims never to have received compensation for the loss of their property, and subsequently reduced its more ostentatious activities in the sector. For years afterwards, the trade union focused on providing occupational training workshops for groups of market traders in different cities (interviews with TUICO 31.01.2015).

Throughout the interviews, trade unionists underscored how ‘informal’ street trade defies unionization strategies. The setbacks reflected common challenges unions face when organizing in the ‘informal economy’, including poor communication channels, organizational hurdles, conflicting goals and disagreements over membership fees and benefits (for discussions see e.g. Gallin 2001; Jason 2008; Lindell 2008; Bonner and Spooner 2011; Rizzo 2013).

It must be noted, however, that one central obstacle to trade union activities in the sector has little to do with the organizational weaknesses of the unions or the structure of street trade but, rather, results from the conundrum posed by the category ‘informal’. A key benefit of union membership, the provision of legal advice and representation, is impeded by a catch-22. The union can represent workers only in terms of labour rights issues but, as street traders are not recognized as workers and their income-generating activities are criminalized, the hands of the union are tied. Street traders who work without ‘formal’ registration and license simply lack the legal basis for making claims, regardless of whether they are casually or self-employed. Their exploitation by ruthless employers who do not ensure occupational health and safety, and their precarious working and living conditions, do not fall within existing legislation concerning workers’ rights. In contrast, other violations of street traders’ rights—unlawful confiscation of their property or abuse by the authorities, for instance—are categorized as human rights violations. These, however, fall outside of the expertise and competence of trade unions (interview with FES 15.02.2015).

As a result, the representation of street vendors in cases of violations of their labour and human rights has largely been missing from TUICO’s involvement in the sector. There is a long way to go before the union can address the rights of workers in the ‘informal economy’, as one TUICO representative stated:

We have a legal unit, but it is not yet incorporated into the informal sector. We’re only now starting to integrate legal work and the informal sector. This is one of the problems we need to deal with. We have members in the informal sector, so we need to stand for them. Therefore, our people in the legal department need to understand the laws and by-laws to teach and train them. (Interview with TUICO, 31.01.2015)

The limits on financial resources and staff capacities, combined with the legal insecurities and organizational difficulties involved in reaching out to street vendors, and not least the obstruction of their efforts by the city councils, have effectively restricted TUICO’s engagement with street traders. Furthermore, the long-standing bewilderment over how to approach street traders that permeated the interviews also betrayed uneasiness and a reluctance to organize them. In response to my question “Why, do you think, are so few street traders members of the trade union?” several trade unionists explained that street trade was a new phenomenon that had taken the unions by surprise. This explanation is not

satisfying, given that market traders and *machingas* have been a prominent feature of Tanzanian cities for decades.

In her earlier interviews with trade unionists, Fischer detected some misunderstandings and stereotypical thinking concerning the needs of 'informal' street traders. She cites one union representative saying, "What they need—those people in the informal sector—they need to know something about business, they need to know how they can get loans, how they can administrate these kinds of things. And that is not what the unions are experts in" (Fischer 2013: 152). Negative attitudes from the socialist era also persist, when 'informal' workers were denigrated (ibid.: 153). In contrast, in the interviews I conducted, the hesitant stance towards street traders was mixed with enthusiasm; the biggest problem was "where to begin" (interviews with TUCTA 30.04.2014; TUICO 11.02.2015).

One expert, who wished to remain anonymous on the matter, saw the fault with the trade unions themselves. In his view, the leadership of TUCTA and its affiliates lacked the flexibility, pragmatism and will to engage with the vast presence of 'informal' employment in Tanzania. They remained tied to traditional structures and ideas of worker representation and therefore failed to see the benefits of building a large membership base in the 'informal economy'. To him, the assumption that organizing in the 'informal economy' required more or different resources than established trade union activism in the 'formal' economy served as an excuse to remain passive; nor did he endorse placing blame on adverse legislation. Indeed, he proposed that if the unions were more proactive in organizing and representing street vendors, the government in turn would be open to negotiating the by-laws concerning street trade, since organizing street traders also had the potential to bring order to the streets and increase revenue collection.

The expert's assessment in many regards reflected the criticism levelled at the establishment of a labour aristocracy by the more pessimist literature mentioned above and, unsurprisingly, contradicted the official line I in heard in the interviews with TUICO, TUCTA and ILO representatives. The point here is not to take sides or to evaluate the actual capacities of TUICO. What the expert's statements brought to the fore, and what I wish to highlight, is that the distinctive label 'informal economy' and associated adverse legislation have for many years paralyzed the union's strategies with regard to street vendors. At least to some extent, the trade union appears to struggle with the same "mind-set" one representative considered wide-spread among street traders, that is, the limited conception "that a worker is an employee". Changing this stereotype was the "biggest challenge" for TUICO (interview with TUICO 11.02.2015).⁷¹

⁷¹ The terms 'employee', 'worker' and 'labourer' are used synonymously in Swahili, *mfanyakazi* (literally: person doing work). *Mfanyakazi* is, however, usually not used to refer to street traders, who are commonly considered *mfanyabiashara*, 'businessman/woman' (literally: person doing business) or *mfanyabiashara ndogo ndogo*, 'micro-entrepreneur' (literally: person doing business small small).

Perplexity, reluctance and the lack of suitable definitions and a practical framework for dealing with street trade are by no means confined to Tanzanian trade unions. Although street trade is recognized by the ILO as an income-generating activity for which Decent Work needs to be promoted (ILO 2002b), attempts to organize street vendors collectively are still in their infancy. Coherent strategies for building associational power in the sector remain to be developed in other national contexts as well as on the global level (von Holdt and Webster 2008).

In some countries, the void left by the perplexity of established labour organization bodies has been filled by grassroots forms of collective organization; in other instances, street vendors' grievances have been taken up as part of broader social movements or popular protests. These are, however, often highly fragmented, and seldom successful in substantially improving the political and social environment of street trade. In Tanzania, the largest association of 'informal economy' operators is the VIBINDO Society, an umbrella organization counting approximately 570 small groups and 65,000 individuals as members across all regions (as of 2015). VIBINDO membership is in itself informal. The organization maintains its Dar es Salaam head office and its leadership of a chair, vice-chair and a secretary through membership fees.

The activities of VIBINDO consist of coordinating training, projects and informal networks for its members by, for instance, connecting producers, manufacturers and buyers. VIBINDO also facilitates micro-credit and micro-health insurance schemes. In addition, the chairman is active in lobbying on behalf of small-scale business with both municipal and national governments. On several occasions, most prominently in 2006, VIBINDO tried to stall large-scale evictions of street traders across Dar es Salaam, achieving a six-month moratorium on the evictions, although unable to stop them altogether. Despite this setback, the chairman hoped that, eventually, the city administration would be open to finding new solutions to accommodate the burgeoning presence of street trade (interviews with VIBINDO 19.12.2014, 11.02.2015).

As its name implies, the VIBINDO Society organizes street traders as small-scale business owners. According to its chairman, it is vital for policy-makers to understand the economic contribution and potential for growth offered by traders and other micro-enterprises; during the interviews, he emphasized the self-organization and independence of small-scale business. In negotiations with the municipal administration, VIBINDO petitions for simplified licensing procedures and access to trading space with the long-term goal of formalizing business ownership. This strategy strongly prioritizes swift and easy market inclusion over legal and social protection. In the view of VIBINDO, 'formal' procedures present both a burden and a luxury which are reserved for established, larger business but out of reach for most 'informal', small-scale business owners operating in Tanzania (ibid.).

The approaches of VIBINDO and TUICO display contrasting strategies and goals for representing street traders. This implies that the limits on street traders' associational power derive not only from the intrinsic peculiarities of the sector, but also from the ways in which the categories of 'formal' and 'informal work' and notions of employment are conceptualized. For TUICO, the situation is paradoxical: the trade union can only organize workers in relatively stable and legally recognized employment relationships, and the 'informal' and unclear status of street vendors complicates their recruitment strategy enormously; thus, the collective organization of traders would be an important first step in the struggle for more stable employment relationships in the sector and the improved legal status of traders. The VIBINDO Society, on the other hand, focuses its scarce resources on enabling small groups of street vendors to do better business, and on easing the steps towards formalization, while questions of legal frameworks and of the precariousness of traders' work remain largely unaddressed.

In the interviews I conducted in 2014 and 2015, representatives of VIBINDO and TUICO admitted that, for the time being, their discrepancies in approach made cooperation between them difficult (interviews with TUICO 11.02.2015; VIBINDO 19.12.2014). Moreover, the two organizations found themselves competing over members (Fischer 2013: 153). Yet, while they had divergent conceptions of 'informal employment' and how to address it, they nonetheless both oriented their strategies towards street trade as a distinctly 'informal' economic activity. In consequence, both approaches left the lack of legal and social protection of street traders unchallenged. As Rizzo (2013: 295) also notes, organizing strategies remain confined to mitigating the effects of informality and precariousness, rather than challenging their causes and the 'informal' status of street traders itself.

6.5 Associational power and the power of law

The legal insecurity and the difficulties facing the organization of 'informal' street trade can be brought into stark relief by a comparison with the developments in the domestic work sector. Throughout the history of domestic labour in Tanzania, the status of domestic workers as employees was never called into question. Regardless of whether it involved predominantly male domestic workers serving in white, upper-class households during the colonial era, or was characterized by a predominantly female workforce in middle- and lower-income households in more recent decades (see Chapter 5), the presence of domestic workers in urban homes was never opposed by public officials. Importantly, domestic workers were collectively organized relatively early on, firstly in the Washermen and House Boys' Association and later in the Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, with the latter playing no small role in pre-Independence labour struggles despite the scattered workplaces (Shivji 1986: 162ff.; 195f.; Bujra 2000: 157ff.).

In 2004, the legality and legitimacy of paid domestic labour as 'work like any other' (see Chapters 4 and 5) was enshrined in labour legislation, in close correspondence with major international labour rights and standards to which

the Tanzanian state is a signatory. This did not, however, move domestic work “out of the shadows” (Fernández-Kelly and Shefner [eds.] 2006) of economic informality overnight. Despite its legal recognition, it remained inaccessible to the trade union, which, moreover, had to confront long-standing perceptions of domestic work as incompatible with regulations for other kinds of labour. In 2006, an ILO Report stated that

looking back over the past ten years, CHODAWU acknowledges that there are a number of challenges which remain in organizing workers in the domestic sector. The very fact that it is mostly located in the informal sector remains the greatest difficulty facing any trade union. In addition the perception of the general public tends to be that domestic work cannot be defined as “work” in a formal sense. (ILO 2006a: 51)

This statement reveals that while it is unclear whether the divisions between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ work are legal, practical or merely a matter of perception, they nonetheless have real effects on union efforts. Ten years after the report was written, overcoming these dividing lines lies still at the heart of the efforts of CHODAWU and IDWF, which cooperate closely with the ILO. When it comes to the settlement of labour disputes, the legal foundations placing domestic workers on the same footing as other workers have proven central to the union’s efforts. According to the Deputy General Secretary of CHODAWU, trade unions in Tanzania across all sectors face enormous difficulties in their attempts to register the informally employed or self-employed and address their complaints. In such cases, rights violations need to be taken to a civil rather than labour court. With domestic workers, however, the law gives considerable leverage to the union, as hiring a worker without an oral or written contract is forbidden and in itself an actionable violation of existing labour law. Once a case is taken to the union, the clear language of the law usually compels employers to comply before the dispute is taken before the court (interview CHODAWU 02.02.2015).

By enabling the registration, recruitment and legal representation of domestic workers, the law is making inroads into the ‘informality’ of the sector. CHODAWU and IDWF have focused on facilitating access for and to domestic workers, and organizing their collective association and bargaining power. Over the years, CHODAWU, IDWF and the ILO have staged several campaigns with the goal of raising awareness of domestic workers’ enforceable labour rights, and informing both employers and employees about regulations governing minimum wage, working hours, maternity leave, decent accommodation for live-in workers and so forth (see next chapter). Their strategies have included local and country-wide campaigns to reach out to domestic workers and their employers, such as an essay competition, radio interviews and the dissemination of information in newspapers and leaflets and on bumper stickers in both English and Swahili.

Although progress is slow and limited resources for the campaigns as well as widespread disregard for the labour of domestic workers remain enormous future challenges, the efforts have yielded moderate but positive results. Union

membership among domestic workers is growing slowly, rights violations are reported and taken for arbitration more often and, across the country, local networks and associations of domestic workers have been formed (interviews CHODAWU 02.02.2015b, IDWF 16.03.2015). With increasing frequency, domestic workers make their voice heard at events, public assemblies or demonstrations in which they apprise the wider public of the significance of their labour, or call attention to the needs of specifically vulnerable groups in the sector, such as child domestic workers (see Wotesawa 2018; *Tanzania Today* 11.05.2017; Tanzania Domestic Workers Coalition 2018).

In the eyes of activists, however, the most important achievement of the campaigns is the gradual but deep-reaching transformation in public perceptions of domestic work. Based on the foundations of existing laws, domestic workers themselves are becoming increasingly aware of their rights and are using this knowledge to bargain with their employers from a strengthened position. Through associating and networking with others, they also see themselves as less isolated and more of a part of the labour force:

In Tanzania, the unemployment is high, especially among women, so women used to take any job offered to them. But because of new awareness, they know that your right is A, B, C, D despite your poverty. The domestic worker will ask: how much are you going to pay me? The question will strike the employer, then the negotiation can start. (Interview with IDWF 16.03.2015)

Changes can also be observed in the attitudes of employers and the wider public. While the social standing of domestic work as a profession eroded as it became increasingly performed by low-skilled and female workers (see Pariser 2015; Chapter 5), this drift appears to be reversing. Mistreatment of domestic workers is becoming more openly discussed and unacceptable in public opinion. Several cases in Tanzania and abroad in which domestic workers won lawsuits against upper-class employers have made the headlines. Considerable public attention has also been paid to a report by Human Rights Watch highlighting the plight of female Tanzanian domestic workers in the Middle East and raising issues of workers' human and labour rights (HRW 2017). In the media, the common tone is that such rights violations cannot be tolerated, and the Labour and Employment Relations Act is explicitly mentioned in newspaper articles (*Mwananchi* 17.06.2013; *The Citizen* 17.10.2017; *Sematanzania* 19.02.2018).

The growing appreciation of domestic work is also reflected in government initiatives. The campaign for the ratification of ILO Convention 189, following its adoption in 2011, was welcomed by the Tanzanian government under the administration of President Kikwete, which highlighted the country's already existing commitment to guaranteeing domestic workers' rights. The Ministry of Labour stood firmly behind legislation updating the minimum wage for domestic workers to conform with employers' income levels, confirmed its commitment to ratification of the Convention, supported the media campaigns and engaged in the

“Tripartite Plus Plan of Action” with TUCTA, ATE and civil society stakeholders to promote Decent Work for domestic workers (ILO 2013a). As part of the campaign surrounding the Plan of Action, IDWF also organized the trip of a group of domestic workers to Dodoma to speak in parliament about actual working conditions and their needs. This attention and voice given to domestic workers in a parliament hearing presented a major success in the campaign for domestic workers’ rights (interviews with CHODAWU 02.02.2015b; IDWF 16.03.2015).

Ultimately, there are no groups or stakeholders who object to the demands of Convention 189, and obstacles to its ratification are a matter of bureaucratic hurdles and implementation, rather the result of its substance (interviews with FES 19.02.2015, IDWF 16.03.2015). One difficulty, for example, is that of including in the ratification process individual employers, who are themselves unorganized and often unaware of the laws concerning the employment of a domestic worker. Nonetheless, while the ratification is still pending at the time of writing (*IPP media* 25.03.2018), the government has taken action by turning local police stations into contact stations for domestic workers who face abuse, meanwhile sensitizing police officers on the issue (personal communication with ILO 19.12.2016). In marked contrast to street trade, the growing inclusion of domestic workers is one of the recent success stories for the struggling Tanzanian trade unions. This situation is not unique to Tanzania, but indicative of global and quite contradictory transformations taking place in the ‘informal economy’.

6.6 New openings and alliances

The aim of this concluding section is to demonstrate that the developments in each sector do not take place in isolation, but are embedded in wider global discourses on the ‘informal economy’ and on rights at work. Sylvia Federici (2006: 115) observes that “[p]ower relations in the workplace can be affected by political activity and the presence of social movements in respect of redefining the main categories of social reproduction”. Such political activity works in myriad ways, interweaving different local contexts with transnational dynamics, and can be driven by intergovernmental organizations, national governments and grassroots organizations, as argued in Section 3.4. The attitudes and agendas influential actors hold on the ‘informal economy’, and on the economic importance and legitimacy of the various income-generating activities in this category, are crucial to the changes in legislation and policy in each sector. The developments in Tanzania with regard to domestic work and street trade demonstrate that, to a great extent, ‘informal employment’ is what changing discourses make of it.

By and large, the degree of organization in the Tanzanian ‘informal economy’ is quite low across all sectors, compared to some other African countries (for an overview, see Lindell 2008). Collective action by different groups of workers has had little political impact (interviews with UWAWADAR 18.02.2015, VIBINDO 19.12.2014; see also Brown 2015), and cooperation between trade unions and informal associations faces many stumbling blocks (Jason 2008; Rizzo 2013). As

Fischer (2013: 156) emphasizes in her research, the “entanglement of ideology, status consciousness, formality and labor representation” dates back to the socialist era and continues to affect trade unions and ‘informal economy’ workers alike. Tanzanian trade unions, she argues, are dependent on cooperation with external partners, among them Western trade unions and development agencies (Fischer 2011). The ILO, represented by its Country Office, is a major partner and key driving force behind the activities of Tanzanian unions directed at engaging with ‘informal’ sectors (Fischer 2013: 142).

Since the 1990s, and especially following its Resolution Concerning Decent Work for the Informal Economy (ILO 2002a), the ILO has focused on irregular and non-standard types of work, identifying the ‘informal economy’ as a space in urgent need of heightened attention from the international labour movement. Commitment and strategies, however, vary across different sectors. Although street vending and domestic work were listed in equal measure as typical ‘informal’ activities (ILO 2002b: *passim*), responses to the ‘informality’ in each sector were quite different.

During the early 2000s, a broad international movement gained momentum, with domestic workers’ associations’ campaigns, most notably in India and Latin America, calling attention to the plight and vulnerability of domestic workers around the world. The (re-)emergence of paid domestic and care work in industrialized countries, often performed by female migrant workers, led to domestic work’s being addressed as an issue of women’s participation in globalizing labour markets and concomitant protection gaps (Anderson 2000; Tomei 2011). Various loosely connected associations met for a global conference in 2006, and in 2009, the International Domestic Workers Network (later changed into International Domestic Workers Federation) was founded. The effort is celebrated as the achievement of a broad global alliance: “With the support of the IUF and Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), and the strong role played by the International Trades Union Confederation (ITUC), the Global Labor Institute (GLI) and ILO, this international networking flourished” (IDWF 2014b). The new alliance successfully campaigned for the adoption of the “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” Convention at the International Labour Conference in 2011. With the backing of the ILO, domestic workers’ rights have ranked highly on the agenda of global labour activism in recent years.

In Tanzania, the efforts of the ILO Country Office fell on fertile soil: campaigns targeting child labour had already raised the issue of domestic work in the late 1990s, which led to the inclusion of domestic work as ‘work like any other’ in the Labour and Employment Relations Act in 2004. Successive governments pledged their full support to the agendas of the ILO and CHODAWU, whose efforts were accompanied by the emergence of a local branch of IDWF. The three organizations are in frequent exchange with external partners and international networks on their strategies and campaigns (interviews with CHODAWU, 02.02.2015b, IDWF 16.03.2015), while the struggle for improved working conditions and better

protection for domestic workers is locally supported by NGOs working on women's and children's rights (interview KIWOHEDE 16.03.2015). The discussion concerning abuse and violation of domestic workers' rights is also frequently addressed together with gender-based violence (ILO 2016a; personal communication with ILO 19.12.2016; see also Wotesawa 2018).

In contrast, a comparable transnational alliance to back street traders' struggles is only beginning to take shape. As discussed above, neither the ILO nor TUICO have yet been able to develop a coherent strategy for the sector, and attempts to do so are repeatedly frustrated by the tenuous legal status of street trade. Despite the success of street vendors' and related popular movements in, for example, India (Joshi 2018), broad inter- and transnational support for street traders has to date not materialized. However, two organizations are worth mentioning: WIEGO, a transnational research and advocacy group, was founded in 1997, with the self-proclaimed aim of "increas[ing] the voice, visibility and validity of the working poor, especially women" (WIEGO website). WIEGO has published numerous reports which often break with conventional wisdom on the 'informal economy', and contributed to debates and projects at the level of international organizations, especially the ILO, as well as governments and civil society groups. The second organization, StreetNet International, functions as a coordinator of an international network of street vendor organizations, and likewise collects and publishes experiences on collective mobilization.

The impact of the two organizations on discourses on street vending, and on the 'informal economy' more generally, deserves future systematic and extensive research. In Tanzania, their presence coincides with significant changes in the political climate surrounding street trade. In 2016, WIEGO visited and documented the work of TUICO's branch office at the recently reopened Mchikichini market in Dar es Salaam, which had burned down three years earlier. WIEGO's report applauds the membership and integration of 65 traders with TUICO, as it enhances their negotiating power with the municipality. For WIEGO, Mchikichini market is indicative of a success in the making:

What's interesting is that TUCTA has nearly 100,000 members – the vast majority of whom are from formal sector entities, including supermarkets, the finance sector, services – including call centers – and in the industrial sector. The informal worker section stands alongside these workers with nearly 2,000 members. The bridging of the informal and formal sector in solidarity for workers' rights shows the power and possibility of unionizing across divides. (Carr 2016: n.p.)

TUICO has recently⁷² become an affiliate of StreetNet, which shares its expertise with TUICO and coordinates its activities with those of other organizations. In

⁷² There is no information on the websites of TUICO or StreetNet as to when TUICO became an affiliate. Since neither StreetNet nor the activities at Mchikichini market were mentioned in my interviews with TUICO in 2015, this presumably occurred in late 2015/early 2016.

addition, StreetNet supports TUICO in facilitating workshops and dialogue with market traders to explore the needs and mutual benefits of the two parties. These do not yet include vendors in non-designated market spaces or *machingas*, but extending membership to these groups is not ruled out for the future. TUICO and VIBINDO have also begun to explore their shared interests and the possible coordination of their efforts more eagerly (personal communication with TUICO 08.12.2016, VIBINDO 06.12.2016).

Endeavours in this direction are likely to take time. During a short visit to Tanzania in December 2016, I was invited to attend a workshop of TUICO officials and market trader representatives, which consisted mainly of presentations on the foundations of the trade union and its strategies by union officials, with the traders in a listening role. With limited understanding in Swahili, I was nonetheless able to recognize much of the content of the presentations as the basics of trade union work, which did not differ greatly from the established traditions of trade unions in Europe or elsewhere. The few comments and questions by the traders, on the other hand, were primarily concerned with concrete improvements in their markets. The overall impression emerged that the two sides had different expectations and were talking past each other. Yet Pat Horn, coordinator of StreetNet and a Steering Committee member of WIEGO who also attended the workshop, explained that, given the long-standing gaps between the 'informal economy' and trade union organizing, such initial difficulties were an essential part of negotiation processes taking place in new territory for both sides. The growing presence of TUICO in street markets and the attendance of the traders in the workshop thus provided grounds for optimism, although concrete results would take time (personal conversation with Pat Horn 20.12.2016).

President Magufuli's favourable policies have further created a friendly environment for TUICO and VIBINDO to organize street vendors and speak out for their interests. Magufuli's statements on the issue were enthusiastically welcomed as game changer by representatives of both organizations (personal communication with TUICO 08.12.2016; *The Citizen* 06.04.2019). Indeed, since then, street vendor organizations have formed at the ward and district levels across Tanzania, especially in Dar es Salaam (Steiler and Nyirenda forthcoming). The shifting discourses among transnational actors and the policy change under President Magufuli demonstrate that, ultimately, what counts as 'informal' is a consequence of actors' active choices and political will. The underlying conceptions of 'informal employment' also inform the political agendas with regard to street trade and domestic work, to which I turn in the next chapter.

7. FRAMING SUBJECTIVITIES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Setting ‘informal’ work to rights?

The lack of legal and social protection for people working in the ‘informal economy’ has prompted multiple actors on international, national, transnational and local levels to devise a wide array of interventions. Notwithstanding the actors’ variety, catchphrases like “Formalizing the Informal Sector” (ILO 2016b), “protecting the unprotected” (Gallin cited in WIEGO 2003) or “Making the Law Work for Everyone” (UNDP 2008) indicate the bottom line common to these approaches: an ‘informal’ realm or regime exists outside of the ‘formal’ one, and the regulatory tools available to the latter need to be extended to the former. Where they differ, however, is in their conceptions of how the ‘informal economy’ is constituted and how economic activity should be appropriately regulated. Consequently, the strategies and the goals of their interventions diverge in important ways.

In this chapter, I examine the two most prominent of such interventions (see Banik 2011), and analyze how their underlying conceptions of the causes and conditions of the ‘informal economy’ affect their objectives of promoting rights, access to the law and social inclusion. The “Decent Work Agenda” (DWA), advocated by the ILO, and the “Legal Empowerment of the Poor” (LEP) approach, promoted by Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto and later taken up by the UNDP Commission for Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP), have both been deployed in quite exemplary fashion in Tanzania. The former remains a key component of the activities of the ILO Country Office and Tanzanian trade unions, and is central to the commitment to domestic workers’ rights by the ILO and its partners. The latter came to be influential in the Property and Business Formalization Programme, known by its Swahili acronym MKURABITA (*Mpango wa Kurasimisha Rasilimali na Biashara za Wanyonge*). Although difficult to reconcile with the criminalization of street trade, the MKURABITA’s conception and its related legislation and policy reforms are of relevance to this sector. While the activities of the MKURABITA office and implementation of the reforms have proceeded slowly, the Magufuli government’s current approach towards street traders can be seen as a continuation of central elements already introduced by de Soto and the CLEP.

The research literature has discussed the potential of the rights-based agendas (RBAs) inherent to the DWA and LEP in the context of the ‘informal economy’. These discussions, however, while generally acknowledging its complexity, locally specific features and interconnections with the ‘formal economy’, tend to portray

the 'informal economy' as an objectively pre-given canvas onto which Decent Work and LEP are applied (e.g. Trebilcock 2005; Faundez 2009; contributions to Banik [ed.] 2011; Muchichwa 2017).

In contrast, I aim to tease out how presumptions of, and prescriptions for, the 'informal economy' interact with and co-constitute discourses and practices of the two rights agendas. In the previous chapter, I showed how legal definitions of 'informal' work shape labour and class relations across and beyond the formal-informal divide. I now turn to discussing how conceptions of the subjectivities of 'the working poor', and of the legal and social challenges characterizing the 'informal economy', affect the allocation of rights and duties by the respective agendas, in both theory and practice. Put differently, conceptions and ideals of the 'informal economy' become part of rights discourses which, in turn, have real-life effects on the ways in which people work.

My argument is inspired by Milja Kurki's reflections on the connections between human rights and democracy promotion and Joan DeJaeghere's deliberations on the education and livelihoods of young people in Tanzania. As Kurki expounds, rights agendas are never merely technical undertakings, they are contested and politicized: "human rights agendas should be conceived as deeply ingrained in political and normative debates about what constitutes 'the good life' and debates between different approaches to perceiving the 'good life'" (Kurki 2011: 1581f.). Drawing on the arguments of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1986), Kurki suggests directing attention towards the politico-economic and conflict-laden implications of rights: "The economy, then, far from being apolitical, or a sphere of mere negative rights (to participate in the free economy), as many liberals have argued, is in fact the centre ground for clashes and fights over rights" (Kurki 2011: 1580). A decisive matter in these contestations is the extent to which rights confirm or challenge the liberal separation of politics and economics, and shift the control over markets to political actors (ibid.: 1584).

Transferring these thoughts to a discussion of LEP and the DWA directs attention to a central link: the question of which rights and responsibilities are promoted is closely connected to conceptions of how the 'informal economy'—quite literally—works and should work. Introducing her longitudinal study, DeJaeghere notes a division between a "neoliberal orientation, with concern for economic growth, consumerism and markets of a global capitalist economy", on the one hand, and "social and economic relations in informal, community and moral economies in Tanzania", on the other. The latter, she writes, "emphasize reciprocity, solidarity and exchange rather than individual profit, competition and regulation" (DeJaeghere 2017: 5).

The discussion of whether or to which extent 'informal, community and moral economies' present a counterpart to neoliberal orientations is part of the conflicting interpretations of the 'informal economy' offered by competing perspectives (see Section 1.2), and will be revisited in the following chapter. The central issue here is that, like Kurki, DeJaeghere challenges the idea of rights as

neutral or objective, claiming that they become utilized and contested as “governing technologies and techniques that produce citizen subjectivities” and “multiple and different meanings of the relationship between state, citizen and the economy” (ibid.: 36).

Rights agendas are thus not merely applied to the ‘informal economy’. They are part and parcel of representations of work as ‘informal’ that have underlying political and normative motives, contributing to ongoing processes of formalization and informalization. Contestations over rights and responsibilities for people in the ‘informal economy’ reflect conflicting discourses about what kind of subjectivities, economic activities and forms of regulation are sought after in capitalist labour markets. Carving out the connections between conceptions of ‘informal’ economic activity and rights discourses, understood as tools to govern ‘informal’ work, sheds light on how the persistence of informality and processes of formalization are implicated in the functioning of capitalist markets.

Both LEP and the DWA explicitly aim at the integration of ‘informal’ activities into established and formalized frameworks of regulation and capitalist production and reproduction. A crucial point in the discussion of the two agendas and their implementation—and the central question of this chapter—is, therefore, how the respective agendas conceptualize the subjects of rights in the ‘informal economy’ and their responsibilities in the context of access to legal and social protection.

To summarize the key arguments made in this chapter: as they are put into practice in Tanzania, the DWA and LEP/MKURABITA almost archetypically display the opposing perspectives onto the ‘informal economy’ as a realm originating from economic and social exclusion, on the one hand, and as a realm teeming with choice and economic opportunity, on the other. This manifests itself, firstly, in competing conceptions of the people working in the ‘informal economy’ as casually employed and insufficiently protected workers, in contrast with self-employed entrepreneurs and owners of business and property. In promoting Decent Work for domestic workers, the ILO and its affiliates in Tanzania build on existing legislation and conceptions of domestic work as an employer-employee relationship and promote public regulation of the workplace. Street traders are conversely imagined as entrepreneurs and owners of property in the government’s poverty reduction strategies and policies, thereby emphasizing competitiveness, self-initiative and personal responsibility.

Secondly, the different imaginaries of the ‘informal economy’ underlying the DWA and LEP dictate the promotion of two diverging sets of rights and duties. Based on the DWA, the promotion of domestic workers’ rights emphasizes labour rights as well as economic and social rights more broadly. In the approach taken by the ILO Country Office, rights promotion addresses the duties of public actors, predominantly the state, and has both a process- and an outcome-oriented dimension. In contrast, the emphasis on entrepreneurship conveyed in the interpretation of LEP by the MKURABITA, as well as by the Doing Business approach of the World Bank, centres around the promotion of property and

business rights. This rights agenda respects the liberal separation of the public and private spheres, offers a negative reading of human rights and places responsibility on private actors, foremost the individual entrepreneur. Rights are, moreover, understood strategically, as aimed to fulfil the function of facilitating efficient markets.

Juxtaposing the application of the two approaches in the Tanzanian context highlights the consequences of conflicting understandings of the 'informal economy', repudiating the claim of RBA's being complementary and consensual. The empirical material, collected from documents, interviews and personal stories, illustrates the contrasts between key tenets of the two agendas through the conditions and struggles experienced by Tanzanian street traders and domestic workers.

I illuminate the role of competing conceptions of the 'informal economy' in the formulation of the respective rights agendas in the following steps: in the next section, I introduce LEP and the DWA in Tanzania. Section 3 shows how the DWA explicitly calls attention to gendered vulnerabilities but also the agency and voice of domestic workers as employees. In Section 4, I discuss the conception of the working poor as entrepreneurs with assets and property, as they are portrayed in the MKURABITA approach, which is demonstrably based on some fundamental misconceptions of the situation of street traders, particularly the most disadvantaged among them. Sections 5 and 6 contrast the promotion of workers' rights by the DWA with the MKURABITA's focus on property and business rights.

7.2 LEP and the DWA in Tanzania

Before delving into the moving parts of LEP and the DWA in Tanzania, a caveat is in order: both 'legal empowerment' and 'decent work' are contested notions and open to being imbued with vested interests by different actors. Despite being branded as 'one' agenda, Decent Work invites competing economic imaginaries (Ruggiero et al. 2015; Hauf 2015); likewise, while internal contradictions and the lack of consistency is one of the main criticisms directed at the Final Report by the CLEP (Banik 2009), interpretations and evaluations of LEP are just as widespread and diverse as the interventions in the name of the concept (Goodwin and Maru 2017). The DWA and LEP are, as deJaeghere (2017) notes, global and international discourses that undergo changes when they meet with and become enacted in local contexts (see also Section 3.4). Both agendas entail various conflicting norms, as well as political, economic and social considerations, allowing them to be challenged and transformed in different contexts and by different actors. At the same time, some of the observations and recommendations of the two approaches also overlap. The following discussion hence presents less a comparison of the two agendas as rigid or coherent approaches than a sketch of their inherent conceptual logics as they play out in their application in the Tanzanian context.

During the past two decades, consecutive governments have attempted various policies to address the long-standing difficulties of legal regulation of small-scale trade and domestic work, with LEP and the DWA gaining prominence in these reform processes. In the early 2000s, facing rapidly growing numbers of street traders and the inadequacy of laws prohibiting street trade, the government under President Benjamin Mkapa decided to engage in a long-term reform process, with the goal of embedding and eventually integrating street trade activities into the formal economy. To this end, and with substantial financial support from the Norwegian aid agency NORAD,⁷³ the government contracted the Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD), a Peruvian-based think tank chaired by economist Hernando de Soto, to draft a reform plan.

The ILD, after considerable research effort which resulted in a four-volume report of a total of 1700 pages, largely followed the tenet of de Soto's earlier work, which shortly after also found its way onto the international stage via the final report of the CLEP. In the ILD's concluding recommendations and reform plan, the existence of an 'extra-legal economy' in parallel to legal economic structures and institutions is seen to hamper Tanzanian development towards an inclusive, modern, market economy, and to perpetuate poverty. Accordingly, the poor need to be given easier access to the law, particular to property and business rights, in order to convert their assets into capital in the 'formal' economy (de Soto 2001; ILD 2005a; UNDP 2008).

The reform plan drafted by the ILD became institutionalized as the Business and Property Formalization Programme, MKURABITA, a planning unit under the President's Office. As the Programme's name already suggests, the main goal of the MKURABITA is the formalization of property and business assets, that is, the integration of informally operated business into the 'formal' market economy. The rationale behind this goal is the ILD's observation that, while poor Tanzanians hold extra-legal assets worth approximately 29 billion USD, these cannot be productively and effectively utilized, as entering 'formal' market institutions is connected with immediate and long-term costs which are inhibitive to the poor (ILD 2005: 4f.). The MKURABITA is to make use of this wealth through its objectives of enabling the integration of already existing 'informal' rules and arrangements into the 'formal' legal system, thereby unifying, modernizing and standardizing national property and business laws.

According to the ILD and the MKURABITA, facilitating formalization promises better governance of Tanzanians' economic activities, stimulating growth and expanding the tax base while simultaneously opening access to legal protection for the poor, in a manner built on established local customs. Once assets like property and land are documented and legally registered, they can be used to obtain access to loans and further investment opportunities. The entry into the 'formal' market is simultaneously seen as a factor integral to stimulating growth

⁷³ The Norwegian government had also been an active funder and promoter behind the development of the LEP approach and the work of the CLEP (Golub 2009: 102). For an account of the inception of the CLEP, see Assies (2009).

and as a goal in itself, as it promises to “economically empower property and business owners in the informal sector” and “enhance their opportunities in using their assets to access capital and thus improve national economic growth and reduce individual household poverty” (MKURABITA 2016).

Although not specifically designed to target street trade, which is considered one among a wide range of ‘extra-legal’ or ‘informal’ economic activities, the MKURABITA presents one of the main government bodies dealing with the sector. Its task is to coordinate the policy and legal reform strategies of various ministries and specialized governmental agencies in alignment with MKUKUTA I and II,⁷⁴ the latter emphasizing the “growth and enhancement of productivity, with greater alignment of the interventions towards wealth creation as a way out of poverty” (URT 2010a: ix). Formalization is thus closely linked to other economic and fiscal policies and programmes providing easier access to liquidity, for instance to microcredit schemes under the Doing Business agenda of the World Bank or the business training programmes of the National Economic Empowerment Council (NEEC) (see below).

The MKURABITA is designed to consist of four phases. Phases one and two, Diagnosis and Reform Design, were completed under the guidance of the ILD in 2005 and 2008, respectively. Following criticism of the conduct of the ILD, phases three and four, Implementation/ Capital Formation and Governance, were continued by the MKURABITA without the ILD. During my research in 2014–15, the MKURABITA was working on the latter two phases in parallel, coordinating its goals with the relevant ministries to pave the way for legal reforms (interview with MKURABITA 23.01.2015). However, fewer resources were allocated to the MKURABITA under Jakaya Kikwete’s administration than under his predecessor, and implementation of the reforms has been slow due to institutional and political hurdles (ibid.; cf. also Lyons, Brown and Msoka 2012: 1020-22). Under the Magufuli administration, the MKURABITA office has been relocated to Dodoma.⁷⁵ Although they had been originally planned to reach completion within ten years, the MKURABITA’s activities on phases three and four continue were still continuing in 2019 (MKURABITA 2019a;b).⁷⁶

Much like the MKURABITA, the DWA is also designed to conform to MKUKUTA’s goals. Based on the principles and objectives of the DWA on the international level, the ILO Country Office adapts its strategies to meet the needs of the Tanzanian context, as specified in the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). Adjustments made to the Programme result from the continuous dialogue of the

⁷⁴ See fn. 36.

⁷⁵ Dodoma is the national capital and seat of the parliament of Tanzania. Under Magufuli, key government bodies, among them the Office of the President, have moved from the de facto capital Dar es Salaam to Dodoma.

⁷⁶ The website of MKURABITA was inactive by August 2020; at the same time, the Programme posted an announcement inviting applications for the position of Director to be filled by September 2020, according to an unofficial online job service (<https://www.ajirasasa.com/2020/08/job-opportunities-utumishi-at-mkurabita.html> [accessed 30.08.2020]).

Country Office with a broad range of international partners—UN branches and international trade unions, for instance—and consultation with Tanzanian stakeholders, particularly local trade unions, the government and the employers' association, ATE (interviews with ILO 18.03.2015; 20.03.2015).

Over time, consecutive DWCPs shifted their focus. In its 2006 assessment, the main concerns identified by the ILO Country Office in Tanzania were high levels of un- and underemployment, poor labour productivity and low incomes, particularly in rural areas, the overrepresentation of women in low-skilled jobs with precarious working conditions, and a low rate of overall 'formal' employment of only seven per cent (ILO 2006b: 4f). The priority areas for the ILO in the period 2006 to 2010 largely concerned the creation of decent work opportunities with a focus on young women and men, the reduction of the worst forms of child labour, and the mitigation of HIV/Aids impacts in the workplace (ibid.: 8-15). Interventions in the 'informal economy' and the creation of decent work opportunities targeted all sectors and included the extension of trade union membership and skills training, especially for business operators and the self-employed in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), combined with the establishment of mechanisms for microcredit services through cooperatives and the expansion of social protection schemes (ibid.: passim).

The 2006-2010 DWCP directed much attention towards self-employed business owners and access to microcredit, reminiscent of the aims put forward around the same time by the MKURABITA, the UNDP and the World Bank. Indeed, in its earlier Roadmap Study of the Informal Sector in Mainland Tanzania (ILO 2002c), the ILO Country Office, together with the UNDP and UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), had put strong emphasis on support for entrepreneurship and business registration.

The DWCP shifted direction from 2013 to 2016, placing the four objectives of the DWA, endorsed by the ILO on the international level, at the centre of interventions in the 'informal economy'. Following the line of the ILO's Resolution and extensive Report on Decent Work and the Informal Economy (ILO 2002a;b), it listed as priorities, firstly, the extension of social protection coverage for all; secondly, the creation of productive employment; thirdly, improved compliance with labour standards and rights at work; and fourthly, strengthening social dialogue mechanisms at the national and sectors levels (ILO 2013b).

The 2013-2016 DWCP broadly applies to both 'formal' and 'informal' labour relations and across all sectors. The decent work deficits in the sector of domestic work were given specific priority by the Country Office following the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention (C 189) in 2011 and the ILO's increased attention to domestic work on the global level. This was, however, not solely a response to growing international interest; rather, the shift in global discourse fell on fertile soil in Tanzania. As discussed in the previous chapter, the prevalence of child labour in domestic service had already led to much debate and activism in the late 1990s and early 2000s, resulting not least in the

legal recognition of domestic work as an employment relationship in the Labour and Employment Act of 2004 (ILO 2006a, 2016a; interviews with IDWF and KIWOHEDE 16.03.2016).

Building on these previous efforts and achievements, the goal of “Making Decent Work a reality for Domestic Workers” became institutionalized in the ILO’s technical cooperation project with MoLE, ATE, TUCTA and their Zanzibar counterparts ZANEMA and ZATUC, financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (ILO 2013b: 30). In further events and publications, the ILO deepened its understanding of decent work deficits in the sector, concretized steps towards implementing the DWA for domestic workers, developed the Tripartite Plus Plan of Action with ATE and MoLE, and supported CHODAWU and IDWF in carrying out awareness-raising campaigns and lobbying work (ILO 2013a;c; 2016a; interviews with ILO 18.03.2015; CHODAWU 02.02.2015). Alongside pressing the case for the ratification of C 189 with the government, efforts to improve working conditions and increase access to legal and social protection for domestic workers were continued by the ILO Country Office as of 2016 (personal communication 19.12.2016).

7.3 Decent work for domestic workers

In labour law, the fundamental question “‘Who is an employee’ is ... a question with a heavy normative baggage ... It establishes a line between a group of workers who enjoy substantial regulatory support, and a group who has to accept the dictates of market forces” (Davidov, Freedland and Kountouris 2015: 115). Entitlements to specified rights and protection are, however, not determined by legal definitions alone. As I illustrate below, the design of the legal frameworks and the categorization of legal subjects are interwoven with presumptions of why and how ‘the poor’ work in the ‘informal economy’.

When the ILO officially turned to promoting Decent Work in the ‘informal economy’ in 2002, it reiterated its long-standing commitment to “the working poor who were working very hard but who were not recognized, recorded, protected or regulated by the public authorities” (ILO 2002b: 1). Accounting for the diversity of enterprises and work relations in the ‘informal economy’, the ILO draws attention to the broad variety of workers in this category:

They include own-account workers in survival-type activities, such as street vendors, shoeshiners, garbage collectors and scrap- and rag-pickers; paid domestic workers employed by households; homeworkers and workers in sweatshops who are ‘disguised wage workers’ in production chains; and the self-employed in micro-enterprises operating on their own or with contributing family workers or sometimes apprentices/ employees (ibid.: 2).

What ‘informal economy’ workers in these diverse circumstances have in common, according to the ILO, is the lack of legal recognition and protection, with

ensuing vulnerability and limited access to public infrastructure, services and representation in the workplace. Their labour relations are characterized by a high level of insecurity.⁷⁷ Although incomes may vary significantly and not everyone working in the ‘informal economy’ is poor, poverty tends to be more common there than in the ‘formal economy’, especially among women. Decent Work deficits, the ILO emphasizes, affect both “informal workers and entrepreneurs” (ibid.: 3).

In the Decent Work Country Profile for Tanzania of 2010, the ILO puts employment at the centre of its strategy. From this viewpoint, the prevalence of ‘informal’, own-account work in the country is considered problematic, since such employment signifies the unavailability of “decent jobs” in the economy (ILO 2010b: 4). In order to foster the creation of decent and productive employment, the 2013-2016 DWCP aims to improve the “employability of young men and women through skills development” and “access to financial and non-financial services by young men and women”.

The focus of the DWCP is on both the employment and self-employment of young people in specific areas, with an emphasis on boosting their employability. High un- and underemployment in Tanzania however poses limits on the potential outreach of the efforts of the ILO. Although labelled as “extending social protection coverage for all”, the activities of the ILO are restricted to “selected workplaces in the formal and informal sectors” (ILO 2013b: 16) in order to use resources strategically and most effectively (interview with ILO 08.05.2014a). This implies that while access to social protection is to be expanded to the ‘informal sector’, it nonetheless remains tied to having some sort of established employment relation. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, employment relations in the sectors of street trade and domestic work are often volatile and difficult to pin down, as are the incomes to which social security payments are usually tied.

Following the ILO’s international attention to domestic work, the sector has become central to the work of the ILO Country Office and explicitly addressed as a matter of employment (ILO 2013c). The ILO’s commitment to promoting Decent Work for Domestic Workers in Tanzania is based on an understanding of domestic workers as part of an ‘invisible workforce’. Importantly, domestic workers are presumed to remain hidden and unheard not merely because of their workplace, but also because of the gendered connotations of ‘the home’ and the long-standing undervaluing of the reproductive work of women. Following up on its previous work, the ILO Country Office has conducted extensive research on domestic work in Tanzania that builds on key insights into domestic work in the global context and analyses of gender issues and gender-based discrimination in the sector, and documents the legislative background and working conditions of domestic

⁷⁷ The ILO lists here the dearth of seven essential securities: labour market security; employment security; job security; work security; skill reproduction security; income security; and representation security (ibid.: 3f.). These are identical with the securities that Standing (2011) lists as absent for the ‘precariat’.

workers (Kiaga 2007; ILO 2016a). This conception of Decent Work deficits recognizes that, as discussed in Chapter 5, the informality of domestic work is not solely attributable to legal issues, but also intersects with gendered notions of paid and reproductive work.

In the words of the National Programme Coordinator, awareness of gender equality and gender mainstreaming is central to the efforts of the ILO in making labour laws effective, as gender aggravates the vulnerabilities of workers in both the 'formal' and the 'informal economy' (interview with ILO 08.05.2014c). The representatives of CHODAWU and the IDWF likewise highlighted the importance and intersectionality of gender: overlapping family and kinship relations made it difficult to identify employer-employee relations in domestic work (interview with CHODAWU 02.02.2015a), and women employees had to cope with a disadvantaged position in the labour market (interview with IDWF 16.03.2015). Moreover, within the sector of domestic work, multiple overlapping vulnerabilities were identified, as migrants, children and young people, as well as victims of domestic violence, were seen as groups requiring heightened sensitivity (ibid.; interviews with KIWOHEDE 18.03.2015; personal communication with ILO 19.12.2016).

The campaign for Decent Work and for the ratification of the Domestic Workers' Convention hence aims to tackle the double stereotypes affecting women as workers and domestic work as an employment relation (interviews with ILO 08.05.2014a; 18.03.2015; see also ILO 2016a). The strategy is two-pronged, consisting both of lobbying for improved legislation and public awareness-raising: although domestic work already enjoys a high level of legal protection in the Employment and Labour Relations Act, the Tripartite Plus Plan of Action aims for better legal protection of domestic workers through the ratification of C 189 and consideration of Recommendation 201, as well as improved implementation of existing laws. Parallel to the legal changes, domestic workers are to become better informed of their rights and obligations and employers of their responsibilities and obligations (ILO 2013a: 21f.); thus, the campaign material stresses the rights, responsibilities and relative power positions of employers and employees. For instance, CHODAWU distributed bumper stickers claiming, "Domestic workers should enjoy equal rights as other workers – Support the ratification of ILO Convention 189" (Image 5). Another sticker, in Swahili, stressed the importance of written work contracts for domestic workers (Image 6).

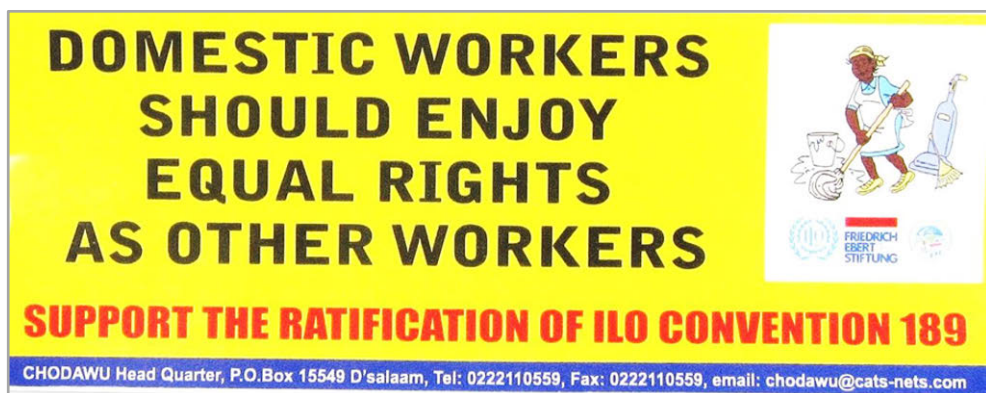


Image 5. CHODAWU bumper sticker.

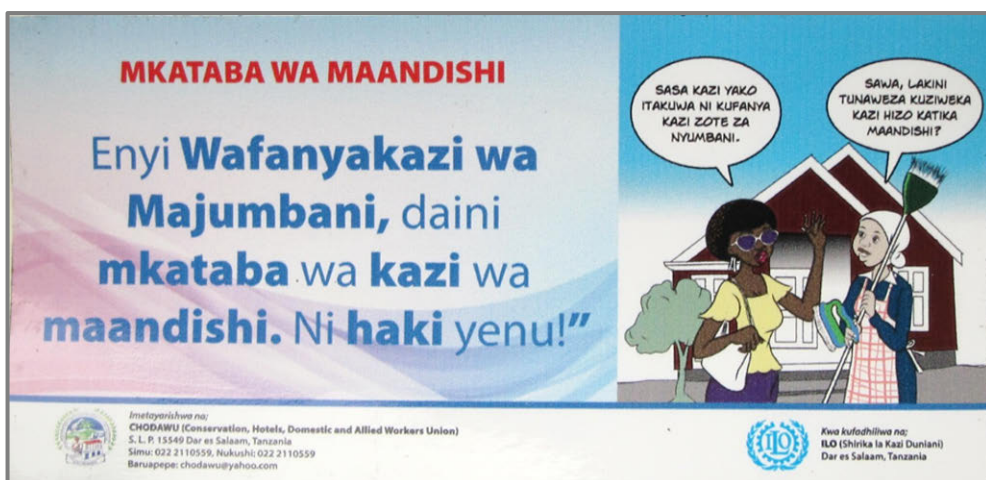


Image 6. CHODAWU/ILO bumper sticker.

The stickers indicate two central aspects in which CHODAWU, in cooperation with the ILO and FES, wants to challenge public perceptions of domestic work: first, in referring to “domestic workers” or, in Swahili, *wafanyakazi wa majumbani*, the pejorative notions of domestic labour as the work of ‘servants’ or *housegirls/ boys*, expressions with historical roots that are still commonly used, are rejected; instead, domestic workers are put on a par with other workers, with the same rights. This discursive shift makes visible the hidden labour of domestic workers and their rights and value as workers, and thus follows up on what Helen Schwenken (2012) identifies as the promise and progressive potential of C 189. *Wafanyakazi* is, moreover, a term which in the common understanding is associated with a ‘formal’ employment relationship, signifying a superior and ‘proper’ kind of employment.

Second, the campaign underscores domestic workers’ agency and voice. On the sticker promoting work contracts, a cartoon depicts an employer saying to a

domestic worker, “Now your job will be to do all the housework”, to which the worker replies “Alright, but can we put the work in writing?”. The goal is to encourage domestic workers to make rightful demands vis-à-vis their employers, seek support from trade unions and the labour court, and get organised in associations and the union to act and bargain collectively. To IDWF and the ILO, it is crucial to portray domestic workers not as helpless victims but as capable of changing their situation (interviews 16.03.2015; 18.03.2015), yet it needs to be kept in mind that this kind of agency and self-determined behaviour cannot easily be displayed by domestic workers who are in a vulnerable position and strongly dependent on the goodwill of their employer. However, although discrimination against domestic workers and violation of their rights remain widespread, the emergence and public presence of domestic workers’ associations in recent years can be seen as hinting at the nascent success of this approach (see *Tanzania Today* 11.05.2017; Wotesawa 2018; Tanzania Domestic Workers Coalition 2018).

The efforts of the ILO and of the other parties in the Tripartite Plus Plan of Action thus follow the ILO’s conception of the ‘informal economy’ as insufficiently covered by legislation, and of ‘informal employment’ as work which is not adequately protected. In consequence, the strategy to integrate ‘informal’ domestic work into the ‘formal’ economy is one of bridging the gap between them (see also section 8.4). On the one hand, legal regulations are to be amended to fit the situation of domestic workers more effectively, and implementation of existing laws is to be strengthened; on the other, domestic workers, who *de jure* already enjoy the same rights as other employees, need to be made aware of the avenues to claim them, and encouraged to make use of the ‘formal’ regulatory system.

7.4 Legal empowerment for the propertied

In marked contrast with the DWA, at the heart of the MKURABITA reforms lies the conceptualization of small-scale trade as micro-business and of traders as micro-entrepreneurs. Under the leading slogan “empowering the disadvantaged towards expanded market economy”, the MKURABITA’s target groups are described as “individuals and groups in the informal sector, whose entry into the formal market economy will enhance their opportunities in using their assets to access capital and thus improve national economic growth and reduce individual household poverty” (MKURABITA 2016). The individuals and groups are specified as “owners of resources and business in the non-legal sector” (MKURABITA 2019c).⁷⁸

⁷⁸ My own translation, Swahili: *wanaomiliki rasilimali na biashara katika sekta isiyokidhi mataakwa ya sheria*. ‘Non-legal sector’ is an approximation of the Swahili *sekta isiyokidhi mataakwa ya sharia*, which translates more literally into ‘sector which does not meet the requirements of the law’, and leaves distinctions between legal and illegal blurry. The wording by the ILD is highly uncommon in Tanzania, where the term *sekta isiyo rasmi* (unofficial sector) is used to describe the ‘informal economy’, and was described by one Swahili speaker as ‘a bit careless’. Similarly, the ILD’s term ‘extralegal’ is unusual in English.

Following the language of the ILD, MKURABITA documents speak consistently of ‘the poor’ as ‘entrepreneurs’ and ‘owners’ of assets, business or property (ILD 2005: passim; MKURABITA 2006; 2007; 2016: passim). Importantly, “[f]or the ILD, business and property are not separate issues; they are interlinked” (MKURABITA 2006: 40). The ILD sees the ‘informal economy’ in Tanzania as an overlap of informal business and informally held property, contrasting 98 per cent of “extralegal entrepreneurs” and 89 per cent of “extralegal properties” with only two per cent of “legal entrepreneurs” and eleven per cent of “legal properties” (ILD 2005: 3).

It is interesting to note that this amalgamation of the poor with entrepreneurship and property is missing from the CLEP’s Final Report, which emphasizes that the four billion people globally who are excluded from the law—a number that remains unverified—are not a monolithic group, but need to be distinguished by their ownership of assets. As stated by the Report, “[t]hose in extreme poverty are typically asset-poor” whereas “[t]hose living in moderate poverty have some assets and income” (UNDP 2008: 19). Mirroring the ILO’s observations in its Report, “Decent work for the informal economy” (2002b), the CLEP Report also differentiates between workers, businesspeople and owners of property.

Despite the strong personnel, institutional and ideational overlaps between the work of the CLEP (see CLEP 2006) and the formation of the Programme under the auspices of the ILD in Tanzania, these distinctions did not find their way into the MKURABITA. Rather, its design strongly reflects the tone of de Soto’s (2001) earlier work and the Doing Business Reports by the World Bank (e.g. 2006; 2017), according to which the main obstacle to economic growth is the high cost associated with the formalization of existing property and businesses, which prevents the poor from participating in the ‘formal’ economy.

In the same vein, street vendors were habitually labelled as owners of small businesses in my interviews with officials of the MKURABITA and NEEC (interviews with MKURABITA 23.01.2015, 17.03.2015; NEEC 02.03.2015). This conception is, moreover, a central element in the tolerant and encouraging stance the Magufuli administration is taking towards street traders, including *machingas*. Magufuli has repeatedly underscored entrepreneurship as virtue of street traders, concurrently making it clear that usage of the streets and public spaces by vendors earning their own daily bread is acceptable, which it is not for those undermining the authorities by selling the merchandise of larger shops and retailers. Trading spaces and licenses issued to traders in Dar es Salaam are given to them in their capacity as holders of informal micro-enterprises (*Global TV* 06.12.2016; *IPP Media* 28.03.2018; *Habari* 02.09.2018, see Chapter 8).

This discourse concurs with a wide-spread emphasis on self-employment and entrepreneurship as a way to combat unemployment and economic inequality. Members of the ruling party—the CCM—and government officials frequently refer to self-employment and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as a way to solve unemployment and economic inequality (*Habari* 29.07.2018; interviews

with NEEC 02.03.2015). Training for “employable skills” and entrepreneurship are also central to achieving the goal of creating and sustaining “Productive and Decent Employment” as laid out in MKUKUTA II (URT 2010: 56), although, importantly, MKUKUTA II places these alongside wider economic and labour market reforms rather than focussing on the employability of individuals and groups alone.

The representation of the poor as owners of business and of assets, and the focus on their inclusion in the market as a means to combat poverty and unemployment, are closely interlinked with the conception of the ‘informal economy’ as outside of the ‘formal’ economy and with neoliberal strategies aiming for its integration. The main thrust of the MKURABITA closely mirrors the work of de Soto and the ILD, in which the ‘informal economy’ presents the boundary of established capitalist market institutions. While it results from costly and burdensome economic regulation, it is also a barrier to economic development (de Soto 2001; see also Gonzales de Olarte 2001). Irrespective of existing research on the historical background and development of the Tanzanian ‘second economy’ and its expansion, particularly in response to economic liberalization (e.g. Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990; Tripp 1997; Coulson 2013), the ILD (2005b: 1) argues:

The socio-economic reforms which were initiated and implemented since 1986 and deepened during the decade of 1995-2005, have generated some positive results at the Macro-level ... However, the benefits from the reforms did not translate into significant reduction of poverty among the majority of the people of Tanzania ... largely because they operate extralegally outside the formal economy where they face a legally prohibitive environment that makes it difficult for them to realize their full potential for economic empowerment and self-improvement.

This implies that Tanzanians are excluded from the economic upswing brought about by structural adjustment and market liberalization as result of their generating ‘informal’ or ‘extra-legal’ incomes, a causal relation that reverses the findings of the aforementioned literature. The ILD’s analysis further leaves structural factors such as gender or wider labour market dynamics unaddressed, although these have been identified as central to the composition of the ‘informal economy’ (see Tripp 1989; 1997). According to the ILD, the reason “why the majority of Tanzanian property owners *choose* to remain extralegal” (ibid.: v; emphasis added) is the cost of converting existing assets, property and business activities to fit them for the ‘legal economy’. There is a long list of legal and bureaucratic obstacles that “keep the majority [of businesses] in the extralegal sector” (ILD 2005a: 3ff.).

The objectives and goal of the reforms are, therefore, to change legal regulations in a way which incorporates existing wealth and creates further “access to property and business opportunities, in order to develop a strong expanded market economy” (ILD 2005b: 3; see also MKURABITA 2007: 4; 2019c). This

conception presents ill-designed regulation as the main challenge, whereas the economic conditions and activities which already exist in the 'informal economy' are seen as unproblematic. Exemplifying the neoliberal perspective, of which de Soto is one of the main proponents, the 'informal economy' is considered a realm of opportunities and self-organization. Indeed, in spite of the unfavourable regulatory system, poor "Tanzanians in the extralegal economy have actually created a self-organized system of documented institutions that allows them to govern their actions" (ILD 2005a: 5).

Legislative change and LEP, as prescribed in the MKURABITA reforms, hence follow a specific, neoliberal definition of the problems behind, and solution to, 'informal' economic activities. This conception is, however, of limited applicability to the working lives of many small-scale traders. As discussed in Chapter 2, the separations between 'formal' and 'informal' activities, and the 'formal' and 'informal city', are not clear; meanwhile, as illustrated in Chapter 4, street traders often move between employment and self-employment. In failing to spot these distinctions and representing poor Tanzanian 'informal economy operators' as self-employed business owners, the LEP approach propagates two critical but contestable presumptions about the 'informal economy'.

First, it reaffirms the dichotomies of formal/ informal and employment/ self-employment, and confines the notion of wage employment to the realm of the 'formal' economy. The previous chapters dealt at length with the fragility of these divisions, as well as with the confusion they bring, not only for scholarly analyses of class distinction and social stratification but, importantly, also for strategies of social organization. The reforms related to property and business formalization solidify these dichotomies, as became clear during my interviews with experts at the MKURABITA and NEEC who solely targeted own-account, self-employed traders in the 'informal economy'. This line of thinking, moreover, impacts on the bandwidth of rights that are promoted, which I address in the following section.

Second, and relatedly, the LEP's self-employment-centred conception does not distinguish between survival and accumulation in the 'informal economy', rather venerating the image of the profit-making, competitive entrepreneur. This discourse is powerful. Indeed, for many street traders and *machingas*, particularly younger ones like Lawrence and Shafira (introduced in Chapters 5 and 6), accumulating profit and enlarging their business is the ultimate goal. A number of traders—for instance Ezekiel who sold fruit at Kariakoo (see Chapter 6)—succeed in saving and re-investing horizontally into expanding their business, or vertically into another source of income such as a *shamba* (interviews with VIBINDO 11.02.2015). For an equally large number of traders, however, what they earn in a day does not necessarily come in the form of cash which can be spent, saved or re-invested. Making a decent profit on some days must often compensate for losses on other days, or be used to repay debts, loans and purchased or commissioned items. After an unsuccessful day, the balance might be zero or even negative, as traders have to cover the costs of lost, confiscated or unsold perishable goods from their own pockets.

Among many other similar stories, this was illustrated by Mama Sada's account. After the removal of her stand from Bagamoyo Road in Tegeta due to road construction, she had been selling fruit and vegetables at Mwenge market for five years. She explained that she had come from a poor family in Kigoma, with just primary education, working as a domestic worker until she accumulated enough capital to start her own business. At Mwenge market, she had to pay a daily fee for the stall and night storage, but since the market was not approved by the municipality, she also had to pay fines to the auxiliary police or else have her foodstuffs confiscated. It was only because she was experienced and well known among the vegetable suppliers that she could usually purchase new vegetables for the next day on credit.

Mama Sada worked fourteen hours a day, six days a week. She could not afford to hire a helper as she had to cover the school fees of her daughter. She remembered how several years earlier, her mother had become very ill and required expensive treatment and medication, which she had only been able to afford with the help of friends. Responding to my question about what she would ask of the government if she could make a wish, she said she hoped to be allowed to stay at Mwenge where business was good, and to be given a loan so she could replace her broken table and have a roof installed. This way she would be able to take better care of her mother and daughter, and perhaps one day own a proper shop.

Mama Sada certainly saw herself as a businesswoman, but what she described was a struggle to make a living rather than profit. This vital distinction applies all the more to casually employed *machingas* and street traders selling goods on behalf of a larger supplier or wholesaler. Indeed, given the income fluctuation and insecurity reported by street traders, speaking of profits is in many cases a euphemism. The focus of the MKURABITA on capital formation and formalization of assets neglects the manifold and complex insecurities of traders who face the risk of zero income or loss and, if they are casually employed, the additional risk of losing their jobs (for a similar argument, cf. Rizzo 2013: 294). In this regard, the MKURABITA reforms suffer from a similarly narrow focus as microcredit programmes which fail to account for the multiple needs and obligations of borrowers, undermining their efforts to run a business and leaving them unable to repay their debts (Roodman 2011).

Mama Sada's story shares traits with those of many other traders, and airs struggles that have been recognized for decades. In Keith Hart's original account of what he coined the 'informal sector', written almost half a century ago, he summarizes his observations:

Petty capitalism, often as a supplement to wage-employment, offers itself as a means of salvation. If only the right chance came, the urban workers could break out of the nexus of high living costs and low wages which is their lot. This hope is comparable with the promise of wealth which a large win on the football pools holds out for the British worker over-burdened by hire-purchase payments. As it is, the monthly

equation of income and expenditure is usually negative, and few manage to escape from the spiral of ever-increasing debt. But the lives of the majority are sustained by hopes of this kind and, as a result, most are ready to involve themselves, both on a casual and regular basis, in petty enterprises of all types ranging in scale from the most trivial activities to major businesses. (Hart 1973: 67)

Irrespective of Hart's early scepticism and differentiated findings on the 'informal economy' (e.g. ILO 2013b), the ideal of entrepreneurship flourishes in discussions of the 'informal economy' in Tanzania, especially in the elements evident in the LEP conception and displayed by the ILD and MKURABITA as well as by the Doing Business approach of the World Bank.

Moreover, as this discourse promotes profit and accumulation as the norm, the blame of failure falls on those who do not succeed in building up a business. This became clear in several conversations with traders who, after many months or even years, found themselves as penniless and destitute as when they first took up this line of work. Traders who had lost their former jobs or livelihoods and were struggling due to government action, such as the large-scale evictions of 2006, accidents or other tragedies, could point to these events and circumstances as explanations. Yet others carried the responsibility for their lack of business success on their own shoulders. My encounters with a microcredit broker and his client, on the one hand, and a *machinga* on the other, present a poignant example of that.

James, who had formerly worked for a microfinance bank and was now head of his own VICOBA (Village Community Bank),⁷⁹ had agreed to meet with me to discuss the purposes of his microfinance institution (MFI). Despite being called a VICOBA, James' MFI did not operate on membership contributions but, like a regular bank, on investors' funds and interest payments. The MFI was semi-formal in that it was registered and licensed by the government, but the loans handed out to clients were granted in an 'informal' manner.

James was accompanied by Kareem, a chef. Kareem had studied hotel management but, unable to find employment in the field, worked as *Baba Lishe*, running a street kitchen in Kariakoo where *machingas* came to eat. The street kitchen operated for three years, during which time Kareem had an adequate income, but he was then what he called "disturbed" by the municipal auxiliary police and had his equipment confiscated. He attempted to start another business, but failed to make any money. Getting involved with James and his VICOBA had allowed him to take out a loan, and he now worked as a self-employed caterer and

⁷⁹ Similar to Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS), which are usually semi-formal, VICOBA's are 'informal' member-based microfinance institutions. The VICOBA model was first introduced to Tanzania by the NGO CARE in the early 2000s. Since then, increased access to microfinance for both the rural and urban poor through SACCOS and VICOBA is explicitly encouraged in the poverty reduction frameworks of MKUKUTA I and II (Ahlén 2012: 5ff.). VICOBA's generally provide loans to microenterprises, as well as skill and business management training to its members.

cooking instructor for hotels and offices who hired his services. With the loan from the VICOPA, Kareem had bought, among other things, a computer with which he could manage his orders from home. His plan was eventually to get a license and have an officially registered business.

James explained that for street traders and *machingas*, obtaining a loan from the VICOPA was significantly easier than from a microfinance bank, but was nonetheless tied to strict criteria: borrowers had to be organised in a group of ten people, who had to know each other personally and be able to vouch for each other. They had to provide proof of an official address and be self-employed, since casually employed traders tended to disappear whenever they changed their workplace. Further, they had to provide statements and proof of their marital status and agree on home items, such as a TV, as collateral. Finally, a national ID or birth certificate was needed for the loan, which would then be paid back in weekly instalments and, once the business started to take off, with interest. These criteria also largely conformed with the practices of the MKURABITA and NEEC, which saw self-organization and mutual control in peer groups as a key first step for the poor to gain access to support and credit and, ultimately, for their integration into the 'formal' economy (MKURABITA interviews 17.03.2015; NEEC 02.03.2015a).

Although I was familiar with the critical discussion surrounding microcredit practices and the establishment of SACCOS and VICOPAs in Tanzania (e.g. Fraser and Kazi 2004; de Goey 2012; Kitomari and Abwe 2016), I nonetheless left the meeting with James and Kareem in high spirits. While I shared the critique of the alleged 'win-win' situation (Hussein and Makame 2008), which assumes philanthropic help for socially disadvantaged and excluded groups can be simultaneously turned into a profitable venture for the MFI and the investors behind it, for Kareem and another 8,000 members of James' MFI, the business model offered the opportunity to generate a stable income and even wealth. Kareem's story provided support for the conception of 'informal economy' operators who can successfully expand their business when they find themselves in a favourable environment.

Yet, the very next day, I was confronted with the limitations of this conception when I met with Frederick, the *machinga* selling wall maps and posters (introduced in Chapter 5). Frederick had attended primary school and the first year of secondary school, but had to quit and work on his parents' farm in Morogoro when they could no longer afford his education. He had left the farm in 2003 to find work in Dar es Salaam, first selling small plastic items like dustbins and hangers, then finding a niche selling wall maps. The profit margin from these sales was very low even when he started and had decreased further in recent years due to increasing competition. In his late thirties, he was suffering from severe health problems due to his exposure to weather and pollution at his workplace on busy Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road and, from what I observed, poor nutrition.

Frederick insinuated that not being able to feed and take care of a family was very shameful, while explaining that he would like to make changes in his life, but did not know how to do things differently. He listed a number of problems that prevented him from doing better: the poverty of his family had kept him from getting a good education and the lack of education kept him from finding good work; harsh working conditions and competition kept his income low; and his lack of capital kept him from making larger profits. Concluding each explanation with the words “that is the problem”, he illustrated his struggles by describing his work routine, which involved commuting six days a week from his home in Kimara to Palm Beach. The number of maps he could buy and sell per day always depended on the previous day’s profit, from which he had to deduct bus fare and lunch money as well as expenses for rent, medicine and the support he sent to his elderly parents.

When I asked him if he had heard of any organizations or institutions which could offer support to him, Frederick pointed out several further problems. He believed that the government, people at the bank and Tanzanian researchers were not interested in listening to small traders like him. He had heard of SACCOS and VICOBA, but even those were inaccessible. Together with nine other traders from Palm Beach he had formed a small group called *Pamoja* (together). They had a chairman and held regular meetings in which they discussed current issues concerning their workplace, taking minutes. The members of the group also helped each other out with small loans in times of need, but that help was limited to the sum of a bus fare or a meal.

Despite their efforts to self-organize, MFIs had repeatedly turned them down. Following the advice of one microfinance consultant, they had drafted a *katiba*, a charter needed for the official registration of the group, but they could not afford to pay the fee to obtain the necessary approval and signature from the registrar of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Importantly, Frederick spotlighted a fundamental paradox:

You have to open your business first, then you can go to a VICOBA. If you don’t have a business, how can you pay back the loan you have received from a VICOBA? First, you need to make money from business, then you can join a VICOBA.

Frederick’s observation reflects the results of research in Tanzania which identified the accessibility of sustainable lending to the poorest by MFIs to a “chicken and egg situation” (Fraser and Kazi 2004: 40); furthermore, even though branded as easily accessible loans, microfinance lending is nonetheless competitive and restricted to debtors who can be categorized as enterprising and reliable. Indeed, the testing and selecting of suitable candidates is in itself part of a lucrative business model (see Boss 2012).

The MKURABITA’s emphasis on the accumulation of capital by business owners, and on the creation of a competitive business environment, comes at the cost of neglecting those of the poor without assets or starting capital. This focus on

creating a business-friendly environment, driven by the engagement of the private sector and the growth of SMEs, has been criticized as a “‘highly optimistic’ belief in the ability of markets (alone) to generate public welfare” (Altenburg and von Drachenfels 2006: 388). With specific regard to Tanzania, several scholars argue that, despite being proclaimed pro-poor, the reforms promoted by the government in the context of the MKURABITA and Doing Business not only fail to account for the needs of small-scale traders’ micro-enterprises, but, moreover, have unintended negative impact on these groups. In fact, the poorest of traders continue to be disenfranchised and marginalized by the reforms, suffering from an absence of public recognition and lacking access to finance and legal coverage (Lyons and Msoka 2010; Lyons, Brown and Msoka 2012, 2014). The focus on entrepreneurship and competitive markets also affects the conception of rights for the ‘informal economy’, to which I now turn.

7.5 Workers’ rights and public responsibility

In this and the following section, I highlight the significance of the notions of domestic workers as employees and street traders as micro-entrepreneurs to the conception and design of legal reforms and the promotion of rights in the ‘informal economy’. Following liberal formulations of rights, it is commonly assumed that civil, political and social rights complement each other (see Marshall 1965). This consensual approach, however, does not consider fundamental ideational and conceptual differences at the roots of these rights. The interrelated, interdependent and indivisible character of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights⁸⁰ is repeatedly affirmed in international human rights documents as well as in legal commentary. Yet a broad range of potential conflicts arise not only in the course of their interpretation and implementation but are already evident in the diverging political and social priorities entailed in their conception.

Although labour rights are an integral part of the International Bill of Human Rights and the UDHR,⁸¹ they have for most of their existence been addressed on parallel but separate paths from other human rights, both in scholarly debate and political practice (see Leary 1996). This division is not coincidental, but stems from fundamental divergences in regard to the substance, goals and functional logic of the respective sets of rights. Centrally, labour rights differ from other human rights in their respective assignment of the roles of rights-holders and

⁸⁰ The International Bill of Human Rights is made up of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

⁸¹ The labour rights listed in the International Bill of Human Rights are the following: Freedom of association; the right to organize and participate in collective bargaining; the right to non-discrimination; the right to equal pay for equal work; the abolition of slavery and forced labour; the abolition of child labour; the right to equality at work; the right to just and favourable remuneration; the right to a safe work environment; the right to rest and leisure; the right to work; and the right to family life.

duty-bearers. Whereas human rights address “equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family”, labour rights concern workers, or, more broadly defined, the working class.⁸² Labour rights thus determine rights-holders more narrowly on the basis of their socio-economic position in society and act in favour of group or collective interests, compared to the universal application and the focus on the individual and citizen in the conception of human rights.

This, in turn, has implications for defining the duty-bearer of the respective rights: labour rights aim to protect workers and other income-dependent groups against the power of private and corporate actors holding capital on the market. They actively call for government intervention to ensure private actors meet their social obligations towards workers. Human rights, on the other hand, are intended first and foremost to limit the power of the state and restrict intervention in the private sphere (Kolben 2010: 469f.).

Distinct roles are assigned to the law and the state. Human rights promotion has the goal of

creating and utilizing legal instruments to check state power and hold states accountable. Law, therefore, is not simply instrumental in achieving particular political ends, but is often *the end* in itself ... human rights movements tend to understand problems as political and solutions as legal. By contrast, labor rights movements have generally regarded problems as primarily economic and social, and solutions as primarily political (ibid.: 476; emphasis original, footnotes omitted).

Dialogue between human and labour rights scholarship has traditionally been rare and confined to discussing legal frameworks in industrialized countries (ibid.; Mantouvalou 2012b). The ‘informal economy’, however, poses an interesting litmus test for the limitations and potential of competing conceptions of rights-based development. If we understand the ‘informal economy’ as the outcome of a process in which some income-generating activities are becoming unregulated and unprotected, and formalization as the reverse process, we see how rights discourses serve to include or exclude certain kinds of people, jobs or even entire sectors. By putting different weight on political and civil or economic and social rights, or on their positive or negative interpretations, discourses on rights and responsibilities become central to determining the organization of the state and the market, and the social positioning of different groups.

The juxtaposition of the ‘informal’ sectors of street trade and domestic work in Tanzania offers relevant insights into these fundamental differences and their implications for efforts to promote rights at the boundaries of established and formalized capitalist markets. It is important to note that both the DWA and LEP explicitly aim for the expansion of legal protection and access to rights into the

⁸² See the respective Preambles of the International Bill of Rights. Labour rights are in most instances conceived narrowly as the rights of employees in an employment relationship, but this definition can be widened to include workers more generally (Mundlak 2007: 730).

‘informal economy’, with the explicitly stated goal of integrating social groups and income-generating activities which have previously been excluded from formal regulatory frameworks. In theory, the DWA and LEP share a commitment to at least a minimal set of labour rights, as proposed by the CLEP, which are to be embedded into the macro-structural reforms of domestic and global labour markets that aim for the fulfilment of related economic and social human rights. In Tanzania, however, the interpretation and implementation of the two agendas follow quite dissimilar paths.

Out of the comprehensive body of work-related and other economic, social and cultural rights,⁸³ the ILO distilled the four pillars of the DWA: social protection, social dialogue, employment creation and rights at work (ILO 2002b). The latter consist of the four Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, or Core Labour Standards (CLS): freedom of association, and the prohibition of child labour, forced labour and discrimination. Yet the CLS have been criticized for displaying a minimalist and negative conception of rights and work, and commentators are divided over whether they represent an enabling instrument to counter neoliberal labour market restructuring or a hegemonic tool to co-opt labour struggles and resistance (Alston 2004; Elias 2007; for a discussion, see MacNaughton and Frey 2011; Hauf 2015).

Irrespective of the debate, following the 2008 economic crisis and the ensuing spike in global unemployment, the ILO embedded the CLS within the DWA paradigm to address the ‘informal economy’ as a more far-reaching issue of governance. The CLS and their underlying Conventions are seen to “contain the basic enabling rights instrumental to progressively breaking away from the informal economy and poverty”. Effectively applying the CLS within active labour market policies, appropriate law enforcement, oversight from the public authorities and tripartite dialogue at the national level offers “the basic groundwork for a progressive exit from the informal economy” (Gravel, Kohiyama and Tsotroudi 2011: 7).

As mentioned above, the recent DWCP of the ILO Country Office in Tanzania builds squarely on the four pillars of the DWA. In the domestic work sector, the Country Office has specified its goals based on its Situational Analysis of existing legal frameworks and working conditions in Tanzania, on the one hand, and the aims of the Domestic Workers Convention 189 and Recommendation 201, on the other. During interviews, officials of the ILO and MoLE explained the need to adapt the principles and goals of the DWA to the realities on the ground. This “evidence-based policy making” (ILO 2016c: 55) had three implications for the promotion of rights:

First, the promotion of the DWA, and of labour rights more broadly, is limited in the face of the enormous proportion of ‘informal’ employment in Tanzania. Although the ILO 2002 Resolution and the 2013-2016 DWCP explicitly examine the applicability of the DWA to the ‘informal economy’, many of the interviewed

⁸³ As enshrined in the ICESCR, see MacNaughton and Frey (2011).

officials emphasized how decent work deficits were more aggravated and far more difficult to address in non-formalized sectors and workplaces. As discussed in the previous chapter, the ILO and trade unions are restricted by the boundaries of labour rights and standards which, by definition, apply only to 'formal' employment and recognized workplaces. Without the legal basis of formally recognized employment relationships, work deficits in the 'informal economy' tend to present themselves as violations of related economic and social human rights that fall outside the competence of labour institutions. At the same time, long-term labour market reforms can only be achieved by addressing decent work deficits in both the 'formal' and 'informal economy' alike (interviews with TAMICO 29.01.2015; TUICO 30.01.2015; FES 19.02.2015). While domestic work has an ambiguous position between 'formal' and 'informal' work, the promotion of labour rights and standards in the sector, importantly, is enabled by the clear legal recognition of domestic work as an employment relationship (interviews with CHODAWU 02.02.2015a,b; personal communication with ILO 19.12.2016). Proper formalization of work relations in the domestic sector as well as in other sectors is therefore the ultimate goal of the ILO's commitment (see also ILO 2002b).

Second, ILO officials emphasized that labour rights and standards are interdependent and complementary, with each other as well as with the wider objectives of the DWA. For instance, increasing access to social protection for people in the 'informal economy' required a comprehensive approach that combined the development of affordable social protection schemes with social dialogue involving employers of both 'formal' and 'informal' enterprises, improved working conditions, labour market security, higher pay and raised awareness of the benefits of social protection. Tripartism and the involvement of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders for coordination and consultation were central to achieving long-lasting outcomes (interviews with ILO 08.05.2014a; 20.03.2015).

Third, the promotion and implementation of labour rights and standards fulfilled both process-oriented and outcome-oriented roles. In the view of representatives of the ILO and trade unions, limited resources and the magnitude of challenges ahead demanded the strategic prioritization of areas of intervention, and a choice being made between short-term and long-term goals, which were, however, to be aligned with those of the DWA. The promotion of concrete rights and standards, such as the regulation of work hours or occupational safety and health, was seen in relation to more long-term strategies to create productive and secure employment. The principles and objectives of the DWA were thereby included in the government's 2008 National Employment Policy. Negotiating for legislative changes and piecemeal improvements in the enforcement of labour laws were thus part of a process whereby different stakeholders practiced tripartism and social dialogue (interviews with ILO 08.05.2014a; TUCTA 06.05.2014; MoLE 12.02.2015; see also URT 2008). In the domestic work sector, the campaign for the ratification of C 189 aimed to raise awareness of decent work and labour

rights among employers, workers and the wider public, with legislative change as the ultimate outcome (interview with CHODAWU 02.02.2015b; ILO 2013a).

Commentators have positively noted the progressive potential and the contribution of the DWA to the global discourse on workers' rights and protection, particularly for its inclusion of feminist concerns of gendered labour market dynamics and its focus on social protection and 'informal economy' workers (e.g. Barrientos 2007). The question remains "whether this symbolic success of feminism in the discursive economy of representation translates into material improvements of actual working and living conditions" (Hauf 2015: 147). In Tanzania, despite a solid legal footing of labour rights for domestic workers and many small initial successes in campaigning for better and decent working conditions for domestic workers, the challenges ahead remain formidable, especially in terms of the practical implementation and enforcement of existing laws (see ILO 2016a). Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapters, domestic workers' visibility and access to the law is determined by multiple and intersecting factors, and positive changes are experienced differently among them.

These challenges notwithstanding, the efforts of the ILO and its partners over the past two decades have resulted in changes in the perception and representation of domestic work. Domestic workers have gained recognition as workers with rights, and the duty of the government to regulate the sector is widely accepted. In particular, the need to protect children and women domestic workers from exploitation and abuse has become an unquestioned commitment of consecutive administrations, while protective measures, including the setting up of contact points and shelter, are being established (interview with KIWOHEDE 18.03.2015; personal communication with ILO 19.12.2016). Importantly, respecting and protecting domestic workers' rights is seen as the duty of the employers and of public institutions. The duties and obligations of the government and of employers are clearly spelled out by the Employment and Labour Relations Act (URT 2004), by C 189, which has been endorsed by parliament, and the Tripartite Plus Plan of Action (ILO 2013a). Domestic workers are thus being identified as rights-holders who benefit from effective legal frameworks.

Although the ambiguous status of domestic work—somewhere between 'formal' and 'informal' and between work like 'any other' and 'no other' (see Chapters 4)—continues to hamper awareness of domestic workers' rights as well as their enforcement, the demand for respect and protection is mirrored by ongoing activism in the sector. It was further reflected during my conversations with individuals and groups of domestic workers. For Melinda, Emanuel and Issa, whom I introduced in Chapter 5, rights and obligations were a matter of negotiation with their employers.

For others who had more personal relationships with their employers, the situation was less clear; however, two aspects came to the fore: practical issues like remuneration, working hours and the work load had to be 'fair'. 'Unfair'

demands by an employer in these areas were considered abusive and exploitative, and would only be endured if a domestic worker could not seek help to address the situation. On the other hand, my interlocutors in the focus group interviews made it plain that they considered respect just as important as rights: for instance, for live-in domestic workers, being given the same food as their employers and not only leftovers indicated respect for their work and for their value as human beings; several domestic workers referred to it as a “human right” based on their “humanity” and equality with their employer. A similar view was held by Grace, Neema’s employer, for whom it went without saying that Neema would join the common meals.

I interpret this to mean that, to my interlocutors, the rights of domestic workers were not only labour but also human rights, irrespective of their status as workers and the ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ nature of their work. While this offers an interesting but not unproblematic avenue⁸⁴ into the discussion on labour and human rights in the ‘informal economy’, it is noteworthy that the workers located the responsibility for their well-being with their employers, unlike legislation and the campaign by the ILO and its partners, which assigns such responsibilities and duties to public institutions and law enforcement. This conception of public responsibility for guaranteeing workers’ rights and the commitment to protecting vulnerable groups is in sharp contrast to the approach taken by the MKURABITA, as I illustrate in the next section.

7.6 Property rights and neoliberal responsabilization

In its Final Report, “Making the Law Work for Everyone”, the CLEP presents the LEP agenda as four interrelated pillars, each containing a bundle of rights: access to justice and the law as a fundamental framework enabling the poor to enjoy their rights; property rights; labour rights; and business rights. Arguing that labour and human capital are “the greatest asset of the poor”, the CLEP directly builds on the DWA: “The typical and tired pattern of low productivity, low earnings, and high risks must be replaced by the fulfilment of the *Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* and the *Decent Work Agenda*, and the strategy to provide protection and opportunity to workers in the informal economy” (UNDP 2008: 7; emphasis original). The CLEP lists the following rights and measures in the pillar of labour rights: the promotion of freedom of association to strengthen the identity, voice and representation of the working poor; the improvement of labour regulation and the functioning of labour market institutions; a minimum package of labour rights for workers and enterprises in the ‘informal economy’ that goes beyond the CLS; increased access to employment opportunities; the expansion of social protection for poor workers; guaranteed access to medical

⁸⁴ Close personal relations and the presumption of equality between the employer and the domestic worker as ‘one of the family’ may be used to gloss over power inequalities and to legitimize the subservience of domestic workers (see Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007; Mattila 2011).

care, health insurance, and pensions; and attention to gender equality and the elimination of discrimination (ibid.).

Irrespective of the commitment to the DWA and to the pillar of labour rights in the Final Report by the CLEP, labour rights, as well as related economic and social rights, are virtually absent from the reports and recommendations by both the ILD and the MKURABITA reform process. As the name of the Programme indicates, the design of the MKURABITA focuses strictly on legal frameworks for the registration and formalization of property and business, particularly on “[i]ntegrated, secure, fungible and transferable property rights” and “[o]rganizational forms to increase productivity through the creation of ‘distinct legal entities’” (MKURABITA 2006: 16).

In 2009, the MKURABITA officially distanced itself from the ILD and the recommendations of the CLEP, describing in a policy note the contribution of the Programme in the context of LEP but clarifying that it neither cooperates with the UNDP nor implements the CLEP recommendations in Tanzania (MKURABITA 2009: 3).⁸⁵ The legal, economic and social empowerment objectives of the MKURABITA are listed in the policy note as “[l]egally protected property and business Rights, which is achieved through the issuance of the titles and its registration as well as creating the necessary infrastructure, personnel capabilities and management systems for sustainable use of the asset for economic benefits” (ibid.: 11). To the extent that labour rights are mentioned at all, their scope is explicitly limited under the MKURABITA reforms to the “[d]evelopment and operationalization of a flexible labour right regime that responds to actual demands of the small enterprises” (ibid.).

Three aspects stand out from this conception of rights promotion in the ‘informal’ or, in the words of the ILD, ‘extralegal’ economy: firstly, income-generation is conceptualized primarily as a matter of assets, property and access to the market, not as one of labour or work. The legal recognition and protection of property and business rights are isolated from labour and related economic and social rights. This approach not only limits the target group of rights-holders who are to benefit from the reform to owners of assets and self-employed entrepreneurs (described above), it also impacts on the coordination of the policy reform process, as the MKURABITA has little to no contact with institutions and stakeholders working on labour and social matters, such as MoLE, the ILO or civil society organizations.

⁸⁵ The split between the MKURABITA and the ILD had followed misunderstandings and disagreements between the Peruvian institute and the Tanzanian government over the scope of the project, as well as the involvement and costs of the ILD in the process (MKURABITA interview 23.01.2015). Dan Banik notes that “the appointment of de Soto as co-chair (along with Madeleine Albright) [of the CLEP] created quite a stir in many civil society circles, not least in Norway, where he was seen to epitomize neo-liberal approaches, at odds with the ideals of most Norwegian NGOs” (Banik 2009: 119); with its inclusion of labour rights, the CLEP went far beyond de Soto’s original focus on property rights. The Norwegian aid agency Norad was a principal donor in both the initial phases of the MKURABITA reforms and of the CLEP, and critical of the work of the ILD in Tanzania (see Norad 2007).

Rather, the MKURABITA coordinates its policies with the Ministry of Commerce and Trade, with the NEEC and, indirectly through the Ministry, with BRELA's simplified procedures of business registration and formalization (interviews with NEEC 02.03.2015; BRELA 05.03.2015; MKURABITA 17.03.2015).

Secondly, and of pivotal relevance to the sector of small-scale trade, in isolating property and business rights from labour and work, the MKURABITA reforms leave unaddressed the question of whether street traders have a right to work in public space. Researchers have noted the shortcomings of the MKURABITA in addressing the "spatial informality" of small-scale trade, particularly the requirement of a fixed address in order to register a business (Lyons and Msoka 2010: 1085). Yet, unless they operate as a registered business, street traders' right to work is not unambiguously guaranteed by Tanzanian laws and, indeed, is frequently undermined by planning, land and business laws (see Chapter 4; Lyons and Brown 2013: 85). The MKURABITA ignores the strong presence of street traders, particularly *machingas*, who have no fixed legal address; hence, street vendors continue to be excluded from the more favourable legislation which has provided for limited liability sole-trader businesses since 2011 (ibid.: 91).

This omission departs from the original recommendations of the ILD, which explicitly called for the legalization and uncomplicated registration of street trade (ibid.), leaving hundreds of thousands of street traders exposed to evictions and legal insecurity since the inception of the Programme and up to late 2016. Even with the encouraging stance of the Magufuli administration and the issuing of vendor IDs, these shortcomings wait to be addressed (see Chapter 8). The lack of recognition for street traders' right to work, let alone right to decent work,⁸⁶ further leads to the violation of a list of vendors' human rights, such as the unlawful confiscation of their property by the municipal auxiliary police and restrictions on fair trial, as well as to their being denied economic and social rights, including the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.

Inconsistent legislation and policies, and the continuing criminalization of street vendors, render the MKURABITA and Doing Business reforms largely ineffective for the small-scale trade sector. Although, in theory, street traders are eligible for business registration and for the NEEC microfinance and skills-training programmes, in practice, the number of vendors using these opportunities was quite low (interviews with BRELA 05.03.2015; NEEC 02.03.2015b). While the MKURABITA's goal is one of tackling the 'informal economy', the poorest of street traders are excluded from the reforms in two ways: the focus on property and business rights as the primary means of addressing poverty excludes poor street

⁸⁶ A positive interpretation of the right to work defines "decent work as 'work that respects the fundamental rights of the human person as well as the rights of workers in terms of conditions of work safety and remuneration.' Decent work therefore includes the right to a decent income 'allowing workers to support themselves and their families.' It also guarantees the right of access to employment and further the right not to be unfairly deprived of employment" (MacNaughton and Frey 2011: 465f.).

vendors like Frederick who take up street vending because they lack assets, property or ownership of a business; meanwhile the denial of their right to work, in both its negative and positive interpretations, criminalizes this line of income-generation further. Criminalization of street vending has been at least temporarily halted by Magufuli's decree; yet, without redressing the issue of street traders' right to work on a permanent basis, the current favourable policies do not solve vendors' multiple labour insecurities (see fn. 77).

Thirdly, the promotion of “[f]ormal, fungible property rights that not only allow assets to be identified but also allow ordinary people to move them in the expanded market to capture as much economic value as possible” (MKURABITA 2009: 5) conceptualizes rights in a strictly instrumentalist manner. Contrary to the way in which the DWA is pursued by the ILO Country Office, the negotiation and coordination of rights is not considered part of the legal and social reform process; thus, the enabling and procedural function of rights, which, for instance, is central to the right of freedom of association, is missing from this conception. Access to the law, particularly to business and property rights, is instead seen as a way to ensure the increased productivity and growth of SMEs, thereby contributing to economic development.

In consequence, legal reform and access to rights are devised largely in a top-down manner; stakeholders like VIBINDO and other civil society groups were not involved in the reform design and implementation.⁸⁷ The lack of Tanzanian ownership in the reform design phase was censured in the early stages in NORAD's Mid-term Review, which also criticized the fact that the ILD carried out much of its consulting work in Peru rather than in Tanzania and cautioned that a “system ‘delivered from on high’ will simply not work in Tanzania” (NORAD 2007: pars. 63-64). The Review disapprovingly concluded:

The Progress Report [by the ILD] makes almost no reference to the Tanzanian policy environment ... Nor does it employ the very large body of Tanzanian research already carried out on formalization issues, property, small business development etc. This reinforces the perception that the Reform Design process has failed to take account of Tanzanian reality and is basing itself on external models. The tendency to use expressions alien to Tanzanian/ Zanzibari law such as ‘property’, ‘title’ or ‘eminent domain’ might lead the reader to a similar conclusion. (Ibid.: par. 81)

⁸⁷ NORAD's Mid-term Review observes that the “ILD has consulted with various Tanzanian NGOs in their work on the Reform design viz. in microfinance (PRIDE), in agricultural marketing (Technoserve), in rural land rights (CORDS) and urban land rights (WAT-Human Settlements Trust)” (NORAD 2007: par. 77), but that overall inclusion of civil society was not anticipated in the ILD's approach. In response to this omission, the Norwegian government funded the NGO, Norwegian People's Aid, which worked for greater awareness and involvement among local firms, businesspeople and politicians by organizing seminars (ibid.: pars. 78-79).

I suggest, however, that the observed mismatch between the MKURABITA reform design and the situation in Tanzania is not entirely due to the lack of Tanzanian ownership, but also results from specific conceptions concerning rights and duties in the context of the ‘informal economy’. During the interviews with MKURABITA and NEEC officials, it became clear that the target beneficiaries of the reforms were individual entrepreneurs and business people who were, however, presumed to lack collective interests and organization. Their organization into small groups in which they could obtain microfinance and skills training was seen as a means to facilitate registration and better administrative control, but not their input and involvement as stakeholders. On the contrary, a turn of expression that repeatedly surfaced in the interviews was the perceived need for a “change of mind-set”, as well as entrepreneurial education among Tanzanians, particularly the young, to assist in their becoming active and orderly through self-employment, rather than expecting support from state institutions. Property and business rights, combined with practice-oriented skills training, were to assist in putting people onto the pathway out of dependence and poverty (MKURABITA interviews 23.01.2015, 17.03.2015; NEEC 02.03.2015a,b).

The emphasis on self-employment and entrepreneurship in public discourse and policy making has its origin in the context of the neoliberal reforms emerging in the 1980s, with the legacy and continuation of these ideals into contemporary politics in Tanzania being noted by several scholars (e.g. Shivji 2009: 37, 50; DeJaeghere 2017: 26ff.). The neoliberal agenda of self-responsibilization, in which the role of the state is reduced to facilitating swift market transactions and development, is an outcome of individual effort, which is made explicit by the MKURABITA:

The Program further seeks to promote the use of formalized assets to access economic opportunities in the formal market. Its development objective is to empower the targeted beneficiaries for self-development through which they can participate in enhancing inclusive development in the country. Formalized assets gain legal recognition and protection which provides them with the means to unleash the full potential (capital) in them (MKURABITA 2009: 4, emphasis omitted).

Apart from the MKURABITA and Doing Business reforms, the emphasis on self-development through entrepreneurship is common in Tanzania (see e.g. *Daily News* 23.11.2015, 14.12.2017; *The Citizen* 28.04.2017) and furthered in the Magufuli administration’s policies concerning small-scale trade. Rather than a radical break with the past, in which street traders and *machingas* were subject to criminal persecution, the current embracing of street trade takes up the original recommendation of the ILD Diagnosis, which called for the legalization of street trade in situ (Lyons and Brown 2013: 91). It represents a continuation of a discourse in which the flexibility, resilience and profit-orientation of individual, hard-working entrepreneurs bring about national economic and social development. Whether President Magufuli’s approach will, in the longer run, be accompanied by schemes which offer support and social protection to vendors

who fail to lift themselves out of poverty remains to be seen. However, as with the idea of LEP as envisioned by the MKURABITA, economic inclusion does not necessarily entail the political participation of street vendors in the decision-making process. I address the reconfiguration of the 'informal economy', and the resulting field of contestation over relations between state and society, in the next chapter.

8. RECONFIGURING THE STATE AND SOCIETY

8.1 Bringing the state (back) in?

Central to this chapter is a discussion of how conceptions of, and interventions into, the ‘informal economy’ are tied to the reconfiguration of the roles and relations of the state, the market and society. It is often stated that the ‘informal economy’ is a matter and result of governance (e.g. ILO 2002b, 2013f, 2015b; UNDP 2008). I propose, conversely, that the ‘informal economy’ simultaneously presents an arena in which state governance and policies are conceived, enacted and contested. In other words, the malleable line between the ‘formal’ and the ‘informal economy’ is not merely drawn by state institutions; rather, the outreach of the state, public authority and the provision of public goods, as opposed to the market and the private sphere, are constructed alongside and together with the ‘informal economy’. State institutions are thus both shaped by and central to shaping discursive processes of formalization and informalization. This argument is consistent with a view which sees the ‘informal economy’ not as absent or separate from the ‘formal’ economy but intertwined with it.

The appropriate roles and responsibilities of the state, the market and the private household present the main point of contestation between competing perspectives on the ‘informal economy’ (see section 1.2). In this context, the fundamental political and ideological opposition between the dualist, structuralist, neoliberal and postmodern perspectives and their varying emphasis on structure or agency are of paramount significance; this is also the context in which ontological commitments and analytical choices in researching the ‘informal economy’ are inevitably political (see Chapter 3). Embedded in contemporaneous political, even hegemonic and ideological, discourses, conceptualizations and representations of the ‘informal economy’ reflect imaginaries of societal organization and, in effect, contribute to the reconfiguration of the state and society in the life-world.

In Africa, political, economic, spatial and urban forms of informality have been discussed in the context of resilient clientelist and neo-patrimonial state structures and the complex relations between public authority and non-state actors (see e.g. Lund 2006; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Bryceson 2006, 2010; Kamete 2018; Jennische 2018; Banks, Lombard and Mitlin 2019). Focusing here on economic informality, I illustrate how in Tanzania, the ‘informal economy’ takes shape at the node between the withdrawal of the state from regulating the economy on the one hand, and its interventions on the other. I suggest that earlier, postmodern accounts depicting a Tanzanian ‘moral economy’ that resists oppressive state structures have given way to neoliberal conceptions of an

'informal economy' that embraces individual self-reliance and a minimalist state role in facilitating competitiveness. This discourse contrasts with the structuralist perspective, as exemplified by the experiences of street vendors and domestic workers, which challenge the assumptions of both postmodern and neoliberal perspectives: struggling amidst capitalistic market competition, they tie the legitimacy of the state to nuanced forms of economic regulation and redistribution.

An influential view of the Tanzanian 'informal economy', following the liberalization of the mid-1980s to mid-1990s, has been proposed by Aili Mari Tripp (1989, 1997), whose conclusions strongly resonate with the postmodern perspective. Taking critical stock of research on the 'informal economy' of the late twentieth century, Tripp aims to distance herself from what she considers a "highly ideological" exchange between Castells and Portes on the one hand, and de Soto on the other (Tripp 1997: 21). Instead of theoretical abstractions, Tripp suggests investigating the 'informal economy' in specific historical and social contexts. Based on her in-depth fieldwork in Dar es Salaam, she strongly emphasizes agency and ingenuity in the survivalist strategies of Tanzanian men and women. Two of her key propositions deserve closer attention.

The first is Tripp's observation that in flouting existing laws, Tanzanians' turn towards unregulated but licit income-generating activities presents "not only a means of resistance to old institutions but also the way in which social forces in Tanzania brought new resources to bear in creating alternative institutions" (ibid.: 1). Although not organized, the persistence of Tanzanians' collective strategies ultimately forced the government to change its rules. These conclusions are mirrored by more recent analysis of the 'informal economy'. The introduction to an edited volume captures the thought neatly in the catchy title "My Name Is Legion", referring to "The Resilience and Endurance of Informality beyond, or in spite of, the State" (Polese and Morris 2015). This view portrays 'informal economies' as

an act of deliberate, if unorganised, non-compliance. They may be distinct from rebel and insurgent governance in that the people who engage with them are not necessarily interested in finding a group identity or refer to a central leader. But it is possible that they are two sides of the same coin or that can be considered two positions on the same spectrum of non-state governance. (Polese et al. 2017: 5)

Economic informality is thus not only about survival. Particularly in the post-socialist spaces of Tanzania and the former Soviet Union, it is seen as an active choice for economic and political resistance directed against an oppressive and unreliable state bureaucracy. It presents a collective effort that may eventually bring about political change (Tripp 1997; Morris and Polese [eds.] 2015).

The second proposition is that in resisting the distanced and often oppressive state, Tanzanians rely on the 'economy of affection', extending kinship ties to maintain independence from the state and the 'formal' economy:

Therefore, survival strategies are collective efforts rather than individual ones. They involve reciprocity and mutuality, both the reliance on and support of kin and friends in times of hardship. Moreover, the egalitarian ethic dictates that everyone is entitled to a subsistence. This is, in essence, a claim of redistributive justice, in which those with the means are obligated to assist the less advantaged (Tripp 1997: 14).

The association of the 'informal economy' with the moral economy – a system of traditional, popular and communal economic organization reflecting collective norms and notions of justice, fairness, solidarity and mutual assistance (see Saaritsa 2008) – is based on the concept by E.P. Thompson (1991b) and builds on the works of James Scott (1985, 1990, 2012). In highlighting the agency of the poor, the postmodern perspective is distinguished from the structuralist perspective and also the neoliberal conception of the 'informal economy' as a market sphere which, although non-regulated, inherently follows capitalist logics. The 'informal economy' is hence a response to the 'formal' frameworks of the (socialist or capitalist) state and simultaneously a stronghold under fire from neoliberal profit orientation and consumerism, as egoistic urban development "eventually eliminates the informal market, excludes the poor and dismantles a moral economy that historically sought to bring justice and prosperity to a wider section of society" (Malasan 2019: 51f.).

Such a view necessarily confirms the dualist separation between the 'informal economy' on the one hand, and the 'formal' economy of the state on the other: despite noting the interconnected and symbiotic nature of relations between the 'formal' and 'informal economy', Tripp retains the distinction in order to delineate the rules and institutions of the state and their contestation. Yet she chooses to "draw sharper-than-necessary lines between the informal economy and the state" (Tripp 1997: 17), not only for analytical purposes but because she finds them to be real: "In trying to make sense of the daily struggle to survive, I use the formal-informal economy, state-society, and legal-illegal templates to capture many of the key dimensions of people's own realities as they experience and interpret them" (ibid.). To Tripp, the informal-formal divide is not merely heuristically useful but "exists in people's minds and language in culturally defined frameworks" (ibid.: 18). Backing this claim, Tripp recalls an anecdote in which a group of midwives was categorized as belonging either to the 'formal' framework of the state or to the 'informal' networks of the village (ibid.). As Tripp maintains in the above citation, economic redistribution and social justice in this perspective are matters of the personal and private rather than public sphere.

By contrast, Matteo Rizzo offers a critique of both the postmodern and neoliberal interpretations of the Tanzanian 'informal economy'. Conducting his studies in the two decades following Tripp's research, he contextualizes his approach to the transportation sector in Dar es Salaam in the structure-oriented works of Castells and Portes, Breman and Wright, among others (Rizzo 2013, 2017). He emphasizes the importance of seeing 'informal' activities as deeply embedded in the 'formal'

economy of the state and its affiliation with capitalist interests (2017: 10ff.). To Rizzo, the informalization of the Tanzanian economy is driven by neoliberal logics. Rejecting many of Tripp's and de Soto's claims, he argues that "from the early 1980s to the present ... [t]he promotion of neoliberalism, in complex and different ways over time, has proved to be the main force" behind changes to Tanzania's political economy (ibid.: 17).

He concludes that, although they have in the past played an ambiguous role in securing the livelihoods of the poor, the Tanzanian state and tripartite institutions are central to redistributive justice (ibid.; 2013). Similarly to Rizzo, Issa Shivji sees discourses on the 'informal economy' in Tanzania as embedded in neoliberalist thinking. In response to the somewhat euphemistic tone of literature centring on individual agency and resourcefulness in the 'everyday', he draws a sharp caricature:

They are street hawkers, between 16 to 25 years of age, fresh from the countryside. They walk anything between 15 to 25 kilometers a day; drink water for their lunch or sniff a hard substance to kill appetite; ... in some cases doubling up as pimps and providers of sexual pleasures to their landladies in lieu of rent; exploit every opportunity during the day to steal and mug while hawking; suppress their pains and injuries with heavy doses of *panadols* and *cafenols* and eventually end up in some city mortuary buried by the municipality for lack of next of kin. Is this the kind of multi-occupational diversification of the informal sector that researchers celebrate? (Shivji 2009: 99, emphasis original)

This chapter places the reconfiguration of the Tanzanian state against this background of competing views of the 'informal economy', specifically, those of the neoliberal and structuralist perspectives. Given the overuse of the term 'neoliberalism', however, some qualification is in order. In a widely noted intervention, James Ferguson cautions that much current critique of neoliberalism, while justified, is based on the norm of the Keynesian welfare state and the class compromise between capital and labour, categories which fail to account for most forms of statehood and work in the Global South. Structural adjustment and the withdrawal of the state from welfare in Africa, in his argument, is often not "very 'neo' at all" (Ferguson 2009: 173) but, rather, follows the classic liberal separation of state and market.

For Ferguson, conversely, neoliberalism is an art of governance, a class-based project drawing on the shared themes of "a technical reliance on market mechanisms coupled with an ideological valorisation of 'private enterprise' and a suspicion of the state" (ibid.). Amending this view, Ian Bruff cautions against taking the proclaimed state-market dichotomy at face value (Bruff 2011) or understanding neoliberalism in simplistic dualist terms of "market liberalization vs. social protection", as state governments are not necessarily protective of their citizens (Bruff 2019: 263). Indeed, despite all differences, both Tripp and Rizzo's studies, as well as discussion in the previous chapters, demonstrate that the state

in Tanzania has in the past and present played multiple and contradicting roles; hence, there are varied manifestations of “actually existing neoliberalism” (Brenner and Theodore 2002). Crucially, drawing on feminist approaches to political economy, Bruff shows that “neoliberalism, in theory and in practice, is ultimately less interested in markets than in states and households”, as “the remaking of households in a manner that denies social justice is as important to neoliberalism as is the remaking of states along antidemocratic lines” (Bruff 2019: 263).

Building on these thoughts as well as on the observations discussed in the previous chapters, I understand neoliberalism broadly as a political project which aims at reconfiguring power relations between public and private actors, privatizing access to economic resources and gains, releasing the state from social duties while simultaneously limiting public control over market actors, and quelling questions of redistributive politics and collective rights. I suggest that, following market liberalization, the restrictive stance of the government on the ‘informal economy’ has shifted to one of welcome, although largely limited to the conception of it as entrepreneurial space. This discourse remains contested, not only by actors such as the ILO and affiliated local trade unions, but also by street vendors and domestic workers themselves.

The chapter’s argument proceeds as follows: the following sections observe the prevalence of neoliberal conceptions of ‘informal’ small-scale trade, as well as their contradictions. This is illustrated by developments surrounding the Machinga Complex, an ‘informal’ shopping mall that has become known as the ‘white elephant’ of Tanzania. Section 3 then discusses the promises and shortcomings of current attempts to license and tax ‘informal’ street vending businesses. In section 4, I juxtapose competing pathways to formalization, based respectively on structuralist and neoliberal conceptions of the ‘informal economy’. Finally, Section 5 focuses on how the withdrawal of the state is justified by a discourse which conceptualizes the ‘informal economy’ as one of solidarity and resistance towards the unreliability of the state; this conception, however, only limitedly captures the experiences and expectations of street vendors and domestic workers.

8.2 Top-floor *machingas*: entrepreneurial logics of ‘informal’ trading space

Between 2008 and 2010, following the promises of the Kikwete administration to relocate street vendors to a suitable business space, the Dar es Salaam City Council (DCC), with a loan from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), erected the Machinga Complex in Ilala District, not far from the ‘informal’ and semi-formal Ilala, Boma, Karume and Mchikichini markets. The vast, five-storey complex was built based on Chinese design and accommodates 4,206 stalls, eight storage rooms, 33 food vending spaces and 68 kiosks. As implied by the name, the Machinga Complex was to provide trading space for small-scale traders and

hawkers, with the intention of building similar market complexes in the cities of Mwanza, Arusha and Mbeya (*Urban Africa* 2015). The majority of stalls have, however, remained empty, failing to create the rental revenue planned by the DCC. By 2015, the complex had accumulated a debt of 34bn TZS (approx. 17m USD); by 2018, this sum had risen to 57bn TZS (28.5m USD). The planning failures have earned the building the nickname of “Tanzania’s White Elephant” (ibid.; StreetNet 2012; *The Citizen* 08.05.2018).

In light of the impressive numbers of street vendors and hawkers in Dar es Salaam – already more than 400,000 according to conservative estimates at the time the complex was built – the question arises as to the aim of spending an initial sum of 13bn TZS (6.5m USD) on a facility intended to accommodate less than 5,000 traders. The Machinga Complex was a DCC/NSSF investment and business idea, presenting a win-win situation: vendors would move from unauthorized areas to the provided space and pay rent and fees, which would not only earn revenue for the City but also, in the long run, create profits for the NSSF from which national-level social security benefits could be financed (interview with NSSF 08.12.2016). The government was further able to point to the complex as proof they were keeping their promises to traders by reconciling their interests with conflicting demands for public order. Finally, the existence of designated trading space allowed blame to be shifted for the persistence of unauthorized street trade to the stubbornness of the traders (interview with Kinondoni Municipal Council 06.03.2015). Commentators have ascribed the costly failure of the project to the “impression that it was undertaken without ample fore-planning” (*The Citizen* 08.11.2016).

While the thoroughness of planning that went into the Machinga Complex is difficult to assess, it presents a logical consequence of a neoliberal conception of ‘informal’ small-scale trade resembling that of the MKURABITA and Doing Business reforms (see Chapter 7), widespread at the time and still largely unchallenged. The orientation towards entrepreneurship and profit miscalculated the means *machingas* and other street traders have at their disposal. The monthly rent for the stalls was originally set at 60,000 TZS (30 USD), an amount two to three times higher than the stationary traders had to pay at the nearby Ilala and Boma markets, and unaffordable for *machingas* with small stocks selling on a day-to-day basis. However, around the same time, with the growth of public-private partnerships in the management of markets in Ilala Municipality, ownership had shifted to private hosts, and rents and fees had also tripled at Ilala and Boma markets, challenging even already established and organized food vendors working there (interview with *Migahawa* 13.02.2015; see also *The Citizen* 11.01.2015).

The high rents left most stalls at the Machinga Complex empty, with those occupied largely rented by owners of more substantial and sometimes formally registered business, while some were acquired and occupied in a fraudulent and illegal manner (*IPP Media* 13.09.2011; interview with LHRC 21.01.2015). In response, the DCC lowered the rent to 10,000 TZS (5 USD) per month and devised

a recovery plan according to which the first three floors would be reserved for small-scale traders and the fourth and fifth floors for medium and large-scale entrepreneurs (*Africa Details* 2012).

In the view of Machinga Complex tenants, however, this was unrealistic and unfeasible, since trading space in the lowest floors was the most valuable and hence the most competitively priced. On several visits to the complex, I noted that shops on the first floor specialized in selling more expensive items such as new suitcases and travel bags, while the second and third floors hosted tailors and computer stores. Tatu, a young hawker selling samosas prepared by his employer—and the only actual *machinga* I encountered in the complex—told me that even after rents had been reduced, the easily accessible floors and more visible stalls remained tightly in the hands of established shopkeepers. The members of UWAWADAR corroborated this view (interview with UWAWADAR 18.02.2015).

Despite the apparent failure to include the target group, and the contradictions in advertising a facility designed for low-income, small-scale traders to upper-end customers, the complex manager is quoted as displaying an unbroken faith in entrepreneurial logic:

The wisdom behind the [recovery plan] is that the approach would attract the true market competition situation and eventually eliminate the wrongly created disrepute that the location was meant for petty traders and low income earners as customers. Other services like pharmacy, banks, hotel and others will be provided for the business park to attain its status ... The complex should be regarded as a golden opportunity for petty traders who are expected to expand to become well-off entrepreneurs. (*Africa Details* 2012, n.p.)

Tensions between small-scale trade—particularly the ‘small-small’ strategies of *machingas* (see Jennische 2018)—and successful entrepreneurship surfaced frequently in the course of my research, comprising a constant element of interviews and conversations not only with government officials, but also with street traders. Like Frederick, many traders would list their difficulties in making a living, yet continue to refer to themselves as *mfanya biashara ndogo ndogo* (see fn. 71) reiterating their need to acquire capital and business skills. While apparently reconciled in the omnipresent image of the hawker-entrepreneur, the discrepancies between a street trader and a shop owner are nonetheless difficult to bridge. This contradiction is symbolized by the Machinga Complex, as noted by one blogger:

Machinga is the name given to people who sale [sic] small things in the streets of Dar er Salaam. But when in the Complex selling big things what do we call them? (Munishinews 14.11.2014).

The differences between small and big, mobile and stationary, both on the street and inside the building, are notably exhibited by the location, logic and architecture of the Machinga Complex, presenting sharp contrasts between street trade and the modern supermarket or shopping mall. The essence of mobile street trade is to sell

ndogo ndogo, small-small: *machingas* depend on selling goods which are affordable and catch the eye, and which customers buy spontaneously and without much planning. Customers who prefer to buy from hawkers and semi-formal or 'informal' markets rather than 'formal' shops or malls do so because of the possibility to haggle and to buy according to one's needs and means: a spoonful of peanuts, a single cigarette, a second-hand dress that happens to fit or a pair of very cheaply priced sandals.⁸⁸ To this end, the traders need to come to the customers, not vice versa; a customer is not likely to pay bus fare to visit the complex in order to browse for small, inexpensive items (see also *Urban Africa* 15.06.2015; Lyons, Brown and Msoka 2012). The notion of a 'business park' imagines customers with time and money to spend and vendors with exclusive merchandise, one based on the ideal of the modern shopping mall rather than the reality of street trade.

The contradictions ingrained in the ambitious idea of a shopping mall or business park designed for poor people also leads to inadequate implementation, exemplified by the design of the building and the stalls: with narrow hallways and bad lighting, it is uninviting for shoppers and vendors alike. Traders commonly considered the stalls too small and narrow to display their wares attractively, while the wire mesh that separated them elicited the nickname of 'chicken cages'.

The Machinga Complex fits into wider strategies of urban modernization and improvement pursued by the DCC and the national government, based on visions of a 'world city' informed by global trends. Albeit in multifaceted and unpredictable ways, such visions tend to be centred on market-driven development and urban property values, and to represent the interests of powerful actors in city planning rather than residents, often at the cost of street vendors and other economically and socially disadvantaged groups (Lindell, Norström and Byerly 2016; see also Seppänen 1999; Fält 2016; Spire and Choplin 2018). Moreover, street vendors and other target groups were not involved in planning and decision-making processes connected with the Machinga Complex and nearby markets. This casts light on the more general question of the extent to which the conception of 'informal' street trading as a stepladder to successful entrepreneurship is based on the views of political elites informed by the neoliberal perspective of the 'informal economy' as entrepreneurial space – rather than the experiences of the vendors themselves.

The architecture of the Machinga Complex runs counter to yet another key feature of street trade: quite simply, the fact that it takes place at street level. Climbing the stairs to the upper floors is not an attractive option for most Dar residents and commuters as part of a long working day, even less so without elevators, escalators or air conditioning. Beyond being inconvenient, the multiple storeys also exemplify class distinctions in the postcolonial city. During the colonial era, the African residents of Dar es Salaam lived in one-storey houses in Kariakoo which have, in recent decades, been torn down to make space for high-rise blocks wherein the price

⁸⁸ I am grateful to Colman Msoka for directing my attention to the importance of *nusu na robo* (a half and a quarter), an element of street trade which is central to many Tanzanians.

of flats increases sharply with the availability of elevators and air-conditioning. For most Tanzanians, living and working in a one or two-storey building is still the norm, while access to private housing and office space in high-rises with air conditioning and elevators is limited to foreign professionals and upper-middle and upper-class Tanzanians. I learnt that many of the street traders with whom I was hanging out had never used an elevator, even though they had spent many years in the city, and *machinga* and student friends who came to visit my sixth-floor apartment told me they had never seen Dar es Salaam from so far above.

At the same time, several of the relatively newly built tall office buildings in the CBD and near Mnazi Mmoja which I visited were sparsely rented above the fourth floor. Like the Machinga Complex, high-rise office buildings are usually the investment projects of private investors or government bodies like the NSSF, but the supply of office space at higher levels is not met by a demand among local businesspeople. In the explanation of one businessman, who was eager to find an affordable street-level location in exchange for his fourth-floor office in the CBD, upper-floor offices were unattractive because Tanzanians preferred to choose services from offices and shops they could easily see, so they could just “come in and out”. Given their unfamiliarity with upper floors and the reluctance, especially of low-income customers, to visit multi-storey buildings, vendors rejected trading space in the Machinga Complex and, in striking defiance of its purpose and of government orders, displayed their wares on the pavement just outside its walls (Image 7).



Image 7. Machingas displaying their wares on the pavement in front of the Machinga Complex (Source: SJ POST, <https://sjposters.wordpress.com/2011/03/06/wafanyabiasharandogondogo-wavamia-nje-ya-mac/> [Picture posted 06.03.2011, accessed 22.05.2019])

Few Tanzanians object to improving the performance of ‘informal’ street trade through entrepreneurialism and the acquisition of business skills, and, indeed, it is the ambition of many traders to own a stall or a shop. Yet the image of street trade taking place on the top floor of a business park is at odds with the actual experiences and expectations both of *machingas* and other small-scale traders and their customers. In Tanzania, the spread of shopping malls and supermarkets, although attractive to middle-class shoppers, appears to have produced far less change in behaviour among lower-middle class and poor consumers than in neighbouring Kenya (see Neven et al. 2006). Whether this is due to cultural preferences or to necessity requires research; however, as I illustrated in Chapters 2 and 6, for many of the poor the facilities of the ‘formal city’ are unaffordable and inaccessible. Thus, in aspiring to modernity and efficiency, the architectural form of the complex presents an attempt to integrate the ‘informal’ into the regulated urban economy that sharply displays the conflicting rationales of the government and the urban poor (see also Fält 2016).

Presenting the ideal of an entrepreneurial class structure and modern, middle-class consumer culture, the conceptual and architectural mismatch between the Machinga Complex and the demands of customers and small-scale traders, especially of *machingas* themselves, exemplifies the limitations of conceiving of the ‘informal economy’ as voluntary choice and unblemished economic opportunity, one brimming with ingenuity and untapped wealth. As discussed earlier, the majority of street traders work ‘informally’ because they lack access to authorized and affordable space and to the ‘formal’ labour market, while their incomes are too marginal to qualify as business fitting to be properly licensed. The narrow, and arguably faulty, conception of ‘informal’ street vending as a stepladder to accumulation and ultimate integration into both ‘formal city’ and urban middle class also informs conceptions of revenue and tax collection, as well as formalization of the sector, discussed in the next two sections.

8.3 Taxing the ‘informal economy’

During the period of my fieldwork and interviews, issues of taxation in the ‘informal economy’ were a largely neglected topic. Officials and experts mentioned the advantages of formalizing the ‘informal sector’: the government would gain increased revenues which could be spent on infrastructure and public services; taxpayers would benefit from improved services, have a stronger legal backing for claiming their rights and also a greater political voice in holding the government accountable. However, apart from legal reform and policies on business formalization (see below), there appeared to be no concrete strategies on how to integrate those working ‘informally’ into the tax base.

This changed with President Magufuli’s decree on street trade in December 2016. Following up on his promises to provide vending space in the cities and to improve Tanzania’s economic performance, the government included the taxation of street vendors and other small businesses, with capital of under 4 million TZS

(approx. 2,000 USD), in the fiscal budget for 2017/2018 (*The Citizen* 08.06.2017; *IPP Media* 13.07.2017). Under the new policy, street vendors can register their business in an unbureaucratic manner with the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) and, for a one-time fee of 20,000 TZS (approx. 10 USD), obtain identification cards which have since become known as Machinga or Street Vendor IDs. By early 2018, an initial 20,000 registrations and IDs had been processed (*The Citizen* 29.06.2017; *Mwananchi* 06.05.2018). Once more making big headlines, Magufuli publicly reprimanded the TRA later the same year for not following his orders swiftly enough and personally delivered 670,000 IDs to a meeting with regional commissioners. Each region was allotted the same number of ID cards (*The Citizen* 10.08.2018). The ID cards allocated to Dar es Salaam were immediately sold out, especially in Ilala Municipality, the centre of 'informal' street trade.

As with the Nguvu Kazi licenses in the 1990s (see section 4.2), the ID cards represent an effort to accommodate the 'informal' urban economy within regulatory frameworks at the municipal and national level, aiming to enhance revenues and government control while simultaneously increasing its legitimacy. The policy has broken with the past as it has brought evictions to an end, at least for the time being; it has, moreover, successfully cast revenue collection as a win-win situation, signalling common interests and interdependence between the state and society and bridging the formal-informal divide. Consequently, Magufuli has been praised by vendors and their associations for giving them the opportunity to get registered and pay a fee to the TRA (*The Citizen* 06.04.2019)—a major shift from long-standing, deep-rooted suspicion and hostility towards tax collection, which has been perceived as oppressive.

Beginning with the colonial period, followed by socialist rule and structural adjustment, and continuing with the post-liberalization governments, Tanzanians have seen few services and very limited state accountability in return for their fiscal contributions (see also Meagher 2018). Indeed, the expansive Tanzanian 'second economy' largely results from the incapacity of the state to provide for its citizens (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990; Tripp 1997; Coulson 2013). During my interviews and conversations, many Tanzanians, particularly market and street vendors, displayed a reluctance to pay fees and taxes, sometimes refusing to do so altogether. In justification, they indicated the poor infrastructure and services they were receiving, the widespread misuse of public funds and corruption. Those with a more steady business and a fixed trading space complained about the multiple fees and levies they already had to pay to local authorities and market managers in addition to being frequently obliged to shell out bribes and penalty fees.

The omnipresence of bribes in the controlling of the urban economy by local government authorities was confirmed by a member of the municipal auxiliary police. In his depiction, the everyday clashes of law enforcement troops with street vendors over the usage of public space, as well as over the collection of fees and taxes, comprised a constant power struggle between state authority and those

resisting it. He explained that while *mgambos* and police received money from both sides, they also had to take the blame and—literally—the beatings from above and below. To one of our meetings, he showed up with a black eye: a shopkeeper, venting his anger at the government, had hit him with a table lamp while he had been acting as bodyguard to the municipal taxman.

The widespread resentment against taxation and the at times violent resistance towards enforcement of the laws reveal the state's lack of legitimacy in the eyes of many Tanzanians. As elsewhere in Africa, while the government's revenue collection in the 'informal economy' is minimal, "corrupt payments to officials constitute a significant public levy on informal actors, as well as augmenting low public sector salaries ... they represent a significant transfer of resources from the informal economy to state officials" (Meagher 2018: 5, references omitted). This is, again, an indication of the many interlinkages between the 'formal' and 'informal economy'. In taking a political step towards surmounting the formal-informal divide, Magufuli's approach to taxing 'informal' small-scale businesses offers to overcome a deeply entrenched antagonism between the Tanzanian state and society and to build a 'new social contract' (ibid.) between the government and the people.

The policies break with the dualist and modernist thinking of past governments and are much welcomed by street vendors and other groups. However, as they are firmly rooted in neoliberal presumptions of the 'informal economy' as an entrepreneurial space, they are limited to formalizing a specific segment, excluding others. In conceptualizing street vendors as holders of small business with capital under 4 million TZS, the policies fail to account for the heterogeneity in the sector. The fee of 20,000 TZS is low for some but unaffordable to others. Given the large numbers of street traders, the total number of ID cards does not meet the demand, especially in the city of Dar es Salaam; in other regions, conversely, regional commissioners have had difficulties selling the IDs. The policies have also intensified competition among the vendors for space and customers. Taking a stroll through Kariakoo and along Uhuru Road in December 2016, I found traders almost shoulder to shoulder. Several *machingas* complained that as a result of the oversupply, business was bad and their incomes were marginal despite the pre-Christmas season. The issuing of IDs has not solved the issue of space, and municipal administrations continue to struggle to find suitable trading spots for the masses of traders (*Mwananchi* 06.05.2018; *Habari* 02.09.2018). Further, having an ID does not guarantee sufficient income to ensure survival (*The Citizen* 13.12.2019).

What is to become of the vendors who cannot obtain IDs has not been clarified. The limited distribution of IDs has led to conflicts between vendors with IDs and those without, as those who have already paid the fee demand to be given priority in the allocation of business premises (*The Citizen* 06.04.2019). Meanwhile, the Dar es Salaam regional and municipal authorities have threatened to evict those without registration and IDs from the city, creating confusion between the president's word and local law enforcement (*Habari* 01.06.2019). Whether

restricting or encouraging street trade, the government has in the past and present not been able—or willing—to provide sufficient space for all. Thus, the focus on business opportunities has left aside more comprehensive notions, for instance, a collective ‘right to the city’ as an alternative conception of ordering public space (see e.g. Vogiazides 2012; O’Loughlen 2015; Brown 2015).

In addition, the policies contribute to informalizing previously ‘formal’ economic units and activities. The conflicts between street vendors and shop owners have deepened. In December 2016, the registered shops in Kariakoo were all but empty of customers. A textile store owner admitted to having hired several *machingas* to sell his merchandise on the streets. What he lost in profit due to having to lower prices he saved in value added tax (VAT), since the fabrics sold by his *machingas* passed under the cash register—an unintended effect of in/formalizing the streets. The strategy of avoiding VAT by hiring *machingas* adds another facet to formal-informal interlinkages: on the one hand, shopkeepers lobby for stricter law enforcement and the eviction of street traders since they undermine prices; on the other, the vendors provide cheap casual labour to distribute the merchandise under the counter. A long-standing strategy, hiring *machingas* has become all the more popular among shopkeepers and wholesalers during recent years, following sharply rising rents and, not least, the months-long standoff between shopkeepers and the government over the introduction of new electronic fiscal devices in 2014 and 2015, the cost of which was imposed on shopkeepers (interview with FES 19.02.2015; *The Citizen* 29.01.2015).

As the line between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ is shifting, the notion of *machinga* is also undergoing a change. The image of *machingas* as penniless but mobile hawkers selling small, inexpensive items, or their labour, to secure their survival had for decades evoked the stereotype of unproductive urban loiterers in the views of municipal officials (see Chapters 4 and 5). As fortune-seeking entrepreneurs and micro-capitalists, they have become the embodiment of the ‘informal economy’ as self-help scheme and bootstrap operation (see Chapter 7), as well as of the modern-day urban shopping experience (see above). Yet, with the introduction of the ID cards, being a *machinga* presents a much-desired business opportunity straddling the formal-informal divide and benefitting from both sides: shopkeepers are closing their stores and downsizing their business to qualify for the cheap and convenient IDs, hiding the actual size and capital of their ventures, while the illicit resale of the IDs has become a business in itself (Steiler and Nyirenda forthcoming). In short, with the opening of urban space to street traders and the introduction of the IDs, the advantages and disadvantages of ‘informal’ work for different groups have not been levelled; rather, they are reshuffled in favour of groups who hold a more privileged position in the market. The neoliberal conceptions of economic informality as an exit strategy from state regulation, and of street vending as road to small-scale business and accumulation have thus created their own reality, albeit in a distorted way.

8.4 Prescriptions for formalization

Competing conceptions of the causes and conditions of the ‘informal economy’ and of the role of the state in addressing them find their expression not least in diverging strategies for formalization. As with rights agendas (see previous chapter), the approaches towards the sectors of domestic work and street trade archetypically exemplify the logics of the structuralist and the neoliberal perspective: considering work in the ‘informal economy’ a “multifaceted and diverse phenomenon”, the ILO envisions the transition to the ‘formal’ economy as a multidimensional and comprehensive policy approach (ILO 2015b). The DWA is specifically amended to address economic informality through seven integrated avenues that include macroeconomic, regulatory, educational and social policies. These comprise growth strategies and quality employment generation; a regulatory environment, including enforcement of international labour standards and core rights; labour organization, representation and social dialogue; equality in regard to gender, HIV status, ethnicity, race, caste, age and disability; expansion of entrepreneurship, skills, finance, management and access to markets; the extension of social protection, consisting of social protection floors and social security systems; and local (rural and urban) development strategies (ILO 2013f: 12f.).

This approach to formalization represents a long-term strategy, designed to be attained progressively. Corresponding with the DWA, the push for formalization has both procedure- and goal-oriented dimensions, with its prescribed avenues intended to protect and improve the conditions of ‘informal’ work, thus gradually building an environment in which ‘informal’ employment is reduced. In this vein, representatives of the ILO Country Office, trade unions and their affiliates alike pointed towards wider macroeconomic conditions in Tanzania when discussing issues of both formalization and informalization. Following the policy recommendations of the ILO (*ibid.*), these experts viewed the formalization of employment relations and of jobs as requiring unified tripartite efforts, with the government playing leading role in facilitating these changes.

The challenges were formidable: workers’ organizations and employers’ associations, together with the government as well as the private sector, had to work towards sensitizing and educating the public on legal frameworks, providing professional and skill training to workers and young people, building structures for social dialogue, struggling for gender equality and non-discrimination—specifically of people with HIV/Aids—and establishing a fair and inclusive system of social protection. The downside of such a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach could be seen in its enormity, requiring the contribution of considerable time, finance and political will by all involved actors and stakeholders. Consequently, in practice and notwithstanding some positive results, progress in formalizing existing, ‘informal’ work and the creation of ‘formal’ employment have been slow in Tanzania (interviews with ILO 08.05.2014a, 20.03.2015, 18.03.2015; ATE 02.02.2015; TIENAI 13.03.2015; TUCTA 28.01.2015; TUICO 07.12.2016).

Hence, in the domestic work sector, the ILO Country Office and its affiliates follow a strategy of working towards these ambitious goals one step at a time. The ultimate aim of formalization in this sector is to balance power relations between employers and domestic workers, clarifying rights and duties for both parties and achieving wider recognition of domestic workers as ‘real workers’. The first step is to establish inclusive labour and social laws, in line with C 189 and Recommendation 204, followed and accompanied by raising public consciousness on the subject of domestic workers’ rights. In the next step, employment relations are to be formalized through written work contracts, translated and explained to the worker and kept as records. Finally, administrative procedures are to be simplified to facilitate the registration of work contracts and inclusion of domestic workers in the social security system (ILO 2013c: 3f.).

At the same time, while the previous and current Tanzanian governments have been participating in the ILO’s strategy, they have put stronger emphasis on business and property formalization, as advised by the ILD and the World Bank, and strategized in NEEC and MKURABITA policies and programmes. The growth of the national ‘formal’ economy is to be stimulated by simplifying the procedures and reducing the costs of starting, registering and running a business; in addition, business ownership and the creation of self-employment are to be encouraged by actively fostering entrepreneurship (see World Bank 2017; MKURABITA 2019a,b,c). In alignment with reforms within MKURABITA and Doing Business frameworks, the goal of creating formalized business is ingrained in the National Entrepreneurship Strategy by the NEEC. This is designed on the pillars of optimizing the legal framework, improving entrepreneurship education and skills, expediting exchange and innovation in technology, enhancing access to finance and establishing entrepreneurship knowledge and networks among all stakeholders (NEEC 2017).

While the expansion of entrepreneurship, skills, finance, management and access to markets is also an element of the more comprehensive ILO strategy, the approach taken by the NEEC is limited in regard to these aspects, in isolation from wider macroeconomic and social contexts. Accordingly, the responsibilities of public institutions, target groups and the overall task are defined more narrowly. Legal reform is to be accompanied by entrepreneurship training and access to finance, which is to be facilitated partly by government agencies and partly by private partners, some of which are ‘semi-formal’ or ‘non-formal’. Contrary to the ratification of C 189,⁸⁹ implementation of the Entrepreneurship Strategy follows an ambitious schedule, with clear indicators by which success will be measured within the current legislative period. For instance, reformed legislation concerning entrepreneurship, microbusiness and SMEs is to be passed by 2019, and the proportion of unregistered businesses is expected to drop from 89 per cent to below 70 per cent by 2021 (*ibid.*: 11).

⁸⁹ Although the Tripartite Plus Plan of Action (ILO 2013a) was already adopted in 2014, at the time of writing, C 189 has not been ratified.

Although narrow in comparison with the DWA, the Entrepreneurship Strategy is portrayed as comprehensive and inclusive: “it is holistic in the sense that it integrates five key areas for realisation of entrepreneurship development. Secondly, it seeks outcomes for all relevant segments of society, including the marginalized (youth, women, those with disability), innovative and high-tech and high growth start-ups, etc” (NEEC 2018: n.p.). While the Strategy claims to be designed for all citizens, the focus of the entrepreneurship training programmes is directed at young people who should have “the character and attitude of an entrepreneur” and “[b]e able to write a bankable business plan and pitch” (ibid.).

The legislative reforms, policy strategies and programmes designed by the NEEC or MKURABITA, and implemented by agencies like BRELA, exclusively aim at improved business facilitation and formalization. At first, the pillars on which NEEC strategies are based—including access to the market and to land (to be used as collateral in customary law), the establishment of cooperatives, legal changes, skills development and the creation of a conducive environment—appear to be broad in scope. More closely examined, however, they are tailored to Tanzanians who are already, or are at least potentially, entrepreneurs. In an interview (NEEC 02.03.2015a), a legal officer explained the strategies of the NEEC:

[T]he changes made by BRELA are very important because previously we’ve had studies showing that the formalization and registration process was too time-consuming and too expensive. There has been much simplification of the steps and increased efficiency to encourage formalization. We recognize that most of the people doing informal business do so as a way of survival, not because they’re interested in being entrepreneurs. Those who want to be entrepreneurs have previously been discouraged by the complicated rules and costs. For these people, it’s now easier.

With regard to street vendors, it’s more difficult. One approach is the Machinga Complex [which] had its challenges ... What all the cities now do is to try to set aside areas for [street vendors] where they can do their market business. Right now we are preparing a guideline to work on with the local governments; we believe it will be easier for the local governments to work with the street vendors to find solutions for these problems ...

We also have our own fund ... but we don’t give out the funds ourselves. They’re applied for via SACCOS and then distributed to its members, which are registered and identified groups. This way it’s easier to reach them than when we try to give funds to individuals.

This lengthy quote indicates that, although for many Tanzanians, self-employment and entrepreneurship are not a free choice but a means of last resort, legislative and policy reform target those who want to be entrepreneurs. However, as discussed in Chapter 5, the extent to which ‘informal’ activities, such as street vending, actually qualify as entrepreneurship, as well as the success of these

activities, is tied to complex life cycles and circumstances. Labour relations and income strategies fluctuate along the continuum from survival to accumulation, depending on socio-economic context as well as on multiple intersecting legal and social categories and norms. As discussed in Chapter 7 and the previous sections of this chapter, the allocation of market space for street vendors, and their organization into SACCOS and VICOBAAs are fraught with problems and favour more advantaged groups while marginalizing and excluding disadvantaged ones.

The discrepancy between the two outlined approaches marks an essential difference between what Amin Kamete (2018: 184) calls “a welfarist [and] a technicist regulatory legalistic form of integration”. It is worth underlining that this divergence is based on different conceptions of relations between the ‘informal’ and the ‘formal economy’. In the approach pursued by the ILO, the ‘informal economy’ is a by-product of capitalist relations of production and market competition, combined with insufficient regulatory frameworks. State governance, or the lack thereof, is a causative factor behind the ‘informal economy’. The state is therefore seen to hold a central role in protecting workers in the ‘informal economy’ and in levelling structural inequalities.

By contrast, the approach towards business formalization is footed on a formal-informal dualism. Thus, the emphasis on the responsibility of market actors and individuals, and the limited role of state institutions in facilitating competitive markets and creating incentives for formalization, represent both a continuation and a change from earlier positions on the ‘second economy’ in Tanzania. The formal-informal dualism has been central to defaming ‘informal’ activities as backward, unproductive and a threat to the authority of the state, as already discussed. In recent decades, this repressive stance has given way to embracing ‘informal’ activities, among them street vending, for their potential in generating incomes, combatting poverty and stimulating bottom-up growth. As with Tripp’s (1997) study, the discarding of the modernist rejection of the ‘informal economy’ and its replacement with a neoliberal and postmodern valorization is facilitated by largely reducing the ‘informal economy’ to a sphere of entrepreneurship, self-reliance and self-empowerment.

The formal-informal dualism thereby remains unchallenged: business registration and formalization, as well as improved entrepreneurship, are explained as a linear development path moving from the “traditional, informal system” through the “modern, informal” to the “modern, formal system”, as a plain-language leaflet on MKURABITA explains (MKURABITA 2007: 7). Survivalist activities which do not qualify for business formalization, by contrast, largely continue to be seen as relic of the past. In several interviews, government officials connected unregulated street trade with crime and weak law enforcement, perceiving the widespread presence of street trade and of the ‘informal sector’ more broadly as indicating the lack of development in Tanzania (MKURABITA 23.01.2015; NEEC 02.03.2015a; Kinondoni Municipal Council 06.03.2015, 19.03.2015; see also Lyons and Msoka 2010; Nyirenda and Msoka 2019). In the same vein, the current government’s praise for street vendors as hard-working and elementary to the national

economy, as well as the policies of allocating trading space and street vendor IDs, are primarily addressed at those who qualify as entrepreneurs.

A major pitfall of the neoliberal approach to formalization is that it flattens the crucial difference between resorting to ‘informal’ forms of employment through choice or necessity. Indeed, research in other contexts has shown the importance of the internal divide between a “more exit-driven ‘upper-tier’ in informality” with higher and more secure incomes and a “primarily exclusion-driven ‘lower-tier’” with different challenges and needs (Danquah, Schotte and Sen 2019). The limitations of the approach became evident in my interviews with street vendors who were struggling to make ends meet, and were pointed out by experts who emphasized the lack of alternative income opportunities for the poor and the importance of both ‘informal’ self- and wage employment for workers, their communities as well as the national economy (interviews with LHCR 21.01.2015; MoLE 12.02.2015; FES 19.02.2015).

Meanwhile, the approach is at odds with the government’s own commitment to the tripartite Plus Plan of Action in the domestic work sector (see sections 6.5, 7.2), and with other initiatives by the ILO and the trade unions. The involvement of the government in both business formalization strategies and the ILO’s DWA potentially represents the two complementary tracks whereby the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 aims to enhance Tanzanians’ ownership in the national economy: the creation of a competitive business environment on the one hand, and the provision of equal opportunities, including educational opportunities, to all social groups on the other (URT n.y.).

The extent to which the government is equally committed to both approaches to formalization, and whether they are complementary rather than mutually exclusive, remain to be seen. Overall, a picture emerges in which the neoliberal perspective on the ‘informal economy’, with its emphasis on individual self-reliance, entrepreneurship and the role of the state as market facilitator, have gained a dominant position in Tanzanian discourse, a trend that is reaffirmed by the policies of the Magufuli government towards street trade. This discourse and trend are countered and contradicted by voices and policies from within the government itself as well as by actors like the ILO, trade unions and StreetNet (see Chapters 6 and 7), and, last but not least, those working in the ‘informal economy’ to whose views I turn in the following section.

8.5 Moral economy and the art of ‘eating with the blind’

In this final section, I contextualize and nuance the conception of ‘informal economy’ as a moral economy, and draw attention to its problematic implications for reconfiguring state-society relations. I suggest that, as in the experiences of Tanzanian street vendors and domestic workers, the ‘informal economy’ is neither separate from the institutions and structures of the state nor particularly ‘moral’ but instead integrated into capitalist logics, idealizing the ‘informal’ as a moral economy feeds into a neoliberal discourse which shifts responsibilities

from public institutions to the private sphere, leaving the poorest and most disadvantaged groups of workers unprotected and exposed to harsh market competition.

This argument began to emerge with a metaphor shared by Clement, the *fundi wa viatu* who was introduced in Chapter 5. During one of the regular afternoon tea breaks at his shoe shining *ofisi*, consisting of a wooden box and an umbrella, a group of men wildly discussed the Tegeta Escrow scandal, a major corruption scheme involving top-ranking government officials that was shaking Tanzanian politics at the time. I was told that the corruption and theft had been more brazen than usual, with a list of big names illegally transferring and pocketing several hundred billion Shillings of public money from a Bank of Tanzania account. Allegedly, government officials had also been caught on camera collecting the stolen money from their private bank accounts, carrying the cash away in suitcases. Translating the discussion for me, Clement explained that, this time, the government had forgotten “how to eat with the blind”: when eating with a blind man, you can steal food from his plate. If you do it quietly and cautiously, he will not notice; if you get greedy and take too much, he will loudly call you a thief, and you are in trouble. The people of Tanzania, he concluded, are like the blind man; they will not stir as long as there is some food left on their plate.

Clement’s interpretation captures the argument endorsed by Tripp (1997) in her account of the survivalist activities which began to mushroom in Tanzania in the 1980s and 1990s. She considers them to be the main source for the acquiescence of the Tanzanian people during the enormous hardships and turmoil triggered by the failure of socialist economic policies, the following crisis and the austerity measures of structural adjustment. The ‘informal economy’ provided a buffer to compensate for the inability of the state to care for its citizens:

In fact, the resiliency of society and its ability to reproduce itself with considerable autonomy from the state is one of the reasons the entire fabric of society did not fall apart during years of unprecedented hardship, to the amazement of many Tanzanians. One airline pilot I spoke with observed: ‘Any other country would have had riots if they had gone through what we have gone through in the past years’. (Tripp 1997: 4)

The resourcefulness of Tanzanians, according to this view, did not only make up for the lack of public and social services, it created new and alternative forms of making a living and organizing social life and, hence, a pathway to development that was far more people-based and bottom-up than the former state policies. In this sense, the ‘informal economy’ did not undermine the state, as the government feared when it resorted to repressing such activities; rather, ensuring survival by ‘informal’ means took the pressure off demands on the state and helped to preserve its legitimacy (ibid.: 11).

Two presumptions which are at the heart of this conception of the ‘informal economy’ are worth considering. The first is the informal-formal, society-state

dualism. Tripp observes that Tanzanians had given up on their expectations of the state's providing for the needs of its workers. As the economy declined and went into severe crisis, higher incomes and wages were out of the question despite rising living costs; in addition, the government had all but dismantled the independent labour movement, which could have fought for workers' interests. Income from 'formal' wages, becoming increasingly meagre in real terms, came to support 'informal' income rather than the reverse (ibid.: 80). With 'formal' employment accounting for less than ten per cent of income-generation in Tanzania today, for the vast majority of Tanzanians the 'informal economy' is still the only provider of work and income. Then and now, all government efforts notwithstanding, employment creation lags behind population growth, and the challenges to modernizing and formalizing the economy remain colossal (*The Citizen* 27.06.2015).

What has changed since Tripp's study, however, is the context for representing the 'informal economy' as alternative and viable pathway to poverty eradication and growth. At the time of Tripp's writing, her account presented a dissenting voice, displaying strong disagreement with perspectives that portrayed survivalist schemes as backward, unorganized and unproductive, and envisioned a central role in bringing about economic and social development for the state. This focus on how people in Dar es Salaam managed everyday life revealed a forceful departure from Tanzanian state socialism: laboriousness, self-reliance, family and village community, although central to the politics of *Ujamaa*, had always had the state as their anchor (for a detailed discussion, see Coulson 2013: 280ff.).

Since then, however, Tanzania has seen years of structural adjustment, the enormous and largely uncontrolled expansion of the 'informal economy' and two decades in which interventions of the state in different 'informal' sectors were quite limited (see e.g. Rizzo 2017). In this changed context, the rejection of the (socialist and post-socialist) state in the postmodernist appraisal of the 'informal economy' bears a strong resemblance to the conclusions of the neoliberal perspective that argues in favour of limited control of the market by the (capitalist) state.

This is all the more so in light of the second, and related, presumption: the split of the 'informal economy' from capitalist competition and accumulation. Small-scale production, labour and the organization of everyday life are deemed to build on community rules of a moral economy that "emphasize reciprocity, solidarity and exchange rather than individual profit, competition and regulation" (DeJaeghere 2017: 5). The moral economy is sketched in contrast to neoliberal thinking: although the distinction between market and moral economy is not clear-cut, and people may operate on different and at times conflicting rationales, "even with increased market activity, the moral-economy rationales have not given way to more market-oriented ones" (Tripp 1997: 127). The 'informal economy' continues to bear traces of "women's way of economic activities" based on mutuality, altruism and broader community imperatives (ibid.; see also Ogawa 2006).

Both presumptions can be refuted. From many conversations and interviews with street vendors and domestic workers, as well as from hanging out in the ‘informal city’ of Dar es Salaam, it transpired that the ‘informal economy’ is integrated into, and interdependent with, the ‘formal’ economy and with the regulatory framework of the state; this has been made evident throughout the thesis. The ‘informal economy’ is further subject to harsh competition, survival struggles and exploitation. Certainly, there were many examples of the elements of a moral economy: street vendors testified that solidarity, friendship and community help were vital to survival in the city. Small loans, being offered a roof for the night, a free meal or back-up in a conflict were considered life-saving in hard times; at other times, pooling resources among family and friends would boost a business venture. In some parts of the city, groups of street vendors had established a network of communication lines with *bodaboda* drivers who warned them if the municipal auxiliary police were on their way to stage an eviction raid. Street vendors generally charged different prices to different customers, depending on their (perceived) purchasing power; some Mama Lishes offered food at a reduced price and leftovers for free to those in need. Similarly, domestic workers supported each other by sharing advice on where to find employment or where to seek help in dealing with an abusive employer. As elaborated in Chapter 5, they sometimes established strong personal bonds with their employers, based on gratitude and mutual help.

Solidarity and mutual help, however, also had strict limits. Those arriving in Dar es Salaam without friends or kin struggled to find a place and an economic niche for themselves. Many of my interlocutors, even those embedded in community networks, had experienced bullying, fraud, theft of their belongings or various forms of violence, often more than once. Young people and women were even more at risk and had to struggle harder. Unlike moral economies in pre-capitalist, rural societies based on subsistence ethics (see Bryceson 2010: 267ff.), in the ‘informal city’ communities and groups were fragmented; in an ‘informal’ space as vast, multitudinous and condensed as Dar es Salaam, the right to subsistence is denied to many. On several occasions, I witnessed young men being beaten to death by a mob for trying to steal. *Kijiweni*—the street corner where on most days more than two dozen young male day labourers would wait from early morning to evening for a job—and the overcrowding of Kariakoo by *machingas*, selling piles and piles of the same low-cost items with vanishingly small profit margins, signalled the pre-eminence of surplus labour and too little work to get by.

Importantly, friendship and mutual favours were not enough to pay for life in the city. “At the end of the day”, to use an expression common among English-speaking Tanzanians, one had to have money. *Pesa* (cash) was needed to pay for basic needs like food and water, medicine, bus fares, rent, clothes and school uniforms for the children. Cash was, moreover, needed to afford much desired luxuries such as smart phones, visits to trendy bars and nightclubs, designer clothes and shoes, perhaps even a motorcycle – all considered part of the ‘good life’. The economy of solidarity and favours, hence, was not separated from the

'formal city' but intertwined with it, as already observed by Keith Hart (1973). The mixing of 'formal' and 'informal', and material and non-material forms of exchanging goods, labour and services is also not confined to the 'informal' or moral economies of Africa, but quite common to capitalist economies around the world (see e.g. Leyshon, Lee and Williams [eds.] 2003; Williams 2004).

The idealized and somewhat essentialized conception of 'informal' small-scale production and labour as the virtues of an 'African' or 'women's' moral economy, rather than a necessity for both survival and accumulation, was not shared by street vendors and domestic workers who, to return to Clement's metaphor, were not blind to the 'formal' political and economic structures and their consequences. They generally conformed with the observation that Tanzanians demand little other than their 'right to subsist' from the state (Tripp 1989; 1997: 4ff.), as they saw prospering in life as their own responsibility and emphasized the need to work hard. Minimalist state interference was appreciated, particularly among stationary traders in established markets and well-organized small-scale producers (interviews with VIBINDO 09.12.2014; 11.02.2015; Migahawa 13.02.2015). This markedly contradicted the views of several government officials, in whose perspective there was need for a 'change of mind-set' among those Tanzanians who, they believed, expected support from the already overburdened government. This looked-for change of mind-set commonly denoted that Tanzanians should move from expecting wage employment to becoming individually self-reliant and self-employed (interviews with MKURABITA 23.01.2015, 17.03.2015; NEEC 02.03.2015a,b; see also *The Citizen* 28.04.2017; Iseselo et al. 2019).

Many street vendors only demanded freedom from municipal authority harassment as, in their view, they were doing no harm but honest work. They also, however, keenly noted economic and social inequalities between rich and poor Tanzanians and saw state structures and the government implicated in corruption. Indeed, they challenged the authority and legitimacy of the state in denying them the space to make a living, especially those who had experienced hardships due to clearance raids. For instance, Mudi, a *machinga* whose merchandise had just been confiscated, saw law enforcement as despotic and arbitrary:

So you know, the City Council people come and arrest us because we're breaking the law, but they take our money, our stuff for themselves, so you tell me, who is a thief? They are paid to chase us and they steal from us but we have to run away or we go to jail.

Similarly, King Said, a *machinga* selling sunglasses along Bagamoyo Road, pointed out that during "the political season", a time of tolerance towards traders before elections, it was safe to trade on the main roads, even in front of a police station. He argued that the government flouted its own laws to gain the votes of traders and encourage them to "forget about the Escrow [corruption scandal]" but he was certain the by-laws would be enforced again right after the election.

One group of *machingas* argued that, at the time of socialism, everybody in Tanzania had been poor, including the party leaders; today, a minority was benefitting from the current economic growth and the country's natural riches. In the same way, domestic workers took note of the sharp differences between wealthy and poor employers. While the latter could be forgiven for paying low wages, the former were considered greedy, unfair and, in exploiting domestic workers, criminal.

Yet while domestic workers and small-scale traders generally had low expectations and made few demands of the government and 'formal' state institutions, they usually provided very concrete responses to the question, "What could the government do to improve your situation?" Many market and street vendors called for better infrastructure and access to attractive trading space and storage facilities, as well as to microfinance and loans. Some of the traders, especially those who were struggling to make ends meet or suffering from health problems, wished for employment opportunities in fields other than street vending; similarly, many of the domestic workers aspired to find other, more highly esteemed and better paid work. A number of street vendors and domestic workers regretted their low levels of education and wanted to be given a possibility to finish secondary school, attend vocational training or even go to college. Domestic workers requested of both the government and their employers to be remunerated fairly, to work and live in good conditions and, importantly, to receive respect for their labour.

Finally, it must be emphasized that none of the street vendors and domestic workers drew a line between the 'formal' and 'informal economy'. They saw neither the difficulties they faced at their work, nor the solutions to them, in terms of 'formal' or 'informal' income-generation. In fact, the notion of 'informal sector', or *sekta isiyo rasmi*, hardly ever surfaced in their explanations and stories but was introduced into the conversation by me. Rather, they spoke of concrete issues: how well they did at their work depended, for example, on their access to trading space, relations with their employers, their starting capital, their education, skills and work experience, their connections and networks and their personal backgrounds. They rated their work, among other things, by how hard they had to struggle and by how well it earned them and their families a good living and the respect of their communities. When discussing formalization of their work, they were concerned with practical constraints, costs and benefits and, sometimes, politics. The formal-informal dualism, in short, had little actual meaning. Again, this stood in sharp contrast to many 'formal' interviews with experts and officials who identified Tanzania's vast 'informal sector' as a key challenge.

In light of these findings, the conceptual division between the 'formal' and 'informal economy', and the equation of the latter with a moral or solidarity economy, must be called into question. In the absence or incapacity of the state, and with no alternatives to 'informal' work for the majority, portraying the 'informal economy' as filled with opportunities and as resembling the solidary space of a community is, as Deborah Potts phrases it, "too convenient" as it "could

be used by the state and policy-makers to enable the government to evade its responsibilities to the urban poor, such as striving to create more formal sector jobs” (Potts 2008: 155). As the arguments in this and former chapters speak in favour of seeing the ‘informal economy’ as an outcome and expression of structural economic inequalities, social hierarchies and power-laden discourses, the conclusions drawn by the ILO seem more sound: “The valorization of local or informal economy actors in development dynamics requires a redefinition of the role of the State, rather than its withdrawal ... In the long term, the social and solidarity economy can provide complementary paths to development” (ILO 2013f.: 44f., 46).

9. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

9.1 Summary and contribution

This book began with the stories of Sara and Rehema, and the different settings into which they ventured to make their lives in Dar es Salaam. Using the concepts I developed later in the thesis, their diverging paths were prescribed by elements of the 'informal' and the 'formal' city, which offered them dissimilar opportunities. The division between the two cities, which, despite being shadowy and contested, nonetheless impacts significantly on the lives of people in Dar es Salaam and elsewhere, prompted me to scrutinize its construction more thoroughly. Instead of taking the presence of an 'informal' and a 'formal' economy as given, it needed to be asked how work lives became conceptualized and represented as 'informal' in the first place, and the effects this had on them and on societal organization more broadly.

In the course of my research, it emerged that the 'informal economy' was by no means a merely descriptive or neutral category. Instead, a political and social concept as defined by Reinhart Koselleck, it is ambivalent in its meaning, normative and continuously contested in its essence. While used to describe material factors, conditions and structures, the concept is *also* implicated in the social construction of the world of work it depicts. To use the term deployed by the CPE school of thought, the imaginary of the 'informal economy' has over the past decades developed a life of its own; changing in its definition, application and normative evaluation across time and context, it plays a considerable role in normalizing and prescribing the precarious and unprotected character of some forms of income-generation as opposed to that of other forms. The processes of in/formalization are hence not only a matter of statistics, with certain numbers of jobs being created in the 'formal economy' and a certain number of people drifting into 'informal' income-generation following labour market disequilibria. They are also a product of the conceptual politics of the 'informal economy' in which legal definitions and political discourses determine access to the protective mechanisms of the 'formal economy'.

Research demonstrates the empirical diversity and complexity of labour relations and income-generation which are subsumed under the category of 'informal employment' and, at least rhetorically, most observers acknowledge informality and formality of work as two poles of a continuum rather than opposites. Nonetheless, the experiences of Tanzanian street vendors and domestic workers demonstrate the stubborn persistence of the imaginary of the 'informal economy' as an object requiring specific forms of political intervention.

In consequence, research on the 'informal economy' remains strongly characterized by a 'division of labour' between disciplines, perspectives and methodological approaches. For many decades, the 'informal economy' has been treated by mainstream accounts in political science, labour law and industrial relations, as well as political economy, as an aberration from the norm of modern, state-regulated ways of working and living or been ignored altogether. The 'informal economy', in short, has been cast as outside of and opposite to common conceptions of labour, law and the state.

My thesis has addressed these pitfalls in a multidisciplinary manner. In studying the discursive dynamics of the 'informal economy' as a political concept and imaginary, it contextualizes 'informal' work within wider transformations of the world of work. By bringing together research from diverse disciplines such as political economy, labour studies, development studies and anthropology, it presents a methodologically and theoretically innovative approach to the discourses and practices of the 'informal economy'. Exploration of the 'informal' and 'formal city' allowed the everyday organization of street trade and domestic work in Tanzania to be placed into context with larger, overarching economic dynamics and discourses, as well as facilitating reflection on the analytical and ethical dilemmas of using 'formal' and 'informal' research methods.

While they can presumably be observed in a different light in other contexts as well, the contradictions and contestation ingrained in the concept of the 'informal economy' come into sharp relief in my observations of Tanzania. Analysing the two dissimilar sectors of small-scale trade and domestic work, both of which qualify as 'informal'—one by the text of the law, the other by its practical implementation—illustrates the limitations of understanding the 'informal economy' as a clearly defined entity. In juxtaposing the meaning of informality in the two sectors, the thesis goes beyond drawing general conclusions on the 'informal economy' based on a single-sector case study. This offers a stronger illumination of the role of the concept in discursively constituting a global phenomenon which presents the majority of work worldwide. In this light, the thesis contributes to an emerging body of critical reflection and engagement with the concept and implications of the 'informal economy', and informality more broadly.

Approaching street trade and domestic work in a loosely comparative manner facilitates unpacking the black box of the 'informal economy' and carving out both the material conditions and discursive dynamics that constitute the two sectors as 'informal'. Using the prism of intersectionality, the in/formality of each sector can be shown to result from complex intersections of legal and social categories and norms based on postcolonial trajectories cross-cutting with gender, race and ethnicity, age, family status, educational background and, finally, class. Various shades of informality exist between and within the two sectors. The in/formality as well as the in/visibility of work performed in the streets and in private homes are not objectively given, but instead need to be seen as relative and relational. The labour of some street vendors and domestic workers is more precarious and

unprotected than that of others, depending on multiple, often intersecting factors. Primarily, street trade is rendered 'informal' because of unfavourable legislation whereas domestic work largely remains 'informal' despite being recognised by existing labour laws. Yet both sectors are characterized by multiple changes over time, such as the feminization of domestic work and cycles of tolerance and repression in street trade, showing that informality is not a constant but a dynamic trait.

A recurrent topic throughout my research is the contrast in conceptions—found in public discourse, legislation and academic research alike—of street traders as self-employed entrepreneurs compared to domestic workers as employees, divergences which do not necessarily match with the experiences of street vendors or domestic workers themselves. Proportionately, significant numbers of the former do not qualify either as self-employed or as entrepreneurs holding at least a minimal amount of capital or assets, whereas, for domestic workers, the nature of their workplace and the intimate personal ties with their employers complicate viewing their employment as a professional relationship. However, these conceptions impacted strongly on the design of interventions into the 'informal economy' of the two sectors. This becomes clear upon a closer look at class relations and labour struggles, rights promotion and the reconfiguration of relations between the state and society, the three areas of conceptual contestation comprising the focus of the thesis.

Conceptions of different forms of 'informal' employment are deeply contingent on conceptions and practices of class relations, and interdependent with the structural and associational forms of labour power held by street vendors and domestic workers. Shades of informality overlap with social hierarchies of status and income levels not only of street traders and domestic workers, but also of their customers and employers. Irrespective of these hierarchies, the representation in the law of domestic workers as employees is met with general acceptance in public discourse and among policy makers. In cooperation with the ILO, Tanzanian trade unions and their affiliates successfully campaign for improved legal protection and working conditions for domestic workers, and labour organization in the sector is making slow but significant progress. The combination of unfavourable legislation and the conception of street vendors as individual, profit-seeking entrepreneurs, in contrast, has led to their long-standing defamation and prevented them profiting from the efforts of law-makers and trade unions. Slow change is underway, however, mostly due to a shift in policy by the current Tanzanian government and transnational activism. In both sectors, the developments in Tanzania are taking place in an interplay with changing global discourses and newly emerging transnational alliances, driven by actors like WIEGO and StreetNet, which actively challenge established views on the 'informal economy'.

Competing conceptions of 'informal' income-generation are also demonstrably relevant to the formulations of rights and responsibilities that are intended to foster the transition from the 'informal' to the 'formal economy'. Whether

informality is perceived positively as a stepladder for successful entrepreneurship or negatively as a survival strategy in entry-level labour determines how different types of work are to be integrated into regulatory frameworks. This is almost archetypically exemplified by the Agendas for Legal Empowerment and for Decent Work, promoted in Tanzania mainly by the ILD and ILO, as key actors, both with the support and commitment of consecutive governments. The two agendas conceptualize and promote two quite different sets of rights, with a focus on business and property rights on the one hand, and on labour as well as wider economic and social rights on the other. Law-making here correlates strongly with competing, underlying conceptions of street vendors and domestic workers as legal and political subjects: street traders are imagined as propertied and competitive businessmen and -women, whereas domestic workers are conceptualised as employees with rights designed to protect them in unequal power relationships with their employer. These ideal types present different responsibilities for the state: in the sector of domestic work, its role is to guarantee labour and social rights; in street trade, the state is expected to protect private property and to foster competitiveness and self-initiative among vendors.

From this, we can conclude that the 'informal economy' by no means presents a lawless space. Legislation and conceptions of legal subjects, labour relations, rights and responsibilities matter even when they cannot be directly applied or enforced. Importantly, the law does not only determine the boundary between the 'formal' and the 'informal economy'; since this boundary is permeable, 'informal' and 'formal' practices diffuse from one side to the other. The law, therefore, may stifle or create possibilities for political and social inclusion as well as improved working and living conditions in the 'informal economy'. This aspect is often ignored in contributions which present the 'informal economy' as the opposite of the state and of the law, regardless of whether its positive or negative traits are emphasized. Hence, the state and the law hold a central role not only in drawing the line separating 'formal', regulated capitalist markets from their 'informal' counterparts, but also in modelling the discourses, identities and practices beyond its official reach.

At the same time, the role of the state is likewise redefined in the discourses and practices surrounding the 'informal economy'. As competing perspectives of the 'informal economy' are based on diverging understandings of the power relation between the state and society, attempts to integrate the 'informal economy' simultaneously comprise attempts to reconfigure relations between the state, market and society. These disputes are deeply political and normative, with strong ideological underpinnings; the discrepancies between structuralist and neoliberal perspectives on the 'informal economy', for instance, come into stark relief in the analysis of this discourse in Tanzania. Legislation and law enforcement, rights discourses, worker mobilization, formalization programmes, urban planning and social policies targeting the 'informal economy' are all integral to the reconfiguration of the state and of society.

To summarize roughly, in Tanzania, around the turn of the century, the neoliberal perspective replaced the modernist perspective which had previously held a dominant position in the discourse and politics of 'informal' street trade. Even though street traders had always been exposed to alternating cycles of tolerance and repression, the abiding tide of rural-urban migrating job-seekers who filled the streets of Dar es Salaam opened the door to the notion of street trade as opportunity-seeking entrepreneurship, increasingly replacing state repression with laissez faire policies and, moreover, an encouraging stance on entrepreneurship. This discourse is accompanied by the state's retreat from social responsibilities and the de-politicising of the labour market and wider economic policies by emphasizing self-reliance and competitiveness. The private household and the 'informal economy', on the other hand, begin to be represented as the buffer for social inequality and exclusion. In practice, however, the poorest and arguably most disadvantaged among the street traders are left behind, and further prevented from accessing the security and benefits of the 'formal economy'.

This neoliberal representation of the 'informal economy' is paralleled and to some extent counteracted by a discourse footed on the structuralist perspective which influences policies in the domestic work sector. This approach envisions a strong role for the state in the legal and social protection of domestic workers and, in the long term, comprehensive reform of the labour market and social security systems. While this approach so far has had slow implementation as its downside, it does promise to include all domestic workers as well as workers in other sectors. The goal of 'formal' and secure employment for all Tanzanians, however, appears ambitious given the continuing low levels of decent employment opportunities amidst accelerating market competition both locally and globally.

The 'informal economy' in Tanzania is what a range of actors, most importantly those in the governing legislative and administrative bodies, make of it. The thesis thus offers a critique of literature that, often despite lip-service to the contrary, takes the formal-informal dualism at face value. Regardless of whether the 'informal economy' is celebrated as a realm of solidarity, opportunity and resistance or its existence is regretted as the outcome of tectonic shifts in the capitalist world economy, these conceptions contribute to the politics of in/formalization. 'Informalization' and 'formalization' hence need to be understood as simultaneous shifts in macroeconomic organization, labour markets and their regulation, *and* as discursive efforts to remake political and legal subjects, class struggle and state-society relations. In both academic and political discourse, the term 'informal economy' is best treated with caution.

Discussing such a highly political and politicized topic, I have inevitably developed my own stance on the 'informal economy' based on my observations. In addition to making a conceptual and methodological contribution, the thesis, therefore, also represents a political-practical intervention. The interlinkages between the 'formal' and 'informal city', the experiences of street vendors and domestic workers, the role of legislation in fostering or impeding workers' organization, and the constant struggles connected with the reorganization of the state, market

and society around the formal-informal divide all speak in favour of the structuralist perspective which sees the 'informal economy' as embedded in capitalist dynamics and distribution battles.

By contrast, neoliberal readings of the 'informal economy' as well as postmodernist salutations of workers' agency and non-capitalist, free forms of exchange are missing the point, at least for a large share of street traders and domestic workers. In the course of the thesis, I elaborate on how a considerable share of academic research as well as of policy-making euphemistically tends to conflate survival with accumulation, casual employment with self-employment, meagre incomes with profits and self-help schemes with 'moral economy' or 'everyday resistance'. Such accounts come close to repeating the language of political agendas which they purport to be investigating with a critical eye. As I discuss in detail in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, it is not least in consequence of such conceptualizing that some current policy agendas conceive of the 'informal economy' as a realm of individual micro-entrepreneurs who are to work themselves and the entire national economy out of poverty in a fashion similar to that of Baron Munchausen, who famously claimed to have pulled himself as well as his horse out of a mire by his own hair.

As it stands, the use of the 'informal economy' as a political and normative concept impacts on how millions of people in the world work and live. This does not only apply to the Global South; discourses surrounding irregular forms of income-generation are also at the heart of the transformations of labour markets and social security systems in the North, with strong interlinkages between these transformations. My thesis shows that processes of in/formalization are not unstoppable or unalterable – there are alternatives that begin with the way we think of the 'informal economy'.

9.2 Limitations of the study and future research desiderata

Notwithstanding all attempts to do justice to the enormous body of excellent research and reflection others have undertaken before me, the often brilliant thoughts and insights shared by commentators, and last but not least the knowledge and viewpoints of my Tanzanian interlocutors, this manuscript contains some gaps which I was unfortunately not able to fill in this work cycle. With the double hope that they can be addressed in future research and that they do not distort the overall contribution of the thesis, I wish to reflect on them briefly.

Limitations in terms of language skills and time unfortunately did not allow me to delve as deeply into the 'formal' and 'informal cities' of Dar es Salaam and the everyday working lives of Tanzanians as would be desirable. Although, over time, thanks to the patience and efforts of the Tanzanian hosts, my understanding of what was happening and what my interlocutors were trying to tell me expanded, it is impossible to grasp how much I must have missed. Important nuances and details as well as 'big messages' probably got lost in translation during the months spent in

Dar es Salaam, as well as when mapping, conceptualizing and writing the thesis. Sharing my findings and the final manuscript with a Tanzanian audience, ideally the people whose views I attempt to represent, and hearing their comments is only very limitedly possible with a small number of people. A problem partly of geographical distance, partly of lacking a common language and partly of restrictions in maintaining communication channels over a long period of time, especially with my Tanzanian contacts from the 'informal city', the process of drafting the manuscript took place far away from the lives I encountered in Dar es Salaam. Hopefully not beyond recognition, this book remains a depiction of the impact the concept of the 'informal economy'—an invention by Europeans studying Africa—had on the residents of an African city, written by a European researcher for a predominantly European academic audience.

Given the breadth of the 'informal economy' and its centrality and interconnectedness with many other relevant themes of current economic, social and urban developments in the Global South and well beyond, I was not able to explore all its links. Narrowing down the scale and scope of a given thematic interest is a necessary and simultaneously unfortunate part of research work. I had to leave aside one aspect which, in hindsight, turned out to be of relevance for how the concept of the 'informal economy' works: the rural-urban ties between the 'informal' and 'formal cities' and the land that feeds them. Talk about ties to rural family members living on the land of the ancestors surfaced in my conversations with Tanzanians as often as the mention of rural poverty and the dream of one day having a *shamba* on their own piece of land. Rural-urban trade and money flows added significantly to the functioning of the 'informal economy' and vice versa. Including this vast field and the extensive literature on the topic would have made this research effort unmanageable, but offers a rewarding avenue for future research. This is all the more so as, beyond providing interesting empirical material, questions of distribution, ownership and use of land, both urban and rural, are of central conceptual and theoretical importance to discussions of the capitalist political economy as well as to imagining its alternatives.

This takes me to another area of research which remained unexplored in the course of this endeavour: the established categories of capital, labour and the state, always particular to just one part of the world, meet their limits in helping us to make sense of current global developments. When I first set out to study labour relations in the Tanzanian 'informal economy', I had hoped to come across different and unconventional ways of working and living that would fundamentally challenge the world of work as we know it and provide fresh concepts. Such alternatives did not emerge in my research, partly in consequence of and partly as the reason for framing the research question the way I did. On the contrary, the praise of the 'informal economy' as *the* alternative to established categories of capitalist organization by some voices in the discourse transpired as one of the greatest conceptual follies of all.

That said, as William Bridges pointedly remarked, "To our counterparts at the end of the 21st century today's struggles over jobs will seem like a fight over

deckchairs on the Titanic” (cited in Beck 2000: 2). Thus appears the whole division over ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ work once we take a step back and acknowledge that both are very much integral to capitalist modes of production which are in urgent need of revamping. Exploring socially sound and environmentally sustainable alternatives to working and living the way we currently do is an increasingly pressing matter in the face of mass unemployment, environmental degradation and escalating economic and social inequality, as well as the automation and digitization of work. To the extent that discussion of the concept of the ‘informal economy’ is involved in the re-organization of global capitalism, I have gladly offered a critique; future debates are encouraged to turn towards proposals of better ways of making a living.

9.3 Good bye, and good riddance? Working on and with a problematic concept

At this point, the reader is likely to have several objections to the thesis. In this final section, I address two of them. The first is, why dedicate a tremendous amount of effort to discussing a concept whose usefulness has long and repeatedly been called into question? The response is: because much of the critique of the concept and its use appears to have gone unheard, or not reached the relevant audience. I have shown how the concept is continuously used to draw lines and evoke worldviews that are not only inaccurate, but in many ways harmful.

This does not only apply to the life worlds of policy making and unregulated work from which I drew my empirical material. As noted critically by Jeffrey Harrod (2007), among others, the presumed existence of the ‘informal economy’ has created entire branches of academic research, a whole knowledge industry aiming to reconstruct and refine a concept that was an academic invention to begin with. The resilience of the concept and its self-explanatory power are exceptional. The tautological character of its dualism emerged in my conversations with government officials and trade unionists in Tanzania as well as with fellow scholars at academic conferences.

For instance, I was made aware by a political scientist that I could not claim that law mattered in the ‘informal economy’ because, by definition, the latter was beyond the reach of the state—if law mattered, the sector in question would not be ‘informal’. One labour lawyer insisted that domestic workers in Tanzania could not be considered ‘informal’ because they were formally recognized by law; another objected that street vendors could not be represented as workers if they were not in a contractual employment relationship. Anne Trebilcock’s (2006) point about ‘informal’ employment being an oxymoron to labour lawyers (and others) is duly noted. Such objections exemplify the problems brought about by the ‘informal economy’, certainly not the answers to it.

It was telling that to street traders and domestic workers themselves, the classification of their work as ‘informal’ had little meaning unless it was connected to more concrete issues. By contrast, the notion of informality tends to remain

insufficiently explained in much literature on the topic, failing to clarify which aspect of informality is to be addressed and shying away from the question of what makes a person, activity or relationship 'informal' in the first place. This leads to well-intended but sometimes short-sighted or ineffective policy interventions, without adequate inspection of deeper causes and wider circumstances. I thus saw a need to highlight that the 'informal economy' lends itself to being used as synonym for its causes, effects and all sorts of conditions associated with it, confusing explanans and explanandum.

This brings me to the second and arguably much more serious objection. Is this thesis not part of the very conceptual politics I aim to critique? Do I not contribute to the self-sustaining academic industry of research on its own brainchild?

I wish to confront these questions with a counter-question: how can we best overcome the problematic uses of a concept? One way is to reject its use. This would, however, do poor service to researching different, actually existing forms of informality—economic, political, legal, urban—which still need to be better understood. So far, a superior term has not been found and, once clarified and used with critical distance to its normative and political baggage, the notion of informality has value in summing up and aptly describing a range of phenomena.

Refraining from using the term would have also, quite simply, made writing this thesis and attempting to bring my claims across all but impossible. I have expressed my distance from and scepticism towards the concept by using single inverted commas to draw attention to its normative and political content. Critical usage of the ambivalent, contested and conflict-laden concept was key to stimulating the debate over its different meanings and their implications. In the thesis, the conceptual discussion opened up important questions of economic regulation and societal organization. Each addressed aspect, from the labour organization of domestic workers to the distribution of public urban space for street vendors, could have been discussed separately and without reference to the concept, yet it was their place in the conceptual politics surrounding the 'informal economy' which allowed me to highlight how labour regulation in the two sectors is embedded into wider contestations and political visions of social order.

Another and perhaps more promising way to overcome a problematic concept is to make it redundant by bringing its underlying issues to the fore. Given the integration of the 'informal' into the 'formal economy' and the interlinkages between the two, questions of poverty and inequality, as well as political, economic, social and legal exclusion, need to be addressed across the formal-informal dualism and its related constructed binaries between a developed North and developing South, employment and entrepreneurship, public and private, legal and illegal. In the long run, I hope that the arguments I put forward in problematizing the 'informal economy' contribute to shifting the focus away from these divisions towards matters of redistribution and ownership, political organization and participation, as well as visibility and voice, which are a concern for workers all around the world.

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Annex 1: Interviewed officials and experts

| Institution | Name | Position | Date |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---------------|
| ATE | Dr. Aggrey Mlimuka | Executive Director | 02.02.2015 |
| BRELA | Bosco Gadi | Chief Accountant | 05.03.2015 |
| CHODAWU | Abraham L. Muhojja | Deputy General Secretary | 02.02.2015(a) |
| CHODAWU | Deograsia Vuluwa | Director Gender, Children and Youth Development | 02.02.2015(b) |
| FES | Khalid Mlanga | Project Officer | 19.02.2015 |
| FES | Anna Mbise | Project officer | 30.11.2016 |
| IDWF | Vicky Kanyoka | Regional Coordinator | 16.03.2015 |
| ILO | Magnus Minja | Documentation and Library Assistant | 29.04.2014 |
| ILO | Annemaria Kiaga | UNDAP Coordinator | 08.05.2014(a) |
| ILO | Gertrude Sima | HIV/Aids National Project Coordinator | 08.05.2014(b) |
| ILO | Maridadi Phanuel | National Programme Coordinator Labour Law | 08.05.2014(c) |
| ILO | --- | --- | 20.03.2015 |
| ILO | Kokushubila Kabanza | National Programme Officer Domestic Workers | 18.03.2015 |
| ILO | Rehema Shija | National Programme Officer Governance | 19.12.2016 |
| Kinondoni Municipal Council | Burton Mahenge | Municipal Solicitor | 06.03.2015 |
| Kinondoni Municipal Council | Anna Mkusa Tesha | Town Planner | 19.03.2015 |
| KIWOHEDE | Edda Kawala | Programme Officer | 16.03.2015 |
| KIWOHEDE | Warioba Nyamsenda, Martha Chiomba | Outreach Officer, Programme Manager | 18.03.2015 |
| LHCR | Flaviana Charles | Advocate, Government, Corporate and Environmental Watch | 21.01.2015 |
| MIGAHAWA | Juma Mohamed Mwenda, Sainabu Atuhumani, Jane Nyanda, Daudi Simbo | Chairman, Secretary, Board member, Board member | 13.02.2015 |
| MKURABITA | Seraphia Mgembe | Programme Coordinator | 23.01.2015 |
| MKURABITA | Jane Lyimo Kisanga | Legal Specialist | 17.03.2015 |
| MoLE | Joseph Nganga | Economist | 12.02.2015 |
| NEEC | Esther Mbaga | Legal Officer | 02.03.2015(a) |

| Institution | Name | Position | Date |
|--------------------|----------------------|---|---------------|
| NEEC | Gwakisa Bapala | Manager Research and Planning | 02.03.2015(b) |
| NSSF | Abas Cothema | Senior Operations Officer Informal Sector | 08.12.2016 |
| REPOA | Joseph Nganga | Analyst, Section Employment | 28.04.2014 |
| TAMICO | Hassan Khamis Ameir | National General Secretary | 29.01.2015 |
| | Thomas Daudi Sabai | National Deputy General Secretary | |
| TIENAI | Moses Lyimo | Chairperson | 13.03.2015 |
| TUCTA | Makongolo John Gonza | Director Economics and Research | 30.04.2014 |
| TUCTA | Edwin Mwakyembe | Occupational Health and Safety | 06.05.2014 |
| TUCTA | Kassim Kapalata | Director Occupational Health and Safety, Environment and HIV/Aids | 07.05.2014 |
| TUCTA | --- | --- | 28.01.2015 |
| TUICO | Margaret Ndagile | Gender and OHS Department | 30.01.2015 |
| TUICO | Jones Majura | Assistant General Secretary | 11.02.2015 |
| TUICO | Peles Jonathan | Head of Commercial Sector | 07.12.2016 |
| TUICO | John Shikunzi | Head of Services & Consultancy Sector | 08.12.2016 |
| TUICO | --- | --- | 20.12.2016 |
| UDSM | Colman Msoka | Deputy Director, Institute for Development Studies | 03.12.2014 |
| UDSM | Tulia Ackson | Faculty of Law | 10.12.2014 |
| UWAWADAR | Mohamed Kidumuke, | Chairperson | 18.02.2015 |
| | Mohamed Chinyapi, | Secretary | |
| | Lilian Kabalike, | Member | |
| | Abu Bakar Saleh | Member | |
| VIBINDO | Gaston Kikuwi | Chairperson | 19.12.2014 |
| VIBINDO | --- | --- | 11.02.2015 |
| VIBINDO | --- | --- | 06.12.2016 |

Annex 2: Small-scale traders

Small-scale trade

| Name | Goods and services | Employment relation | Location |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| <i>Machingas:</i> | | | |
| Ezekiel | Mangoes, coconuts and other fruit | Self-employed | Kariakoo |
| Frederick | Wall maps and posters | Self-employed | Upanga |
| Halima | <i>Mandazi</i> (doughnuts) | Self-employed, with unpaid family members | Kariakoo |
| Hassan | Cookware | Employed by street trader | Kariakoo |
| Judy | Shirts, ties and cosmetics | Self-employed | CBD |
| King Said | Sunglasses | Employed by retailer | Morocco intersection |
| Lazaro | Baseball caps and beanies | Self-employed | Karume market |
| Mudi | Leather belts | Working in a collective | Posta |
| Polycap | Shoes | Employed by street trader | Ubungo intersection |
| Rashidi | <i>Mitumba</i> (second hand clothes) | Self-employed | Magomeni |
| Sam | DVDs and small electronics | Self-employed | CBD |
| Shafira | Small electronics | Employed by retailer | Mkwajuni |
| Tatu | Samosas | Employed by <i>Mama Lishe</i> | Machinga Complex |
| Tony | Car washing, formerly: shoes | Self-employed | Posta |
| <i>"The kahawa boys":</i> | | | |
| Bariki | <i>Kahawa na kashata</i> | Work in a collective | Jangwani |
| Benjamin | | | |
| Musa | | | |
| Rodrick | | | |
| Yonah | | | |

| Name | Goods and services | Employment relation | Location |
|--|---|--|-----------------|
| Roadside traders with stalls/kiosks: | | | |
| Aziza | <i>Dada</i> , dinner (rice, beans, vegetables) | Employed by <i>Mama Lishe</i> | Kariakoo |
| Clement | <i>Fundi wa viatu</i> (shoeshiner and shoe repair man), selling soft drinks and water | Self-employed | Magomeni |
| Ibrahimu (and son) | Fresh fruit juice | Self-employed, with unpaid family members | Kariakoo |
| Rose (and partners) | <i>Mama Lishe</i> , breakfast and light lunch (soup, pancakes, tea) | Self-employed, runs restaurant with partners | Makumbusho |
| Market traders in designated market areas: | | | |
| Lawrence | <i>Mitumba</i> | Self-employed | Karume |
| Mama Sada | Vegetables | Self-employed | Mwenge |

Annex 3: Domestic workers

| Name | Employment relation | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Employers: | | |
| Grace | Bank accountant, employed | |
| Namiko | Businesswoman, self-employed | |
| Domestic workers: | | |
| Emanuel | Live-in, watchman | |
| Issa | Live-in, all tasks, retiring | |
| Neema | Live-in, cleaner and cook | |
| Melinda | Live-out; cleaner | |
| Bisuna | Live-out, formerly live-in; cooking and cleaning, additionally elderly care, seeking part-time work | Focus group interview |
| Deborah | Live-out; all household tasks | |
| Esther | Live-out; all household tasks | |
| Felecia | Live-in; cleaning, cooking and childcare, additionally live-out jobs | Focus group interview |
| Jackline | Live-in; all household tasks | |
| Mama Amani | Live-out; cleaning, cooking and childcare, additional income from vegetable sales | |
| Mama Sarah | Live-out; cleaning and cooking, seeking additional jobs | |
| Mercy | Live-out, formerly live-in; cleaning and cooking | |

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