

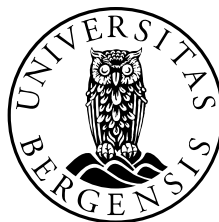
“There’s no love here”

Beach boys in Malindi, Kenya



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Front page photograph:

Picture of a heart drawn in the sand, taken from an Italian
blogging site; <http://blog.libero.it>

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PREFACE

This thesis deals with so-called beach boys who, through their efforts in seducing foreign females on vacation in their home area of Malindi, Kenya, aspire towards economic success. Although this is a global phenomenon, an attempt is here made to establish the ways in which beach boys are anchored in their local community while simultaneously being a part of transnational flows of people and ideas in the shape of tourism. This case study was made possible through my stay in Kenya; interacting with various beach boys in Malindi within the time-frame of six months. I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity of carrying out a fieldwork that has led me to various encounters with people that will forever be a part of me.

The two young men making this thesis possible are the same men who acted as my ‘protectors’ and ‘brothers’ in Malindi. Whether it was enlightening me about common practices and ideas, or just including me in their daily lives and activities, they always made sure I was ok. I will forever be grateful to “Lolani” and “Juma” for including me as much as possible in their lives, and I thank them both from the bottom of my heart. I also owe thanks to “Kavu”, who shared with me parts of his life; giving me additional insight into the practices of beach boys. Further, I am grateful for every single encounter I had with beach boys along the beaches of Malindi. Although it was not at all times pleasant, it was always thought-provoking and rewarding. As a consequence, I would here like to thank ‘the beach boys of Malindi’ for constituting the basis of my project.

My good friends “Benny”, “Carolina”, and “Beatrice” are, along with the other friends I made during fieldwork, also essential to thank as they brought laughter and joy to what came to be my daily routine in Malindi. In terms of the writing process it was my dearest fellow students who were responsible for countless joyous moments during what has been a wonderful, but at times stressful, period of my life. I thank you all so much. In accordance with the time spent on executing and writing this thesis, I have unwillingly been less attentive to my closest friends, and with an apology I wish to thank each one of you for your support and encouragements; Kjersti, Stine, Isabel, Jonas and Stine. Closest to my heart however, is the enormous love and support I have received from my mother, Tone, and my brilliant sister, Rebekka. Although I have made them worry, I would not have been without this experience and I thank you both for being there for me.

From the beginning of this project until the very end, my supervisor, Dr. Arne Cato Berg, has been of great importance to me. Without his encouragements and feedback this thesis would be less than it is, and I am incredibly grateful for his dedication to, and interest in, my project. Your presence and assistance throughout this process will never be forgotten, and I thank you very much for all your help. I am also thankful to Eilin Holtan Torgersen, who has contributed to the making of the final thesis, and I truly appreciate the time she put into reading drafts and giving comments.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank Vincent for his patience and understanding, especially during my stay in Malindi; away from home. In addition to being grateful for your visit and interaction with what seemed to be ‘the men in my life’ at that time, I very much appreciate your comments and our discussions on various topics about Kenya and beach boys. There is no doubt that your serenity and continuous care for me has helped me along the way; “*asante sana*”.

Miriam Eid Bergan

Bergen, 27.05.2011

Map 1: Kenya



Map 2: Malindi



CONVENTIONS

I used both English and some Swahili as my methodological language throughout fieldwork in Malindi. Although I am not fluent in the Swahili language, I used a mixture of Swahili words and English (normally referred to as *sheng* in Kenya). A list of the Swahili words used is to be found in the very end of this thesis. Throughout the thesis I make use of italics when presenting a Swahili word; such as the word *safari*. Further, when I quote various people quotation marks are applied, distinguishing the statements from the text. For instance, a statement from one of my friends is presented in the following way; “I have five *wazungu*”.

In Swahili, the alphabet is identical to the English alphabet except for the letters X and Q which do not exist. Consonants are more or less as the English ones, while vowels are pronounced in a specific manner and are, if placed after each other in a word, pronounced separately. There are no silent letters in Swahili, and the emphasis is almost always placed on the two last syllables of the word (unless the word is borrowed from other languages such as Arabic or English).

A is pronounced as in ‘father’.

Dh is pronounced as in ‘there’.

E is pronounced as in ‘egg’.

Th is pronounced as in ‘thanks’.

I is pronounced as in ‘bee’.

Sh is pronounced as in ‘shopping’.

O is pronounced as in ‘door’.

Ch is pronounced as in ‘church’.

U is pronounced as in ‘loop’.

Ng is pronounced as in ‘jingles’.

Ng’ is pronounced as in ‘sing’.

Having accounted for the ways in which to pronounce the Swahili words made use of in this thesis, it will also be beneficial to look at the exchange rate for the local currency which is Kenyan shillings¹ although I take into account the obvious fluctuation of the exchange rate.

1 Kenyan Shilling (Ksh) equals

0,6 Norwegian Kroner (NOK)

0,01 U.S. Dollars (\$)

100 Kenyan Shillings (Ksh) equals

6,47 Norwegian Kroner (NOK)

1,19 U.S. Dollars (\$)

¹ <http://www.valutakalkulatoren.no/valutaveksling> - 13.04.2011

PROLOGUE

While walking along Silver Sands beach with a few beach boys, I see Juma, together with an older white woman, coming towards us. They are clearly flirting, and I pretend not to recognize Juma (considering his ‘instructions’ concerning situations like this). He gives me a quick look and winks at me as they pass us. I meet Lolani further down the beach and ask him who the woman with Juma is. He says that Juma is “trying his luck”.

A few days later I get the full story from Juma while having a drink together with him and Lolani in town. He tells me that Valentina, who is Italian, was here on vacation and that they met for the first time on Silver Sands the day I saw them walking side by side. They only spent a few nights together in a hotel outside town because she was here with her teenage daughter. Valentina is around 50 years of age and she has a husband in Italy who is a lot older than her, Juma tells me. She has already gone back to Italy, but has apparently fallen in love with him. She sends him messages and calls him every day, Juma adds. He starts laughing and mumbles something. Lolani starts laughing as well. I ask them to tell me what they are laughing about. Juma finally says that Valentina had cried after the first time they had sex; she told him that she never receives the same attention from her husband. The conversation then evolves into one about sex and various sexual acts, only with short interruptions of Juma’s phone ‘beeping’. He holds it up, telling us that he is receiving messages from Valentina where it says how much she misses him and how much she loves him. She writes that she is planning to leave her husband and that she wants to be with Juma “forever”. Juma keeps on laughing and seems proud to say that he has made her fall in love with him; repeating that he can “give her what her husband can’t”.

During the vacation with her teenage daughter, Valentina met Juma at the beach. This is emblematic for encounters between beach boys and foreign women. It is however worth noting that Juma is one of the more successful beach boys in Malindi, and that the ‘effortless’ way he seduced Valentina is based on years of practice and experience. What is not included in the accounts above is the context and details of the seduction process, as well as further exploration of what happens before and after a beach boy enters into a romantic relationship with a foreign woman. The contextual surroundings of encounters between beach boys and tourist women add to the complexity of this phenomenon. An exploration of this complexity, along with positioning beach boys within their local surroundings, creates the basis for this thesis.

Westerners are increasingly choosing Third World countries as their vacation destination. Cheap, chartered flights and tropical weather are attracting more and more tourists to Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. One of the perceived negative aspects related to this is sex tourism; where men travel for the purpose of having sex with local women. Sex tourism and prostitution is often treated as an expression of male patriarchal power and female powerlessness, which then leaves no room for the possibility of female sex tourism. On the other hand, female travellers also engage in romantic liaisons with local men. The romantic relationships that often develop from interaction between beach boys and foreign women will be the focal point of this thesis; shedding light on practices and motivations of the beach boys in question. Many would argue that the actor's narratives are often based on romance and courtship, which makes both prostitution and the notion of sex tourism inappropriate (Taylor 2001:749-750). Neither the beach boys nor the female tourist refer to their interaction as sex tourism. Rather than exchanging money for sex, these women are looking for romance and possible relationships (Pruitt and LaFont 1995:423). It should however be noted that "romance" signifies only the one party; the female tourist. As Dahles and Bras (1999:287) notes, the beach boys underplay the commercial side of the relationship, stage affection and to a degree change their identities; even hiding other emotional or marital obligations. However, unlike male and female sex-workers, beach boys do not directly ask for, or demand, money for their company and 'sexual services', although this is a part of the 'deal' without saying. As Herold, Garcia and DeMoya (2001:991) notes, they instead use different strategies to get the women to pay for meals and activities as well as gifts, also in the form of money.

This relates to the exchange of gifts and commodities between parties, where the former often is seen to indicate moral obligation while the latter is distinguished by its moral neutrality. Parry and Bloch (1989) challenges this view by presenting empirical cases that show otherwise, and I hope to do the same in light of this study. Furthermore, the beach boys' search for profit through such reciprocal interaction may be seen as having entrepreneurial aspects; posing the question whether beach boys should be viewed as entrepreneurs within their local settings. Through engaging in liaisons with tourist women, they are in many ways taking part in the economical aspects of the prevailing tourism-industry in Malindi. Yet, their aim is not to earn money and leave their homeland, but rather earn money to establish a business and prosper close to their families and peers; in their eyes maximizing the profit obtained.

Most of the scholars doing research on beach boys emphasize their ultimate wish for migrating out of their country to either Europe or North-America through the relationships with foreign women. Leaving for Europe, and changing their present condition, is seen as an opportunity to create a better life for themselves (Brown 1992:365). As already mentioned, this does not seem to comply with the aspirations of beach boys in Malindi. They would rather stay in Kenya, making the ultimate objective one of economic profit. In other words, they also aspire towards creating a better life for themselves, but their wish is to do so in Malindi and not abroad. Using Barth (1966:60), and his model for generating social forms, it is relevant to look at how choice, strategy, and role-play, based on ideas and values in society, create patterns of behaviour. Barth points out that all behaviour takes place in a matrix of values and social relations (1966:60). Following this, it will be fruitful to consider the local surroundings of beach boys. Looking at how beach boys are anchored in their society will be important in aiming to provide a comprehensive approach of distinguishing beach boys in Malindi from beach boys elsewhere.

Chapter 1

THE BEACH BOY PHENOMENON

On the East Coast of Africa, about 120 km north of Kenya's second largest city and largest seaport Mombasa, lays Malindi Town. The town is the capital of Malindi district, and is one of the five areas making up the district that has a population of 378,317² (2010 census). The population of Malindi Town is 80 721³ (1999 census), and it is the second largest coastal town in Kenya. In recent times Malindi has been influenced by the rapid expansion of tourism, and it has been a popular destination for Englishmen, Germans and Italians. During the last ten years Italians are said to have "invaded" Malindi. Residents of older generations have told me that Germans, along with the British, used to come to Malindi 20-30 years ago but that they all 'moved' to South Coast (the southern side of Mombasa) after Italians began arriving here 10-15 years ago. The influence they have on Malindi seems to be ambivalent; whether it is said to be negative or positive depends on whom I spoke with. Many residents tell me that Italians have helped develop the town by for example building houses and fixing roads, while others tell me that they have ruined the morals and dignity of Malindi with their demand for drugs and prostitution. A study done by Kibicho (2002) reveals that the local residents of Malindi have both negative and positive attitudes towards tourism in the area. On the one hand, tourism was said to have positive impact on individuals and the local economy; creating jobs, improving living standards and personal income as well as the overall image of Malindi. On the other hand, the negative social impacts were often enhanced; tourism was blamed for worsening drug-use, alcoholism, sexual permissiveness, vandalism, and crime in general. The ambivalent response to the impact of tourism in Malindi noted here concurs to my own findings during fieldwork in Malindi.

An aspect of the more negatively perceived influences of tourism on Malindi is the beach boy phenomenon. Beach boys are found at any coastal resort in the area of Malindi. They are normally young men, more or less between 17 and 30 years of age, making a living by providing various informal services to tourists. Today those services are based on booking *safaris*⁴ (trips) either on land or at sea. Beach boys will approach tourists at the beach and ask if they would like to go for trips, see the nightlife, or visit their villages. Jamison, who has

² <http://www.geohive.com/cntry/kenya.aspx>

³ http://www.malindikenya.com/malindi_population.htm

⁴ *Safari* is a Swahili word, meaning journey, and is widely used by Kenyans and tourists to describe various trips (designed for tourists).

also studied beach boys in Malindi (in 1992) among other things, writes that beach boys form an important part of the “sun and fun” tourism landscape in Malindi (1999:952). Although there has been controversy along the Kenyan coast considering beach boys and their practices, some point out that they are a huge attraction for tourism in the coastal areas. Jamison writes how some Italian hotels even hired local beach boys as full time tour-guides assigned to groups of tourists while, by contrast, the few British and German owned hotels actively informed their guests to stay away from beach boys (1999:953). In the Lonely Planet guide-book to Kenya it is written about beach boys as well:

Beach boys – young Kenyan men who walk along the beaches selling everything from woodcarvings to marijuana as well as sexual favours – are a fact of life at the big resorts and their dogged persistence can be wearing. All you can do is refuse politely; they should move on quickly enough (Parkinson 1996:169).

This brings me to the various perceptions of who exactly is to be considered a beach boy. Can it be *all* young men on the beaches of Kenya, like they imply in the guide-book, or is it possible to distinguish a special group or category among these men? Furthermore, the ones who know about beach boys, and the scholars who write about them, have struggled to find an adequate term, or concept, for the beach boy phenomenon.

Sex, romance or companionship?

Dahles and Bras (1999) write that neither prostitution nor love is the right concept for characterizing the relationships between foreign women and beach boys. According to De Albuquerque (1998), the relationships between beach boys and female tourists represent “sex tourism”; money for sex. He is therefore very critical of the concept of “romance tourism” espoused by Pruitt and LaFont (1995). Questioning this, Herold et al. (2001) are of the impression that it is too simplistic to define relationships between female tourists and beach boys as strictly sex or romance tourism. They report that the motivations for tourist involvement with local men vary considerably, and find it questionable that studies done by for example De Albuquerque (1998) do not include interviews with female tourists (2001:993-994). Pruitt and LaFont (1995:425) write that travelling now serves as a medium of female self-realization as women seek to expand their gender repertoires to include practices traditionally reserved for men. Relating this to what they call romance tourism, they point out

how the continuous expansion of feminine boundaries requires new experiences such as new kinds of romance (1995:425). Kibicho writes that women who feel rejected by men in developed countries, “for being sort of fatter and older”, find that in Kenya all this is reversed; they are “romanced”, appreciated and “loved” by men (2009:103). Through acting on the women’s insecurities and desires for love and affection, beach boys are successful in seducing some of the foreign females. Herold et al. emphasize the common focus by the female tourists on companionship (at times including love and sex), suggesting the possibility of yet another concept; namely “companionship tourism” (Herold et al. 2001:994). The various concepts proposed here are developed on the basis of research done on beach boys from a range of countries. Looking at Kenya, Kibicho (2009) alters between using the term “beach boy” and “male sex worker”, implying that the two terms describe the same phenomenon in Malindi. Although I make use of Kibicho’s material throughout this thesis, I do not agree with the term “sex worker” being used to describe the young men I here chose to refer to as beach boys. Moreover, the outlined focus of this thesis exceeds the issue of naming the actors and the phenomenon itself. I thus take a different stance based on the material collected during fieldwork in Malindi.

Existing research

The Caribbean is widely known for their beach boys, and it is written a lot about them in the media. In Jamaica they are called ‘renti’ or ‘rent a dread’, and reading about their stories, it seems they are proud to tell the world about their skills of seducing tourist women (De Albuquerque 1998:48-57). De Albuquerque (1998) leans towards defining beach boys as sex workers, and presents female tourists as merely “in search of the Big Bamboo” while the beach boys are looking for a ticket out of Jamaica. Herold et al. (2001:992) report from the Dominican Republic that all the beach boys in question had one or more friends who had migrated to other countries assisted by their “tourist lovers”, and that they all provide a role-model for other beach boys who wish to migrate out of poverty. Yet, like Pruitt and LaFont (1995), their main focus is to explore and suggest definitions applicable to relationships between foreign females and beach boys (Herold et al. 2001).

In The Gambia, beach boys go by the name of ‘bumsters’ or ‘bomsa’ (Brown 1992:363), and in Senegal they are called “côtéman” (Venables 2009:1). Brown (1992) has a focus on how ‘bumsters’ in The Gambia may be seen as culture brokers, acting as mediators

between tourists and the resident population as well as playing the role of innovator in their local society. Along with others writing about beach boys, she points out the obvious ambition among beach boys to migrate to Europe or North America. Nyanzi, Rosenberg-Jallow, Bah, and Nyanzi (2005), also studying in The Gambia, look at how these young men discuss, fantasize about, and aspire towards travelling to “a better place”. They emphasize the embodiment of racial myths about “Black bodies” and “Western affluence” that is connected to this phenomenon (Nyanzi et al. 2005).

In Indonesia, Dahles and Bras (1999:284) note that beach boys there share a dream of acquiring a ticket to one of the “promised lands” where their “true loves” (the foreign females) come from. They have looked at how entering into a sexual relationship with a Western female poses a challenge to self-employed young men, referred to as beach boys, in Indonesian tourism destinations. Concurring to the various challenges of seducing tourist women they have, as mentioned, enhanced the aspect of self-employed young men (beach boys) as “romantic entrepreneurs”.

Drawing attention to the area in question, it is useful to consider the work done by Kibicho (2009), Jamison (1999), and Peake (1989), who have all included beach boys in their studies from Malindi. Kibicho’s (2009) study is related to tourism analysis, while both Peake (1989) and Jamison (1999) have written about the impact of tourism on Malindi and its residents. All the while, both Kibicho (2009:176) and Peake (1989:212) emphasize that the ultimate ambition for beach boys is to set up a business of their own rather than migrating out of the country. When looking back at my initial research objectives, and comparing them with the material collected during fieldwork in Malindi, the main adjustment needed is to dissociate from the assumption that beach boys want to migrate to Europe or North-America. Through prioritizing money, beach boys in Malindi distinguish themselves from beach boys in the studies from other countries mentioned above. However, the comparative material presented here will be made use of throughout the thesis as it relates closely to the various topics that will be addressed. Thus, my material distances itself from other studies that base beach boys’ actions on the wish to migrate.

Beach boys or Beach operators?

In the very beginning of my search for beach boys in Malindi, I was told by some of the local elders to go look at the beach. By an *askari* (security guard), I was told that there are four

types of people spending time at the beach; beach boys, beach mamas, beach Maasais⁵ and beach children. Another young man I talked to divided beach boys into those who sell souvenirs, those who sell boat trips and *safaris*, and those who aim at offering themselves as improvised guides for tourist. Kibicho (2009:116) points to three categories of “beach operators” that are recognized by the Kenyan government; curio-dealers, local boat operators, and *safari* sellers. The ones who do not fit into one of these categories are considered “beach boys”; sex workers, moneychangers, self-styled interpreters and guides, drug traffickers and food hawkers (Kibicho 2009:116). However, I was several times told by local residents that the people who frequent the beach are often involved with most of the activities there, like prostitution (as facilitators or sex workers), informal tour-operation, sale of souvenirs, and dealing of drugs. This relates to what Kibicho (2009:116) writes about how beach boys spread themselves thinly over a wide range of deals, to cushion themselves from uncertainty rather than specializing in one of them. Peake (1989), who has also done research on beach boys in Malindi, notes that it is only the wider society that refers to these young men as “beach boys”. Instead, they make use of the terms “hustler” and “playboy” to describe themselves (Peake 1989:210). During my stay in Malindi I found that they would prefer to be called “beach operators”, instead of “beach boys” although this was not always consistent. Peake did his fieldwork in Malindi some 30 years ago, and since then things seem to have changed. I was told that beach boys were viewed in a more negative way before, but that they now have become organized and sell safaris, albeit informally. Recalling the categorizations of beach operators and beach boys by the Kenyan government, it may seem that so-called beach boys are, in recent times, attempting to move towards a more positive labelling of their practices.

The preference of the term beach operator relates to their connection to local tour-companies as informal workers; they attempt to persuade tourists to book *safaris*, or boat trips; escorting them to the booking-offices to get their commission (which is ten percent of the price paid) if successful. Narrowing it down, beach boys in this case may be said to be the young men spending time at the beach looking for tourists who would possibly book a *safari*. Further, this is used intentionally as a platform to initiate contact with female tourists. This way, they set the basis for further interaction, possibly joining the tourists on trips, and hence creating the possibility of a romantic relationship to develop. The emphasis on romance, and the seduction process, is here important. The amount of energy and thought that beach boys put into the crucial starting phase of the interaction with the foreign female tourist highlights

⁵ The Maasai are one of the Kenyan ethnic groups, located in central Kenya and northern Tanzania.

the aspect of romance (whether it is said to be genuine or not), and can be said to be one of the distinctive factors of this phenomenon. As my two closest friends among the beach boys agreed; the term romance tourism, posed by Pruitt and LaFont (1995), may be the most accurate term for describing the overall aspects of this phenomenon. When it comes to describing the young males I will continue to make use of the term beach boys in lack of a better descriptive term, all the while having highlighted the problematic aspects of thereby relating them to various categorizations of the young men who frequent the beaches in Malindi. I thus choose a middle-way between internal categories and external views.

Methodological considerations

I am, and was, acutely aware that the topic of this study is a highly sensitive one, which demands stringent ethical clarity. Taking into account that such clarity may have been challenged by elements that were invisible or incomprehensible to me as a researcher, both before and after fieldwork, I have tried to handle the information I got with the utmost caution. The names of both beach boys and others, as well as the names of hotels and bars, throughout this thesis have all been altered. Through making use of fictive names, aside from when mentioning geographical places, I aim to preserve the anonymity of the people included in this study. It is also important to point out that I made sure the beach boys in question were aware of their option of controlling what information (concerning them) I would make use of.

The method I chose to use as a way of gathering information was participant observation, which entails involvement and participation in various activities of the ones studied, or in other words; I attempted to observe while taking part in what was going on. In the beginning I set out to use both interviews and tape recording to supplement the participant observation. However, this complicated my interaction with beach boys as they became acutely aware of the fact that I was writing down or recording their words. Although I never concealed from them that I wrote down all interaction when I got home, or at times in my notebook while out, it nevertheless made them uneasy and distracted when I, in the beginning, took out my book or tape recorder while talking to them. The best way to learn about beach boys and their lives then became through conversation and interaction on a daily basis. I would also at times sum up what I had written down previously and ask them whether it was consistent with their understanding of what had been said, or what had happened. Having said this, my presence must also be accounted for, as would seem proper considering my partaking

in the various incidents that will function as basis for further reflection. As Okely and Callaway writes; “the race, gender, age, nationality and personal history of the fieldworker will necessarily affect the process, interaction and emergent material one collects” (1992:xi). Considering my own background; being a 25 year old Norwegian woman, looking just like any other tourist in the area, I partially fit into the description of someone who is a ‘target’ for eager beach boys.

In this respect, Venables’ (2009) article, about conducting fieldwork in Senegal on so-called ‘côtéman’ (beach boys), is of relevance here. She examines some of the difficulties that she encountered during her doctoral fieldwork on beach boys of the Casamence, Senegal, and how it often led to compromising situations that she was unfamiliar with. Venables (2009:5) writes that her interviews with beach boys were affected by sexual tension, and that she had to be acutely aware of how encouraging gestures could be misinterpreted as flirtation. She wanted to maintain a professional relationship with her informants but seemed to find it difficult without appearing rude and ungrateful towards them. The same predicament was highly relevant in my own fieldwork. I decided to be friendly while at the same time enhancing my role as someone’s wife (which became natural to tell people, as my husband is also Kenyan). Also, avoiding living in the same house, or area, with the beach boys I interacted with was done deliberately. I managed to rent a small house on the north side of Malindi Town and used about 10 minutes by motorbike every day to get to the beach or town itself. My days during the peak season were normally spent on the beaches (during daytime) and in town (during night time). When the low season started I normally spent my days in the areas where the beach boys lived, or in town. Common for these two periods of time was the time spent with beach boys. Although I prepared myself for the challenges of this particular fieldwork before arriving in Malindi, I was nevertheless ‘thrown into’ a range of various situations where my role as anthropologist was put to a test.

At this point it is worth dwelling for a moment on the very idea of participant observation. Geertz (1989) writes that “participant observation” turns out to be more a wish than a method itself, while Bourdieu (2003) presents the question of whether it is possible to be both subject and object simultaneously; being the one who acts as well as the one who watches himself act. While in traditional anthropology the subjectivity of the author was separated from the objectivity of the text, the recent decades have been shaped by the anthropologist’s own accounts and insight into the challenges related to participant observation and ethnographic experience in general (Clifford and Marcus 2010:14). This difficulty relates to in what degree an anthropologist should include himself in the research

product. Geertz (1989:84) raises the problem of representing the research process in the research product, or as he writes, “how to get an I-witnessing author into a they-picturing story”. Further, he suggests that one way of solving this issue is to construct an I-witnessing style ethnography; bringing the field work as personal encounters, and ethnography as reliable encounters, together in a diary form (Geertz 1989:84). Yet, Geertz (1989:89) dismisses to a certain degree such an approach when he questions the feasibility of what has been called “the diary disease”; working up a private self for public presentation.

Bourdieu (2003:282), on the other hand, is critical to what Geertz calls, after Barthes, “the diary disease”, and points to the need for “participant objectivation”. In an approach to manage the difficulty of being both a subject and an object as an ethnographer, Bourdieu (2003:282) proposes “the objectivation of the subject of objectivation”; that is the researcher. In other words, he stresses the need for presenting the researcher as well as the research product. However, Bourdieu (2003:282) does not suggest an exploration of the “lived experience” of the anthropologist, but rather an exploration of the social conditions of that same experience; its limits and effects, and of the act of objectification itself. Although this may be seen as the ideal here, the limited scope of this particular research restricts the amount of exploration around my own social conditions for the process of objectification. I nevertheless support Bourdieu (2003:287) when he writes about the artificial aspect of not placing the researcher into the research. Following this, I have chosen to include myself in the final research product in an attempt to give honest descriptions of my observations, all the while revealing the challenges of being subject and object at once. Participant observation may be the only method used here, but it is not made use of without having reflected upon some of the challenges attached to such an approach when gathering information about beach boys in Malindi. Further, an illustration of the various difficulties I met during fieldwork should also be presented in the outset of this thesis.

Implications of interactions

The first few days I began frequenting the beaches, I was always approached by several beach boys. During the weeks that followed, I met most of the beach boys that operated on Silver Sands. I also met with several of them in the afternoons and evenings, either to visit their homes or to have a drink and talk. In the beginning this was my biggest challenge because I did not yet know whom to trust, what or whom would be considered dangerous, or especially

how they perceived me. I rarely felt completely safe together with the beach boys because I knew that most of them wanted to seduce me in one way or another. An incident with one of the first beach boys I encountered demonstrated this. I had met Kazungu together with his brother for a coffee in town before he asked me to join him into the apartment that his brother's Italian girlfriend had rented for them. Without suspecting anything, I went inside the apartment; soon realizing that his aim was to get me into one of the bedrooms. Somewhat startled, I managed to manoeuvre my way out of there. Incidents like that made the first months of my fieldwork more challenging than expected. This partially changed when I, after a few weeks, met what would turn out to be two of the most important people helping me in the process of collecting information about beach boys in Malindi. I refer to them as Lolani and Juma. They are both Giriyama⁶ beach boys, and in their presence I was always looked after and 'protected' – although this at times resulted in uncomfortable situations itself. Becoming friendly with them, and learning about their lives in detail, I also had to show them 'respect' and prove my loyalty. By this I refer to my relation to others; both other residents and beach boys, and in particular the tourists.

My interaction with foreign females, or tourists in general, was limited as a result of my aim of proving to be loyal and trustworthy to the beach boys I interacted with. If I was to spend a vast amount of time together with Italian women (the same women the beach boys were either attempting to seduce, or had already successfully seduced) it would probably have added to the difficulties of gaining their trust. Except for one Italian woman that I encountered, I rarely interacted with Western tourist throughout the six months I spent in Malindi. Hence, my accounts of beach boys is confined to their lives and practices, with little input on how the female foreigners experience the same interaction aside from accounts of this from beach boys themselves. Although some may argue a problematic side of this, it is possible to say that I might not have been able to have interacted as closely with the beach boys as I did if I had chosen to include accounts of the foreign females partaking in romance tourism. In other words, I chose to focus on beach boys at the expense of accounting for the foreign females' side of the (romantic) interaction. In addition to that, it was (for obvious reasons) difficult for me to closely observe the intimate interaction between beach boys and their foreign 'girlfriends'. Some of the foreign women involved with beach boys even specifically told their 'boyfriends' to avoid me at the beach; taking alternative routes to avoid walking passed me.

⁶ The Giriyama are an ethnic group, part of the Mijikenda ethnic group, and will be elaborated on in chapter 2.

The relations I had with Lolani and Juma also extended to affect my relations with other residents. At times my loyalty to them would be at the expense of my relations with other beach boys and local residents. Spending so much time with two of the beach boys, I was automatically linked to them as their *manzi* (girl). An evening I was out for drinks with another (former) beach boy called Kavuu, we were followed by Lolani and Juma all night while moving from bar to bar. They claimed it was coincidental, but when Lolani later called to say that they do not trust Kavuu, and that they think I should be more careful about whom I spend time with, I understood that their aim was to watch over me. In turn, this made Kavuu upset, which led to an ongoing tension between the two parties, at least for the rest of my stay in Malindi. The friends I made in Malindi, mostly up-county Kenyans working in the formal tourist industry, gave continuous warnings about beach boys and their “bad behaviour”. When I still continued to spend most of my time with them, despite the warnings, those friends viewed me as somewhat naive; placing me within the category of “all the other *wazungu*” (who are seen to “love” beach boys). On a different note, both Lolani and Juma found it incomprehensible that I could be friends with some of the people I knew. They several times referred to my closest male friend (a waiter in Malindi) as a kind of “wannabe”, and were at times also concerned about my interaction with Kenyan women, who they argued were *malayas* (prostitutes), and hence “a bad influence on me”. Nonetheless, my focus remained on the beach boys as we gradually came to trust each other more.

Concerning my interaction with the beach boys, it was not always uncomplicated. This was based on the way I wanted them to perceive me; on the one hand attempting to be less evident, and on the other attempting to give off the impression that I knew a lot and could protect myself. The former is, maybe needless to say, something that is required for an anthropologist in attempting to get a glimpse of various situations and interaction as if one is not present. The latter, however, is related to the situation I placed myself in. Being alone, I made an effort to seem less uncomfortable than I actually was, and hence; less vulnerable, with the aim of not ending up in situations I could not have managed. Through making use of information about the locality, ethnic groups and various issues concerning Kenya, including knowledge of the local language, probably influenced their impression of me as someone other than a tourist. However, it was the details I knew about witchcraft and magic, specific to their ethnic group, which astounded the beach boys. I obtained most of this information through other friends in Kenya as well as ‘putting two and two together’ from various conversations with Giriama beach boys. Towards the end of my stay, one of the beach boys, Lolani, confessed to me that they had always seen me as a witch; serving as an explanation

for why I was not scared to join them out after dark, or to visit their home-villages. He added that it would also explain how a *mzungu* (a white person/European) could know so much about (Giryama) *juju* (witchcraft). This may resemble what Barth writes about from his fieldwork with the Baktaman people; where his skills in remembering (or, in fact writing things down) are interpreted by them to mean that he has prior knowledge about everything in their society and is hence treated with respect and given high ranking in their community (1980:26). Regardless, to be seen as a witch by some of the beach boys shows the complexities of trying to interpret others' behaviour while in fact being interpreted yourself.

Chapter outline

In chapter 2, I present the area of Malindi; its history and its residents. In doing this I attempt to provide a basic backdrop for the issues explored throughout this thesis. Shedding light on the ethnic diversity of Kenya in general and Malindi in particular, is essential in looking at interrelations between local residents. A majority of beach boys in Malindi are Giryama, and is something that deserves attention. Aside from the variety of ethnic groups, tourism, and its major influence on daily life in Malindi, will also be taken into account here. In relation to tourism, the revealing presence of Italians has to be considered as well.

In chapter 3, I move on to placing the beach boys within these surroundings. In order to create an image of how they appear, I describe their specific style, both in terms of clothing and behaviour. Their so-called macho behaviour relates to their dealings with foreign women, and is linked to local ideas about gender roles as well as it can be said to be embedded in the overall aspect of the presentation of self. While beach boys keep their notions private their actions are there for public display. I explore the various tactics applied by beach boys who aim at acquiring money through relationships with foreign females, enhancing the aspects that separate beach boys in other countries and from beach boys in Malindi.

In chapter 4, the economical characteristics tied to the activities and goals of beach boys are accentuated. In approaching these romantic relationships as reciprocal interaction the focus here will be on the exchange of money, gifts, intimacy and affection. From this, the idea of sex exchange, and whether or not beach boys should be seen as sex workers, will be explored. Through connecting beach boys to their locality as profit-seekers, I here propose the term entrepreneurs as an option.

In chapter 5, the relevance of looking at global or transnational flows makes itself apparent through focusing on how beach boys are connected to various social fields of different sizes. Through historicizing globalization it is possible to include a perspective in time, and not just space, as they act within the framework of Malindi. While at the same time avoiding to make this a study of tourism, I place beach boys within the context of the meeting between social spaces made possible through the compression of time and space, here manifested by tourism in Malindi.

Chapter 2

‘DESTINATION’ MALINDI

This chapter will serve as a broad introduction to the site of Malindi. By describing the topographical appearance of the area, and introducing some of its history, I hope to create a deeper understanding of the context surrounding the focus of this research; which is beach boys and their relations to foreign females. Considering the multi-ethnic reality in Kenya, this chapter also contains a focus on the various ethnic groups living and coexisting in Malindi. Moving on to the realities of today’s Malindi, it will be impossible to ignore the importance of tourism to this town. Tourism has had a continuous development in the area, and it is said it has for the last two decades been dominated by Italians. By shedding some light on the Italians, I want to show how their presence in Malindi, as both residents and tourists, is impossible to ignore. Finally, by looking at beach boys and their relation to the context portrayed in this chapter, I aim to create a solid framework for further exploration in the chapters to come.

The Malindi area

Malindi is said to be historic as it has journeyed through eras from the time of early Arab and Chinese traders, Portuguese adventurers, and European settlers. Malindi is peaceful and quiet, but can also be vibrant and chaotic at times (see map 1 and 2). During the day the streets are full of people while there are cars, *matatus*⁷, and *Bajajes*⁸ taking people from one place to another. On the streets, hawkers are trying to sell whatever they are carrying around with them, and people usually exchange a few words when passing each other. The striking mixture of Arabs, Africans, Indians, and Europeans in the streets of Malindi creates the feeling of being somewhere unique. The sounds of Swahili, English, Italian, languages of various Kenyan ethnic groups or combinations of these, will surround you. There are two principal roads crossing through the centre of Malindi Town; one coming from Mombasa and leading towards Lamu⁹ in the north, and the other starting in Malindi heading for Tsavo

⁷ It is said that the word *matatu* derives from the Swahili word for “three” because it used to cost three Kenyan shillings to ride in a *matatu*. A *matatu* is usually a minibus, or other public transportation in Kenya.

⁸ *Bajaj* is a specific brand of motorcycle and, along with the brand *Honda*, normally refers to any motorcycle, either for private use or public transport, in Malindi.

⁹ Lamu is an island about 100 kilometres northeast of Malindi.

National Park in the east. The centre of town is relatively small and easy to navigate through (see map 2). Malindi Old Town is located in the southern part of town and houses most of the Swahili population in Malindi (who are said to be the only indigenous ethnic group to the town). The houses in Old Town are built close together creating small passages between them. Some of the houses have two or three storeys, and most of them are white in colour. Mosques are a part of the scenery in Old Town as well as Malindi in general. The centre of town consists of traditional *dukas*¹⁰ (shops) and larger stores that sell clothes or electrical equipment, as well as markets where you find fresh fruit and vegetables of all kinds. Narrow streets filled with people, motorbikes, and *tuk-tuks*¹¹, lead you past houses and stores from one end of town to the other. The northern part of town is where most of the Western-style restaurants and supermarkets, especially Italian, are located. You find restaurants that have signs in Italian; inviting you to eat or to surf the internet. Because of the high number of tourists in this area there are also more hawkers and street-sellers here.

The north and south coasts of Malindi consist of bigger hotels and several private houses owned by Europeans. Some live here permanently, while others visit once in a while and rent their houses out to other Europeans rest of the year. Therefore, the roads leading north and south from Malindi Town are quiet and empty with only fences and various signs (aimed at thieves) that show there are people living there; warning others to keep away. While the areas closest to the beach are occupied by Europeans, the other side of the roads, towards the west, is populated by Kenyans. Surrounding the town of Malindi are several settlements, planned and unplanned, both from the coast province and from up-country. These settlements can range from small towns to clearings with a few huts in the forest hinterland. Immediately outside Malindi Town you find larger settlements with three-story buildings consisting of apartments, and various arrangements where people and families live in separate rooms under the same roof but share a toilet and a bathroom. These settlements are growing fast and they have their own *dukas*, bars, and other facilities. Passing these settlements you reach more vegetated areas where you find smaller villages. It is in areas like these that Giriyama (who have inhabited this area since the nineteenth century) and other Mijikenda¹² groups live with their families. Some (mostly of the younger generation) leave their families and migrate into urban centres, or the bigger settlements closer to Malindi Town. This is what most of the

¹⁰ *Duka* is a small shop, or kiosk, selling a variation of food, sweets and drinks amongst other things.

¹¹ A *tuk-tuk* is a mode of public transport in the form of a motor vehicle with three wheels, also referred to as a *rickshaw* in some countries.

¹² *Mijikenda* derives from the word nine, and consists of nine closely related Bantu groups, one of them being the Giriyama.

beach boys have done; living with their wives in the settlements close to town, while their extended families stay in the hinterlands, continuing their traditional lifestyle and land cultivation. These villages consist of huts surrounding an open space. Around the huts are plots of land that they cultivate. Maize, potatoes and other crops are grown for subsistence use. You may find in these villages small churches or mosques as some are Muslims due to intermarriages with the Swahili, but the majority are either Christian or they believe in other Gods or their own ancestors.

The Sabaki River¹³ drains its water into the Indian Ocean some kilometres north of Malindi Town. This causes the sea to turn ‘brown’ in that area. As a result of this, the more popular and ‘clean’ beaches are found on the south side of town. These are Silver Sands and The Marine Park (see map 2). One can walk from the town centre or take a *tuk-tuk* or a *Bajaj* to get there. This is also where some of the bigger hotels are situated; along the roads leading south, and along the beach called Silver Sands. At times the white sand here is covered with seaweed that has been washed ashore from the ocean. A coral reef is located some 500 meters from the shoreline, and is possible to reach by foot during low tide. Palm trees provide shade in some places but most of them are within the various hotels’ private property along Silver Sands. There is a brick wall, normally with stairways for the guests to have access to the beach, separating the public beach from the hotel properties. Silver Sands stretches a few kilometres south towards The Marine Park. Separating Silver Sands from The Marine Park is a place the local residents call Jakuzi. There is a giant rock creating small caves and there are shallow pits in the sand where water gets heated up by the sun during low tide. The Marine Park is guarded by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) personnel and is an area where the natural coral reef and sandy beaches are protected. There is a small shop here where you can buy food and drinks, and it is also possible to rent sun-beds. This is where many of the boats¹⁴ are anchored, and where the captains of the boats spend their days while waiting for tourists to accept offers of going to the reef, or to one of the islands close by, in their boats.

Most of the tourists visiting Malindi are to be found in these areas during day time; either at Silver Sands, Jakuzi, or The Marine Park. Some go for longer walks along one or both of the beaches. At night time the tourists normally move into town; visiting the restaurants and clubs. The majority of tourists come to Malindi during European winter time; when it is cold in Europe and warm in Kenya. Because of its location along the coast, just a

¹³ The river is also named the Galana River.

¹⁴ The boats at The Marine Park are usually used for taking tourists out to see the coral reef and to feed the fish. The boats are therefore so-called glass-bottom boats, where one is able to see under water while inside the boat.

little south of the equator, Malindi has rainy seasons; where the “long rains” are from April to July and “short rains” during October and November. It is generally hot and humid around the year and the average daily temperature ranges between 22 degrees Celsius minimum, and 29.5 degrees Celsius maximum. It will get warmer and more humid right before the long rains begin, while the lowest temperatures are experienced during the rainy seasons. As a result, the rainy seasons, with their low temperatures, relate to the peak and off-peak tourist seasons. Malindi’s location and climate is a significant, if not the most significant, factor of the position Malindi has as a tourist destination. Most tourists plan their vacation in Malindi according to the rainy seasons. This affects the local residents as many of them are directly or indirectly connected to the tourism industry. Malindi’s location and climate can also be said to be relevant to its history and development up until today; its strategic position along the East African Swahili coast has attracted traders and settlers since before the beginning of this century.

Historical overview

According to historical and more recent archaeological reports, it is likely that Malindi was founded in the early thirteenth century by Arabs (Martin 1973:10). These were traders who came by sea and settled down along the East African coast. They are said to have started and developed Malindi as a town. The dominant religion in the area became Islam, introduced by the Arabs. The language, *Kiswahili*¹⁵, developed as a dialect from the interaction between Arabs and the African dwellers in the Malindi area. What might be referred to as the Portuguese era begins later, in the year 1498, when the Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama and his crew spent nine days in Malindi before heading to India (Martin 1973:18). The king of Malindi and his people initiated a friendly relationship with the Portuguese. This relationship continued throughout the sixteenth century, and resulted in Malindi becoming the centre of all Portuguese activity north of Mozambique (Martin 1973:18). A popular tourist attraction today is the Pillar of Vasco da Gama; a coral pillar erected at that time by Vasco da Gama in Malindi Town. Malindi was one of the central city-states of the Swahili civilization along the East African coast (Jamison 1999:949). Mombasa was also an important centre of trade and even though Malindi was a real threat to Mombasa (as the centre for trade) it still did not have a natural harbour like Mombasa did. Its location made it complicated for ships to enter

¹⁵ *Kiswahili* is the Swahili term for the Swahili language.

Malindi. Unlike Mombasa, Malindi was not an island, which made it more difficult to protect the town from attacks on land. Eventually, in the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese built Fort Jesus in Mombasa and decided to move their capital there instead.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Sultan of Zanzibar came to control most of the East African coastal towns, including Malindi. During the Zanzibar period, slaves were used to help cultivate local products like grain, coconuts, bananas, maize, and mangoes (Martin 1973:57-61). Slaves who were set free, or escaped, often “joined Giriama clans” and settled down along the coast (Brantley 1981:60). The next period to come was the British colonization of Kenya that started in 1895 and lasted until 1924 (Martin 1973:73). It was not until the second period of the British colonization, from 1925 to 1963, that the foundation was laid for the most important part of Malindi’s economy today, that is, tourism. In the beginning of the 1930’s hotels were built and opened, and towards the end of the decade there had been a moderate increase of tourists coming to Malindi (Martin 1973:101-103). During the last two decades of the British period the population of Malindi grew noticeably, mostly because of the new European population that had arrived after the end of the Second World War (Martin 1973:106). Kenya celebrated its independence from Britain in 1963, which also resulted in European residents from upcountry retiring and settling down in Malindi Town (Martin 1973:106). Besides cash crop farming, Kenya had little source of foreign income. A new focus on tourism developed in Kenya, aiming particularly at coastal areas like Malindi.

Population and ethnic groups

The peoples of the Kenyan coast are the Swahili, from Arabic and Islamic heritage, and after them; Mijikenda. Most of them speak *Kiswahili*, but Mijikenda groups (like Giriama) also have their own languages. The population of Malindi around the year 1500 was an ethnically mixed group of people, as it is today, including Africans, Arabs and Indians (Martin 1973:25). Arabs were originally the ruling class in Malindi as they governed and owned most of the shops and plantations in the area (Martin 1973:26). Many of the Arabs who had come to Malindi did not bring their wives but married instead African women (Martin 1973:27). The combination of Arab and African is normally referred to as Swahili, or Afro-Arab (Brantley 1981), and is usually a debated example of ethnic classification in African culture (Jamison 1999:952). Another major ethnic group in Malindi is Indians (or Asians), who have been trading along the East African coast from at least the start of the century, although the exact

time they first settled down in coastal towns is uncertain (Martin 1973:27). Giriyama¹⁶, who is the largest Mijikenda group, probably originated in southern Somalia, and migrated south as the land was no longer sufficient for their slash and burn technique¹⁷ (Martin 1973:76). They arrived close to the Sabaki River, some miles north of Malindi Town, around the year 1890 (Martin 1973:76). Because an ethnic group already there; Galla¹⁸, had problems with the tsetse fly¹⁹, and hence had to move to another place with their cattle, Giriyama were able to practice their subsistence farming close to Malindi (Martin 1973:76-77).

In the very beginning of the twentieth century, the British, who were ruling at that time, were continuously harassing Giriyama by introducing a “hut tax” (which was collected using any means possible) and were also giving Giriyama very low priority within the government (Martin 1973:77). Giriyama were scared to appear in town for many decades because of the poor treatment they were receiving from British colonists. As a result of this they did not participate in the economy of Malindi; over ninety-five percent of all business transactions were carried on by Arabs and Indians (Martin 1973:79). The long term effect of the harsh treatment of Giriyama by the British was that upcountry Kenyans were being hired as labourers in Malindi town instead of Giriyama (Martin 1973:92). Giriyama, and their history in Malindi as well as their relations with other ethnic groups, is of importance in learning about beach boys (who are, as I will get back to, mostly Giriyama).

There has been an increase in the ethnic diversity of the population of Malindi as upcountry ethnic groups have moved towards the coast of Kenya to take advantage of opportunities that are offered in the tourism industry (Jamison 1999:951). The language here is mostly *Kiswahili*, but also English and Italian, as well as the other Mijikenda dialects. All different ethnic groups in Kenya have their own languages, but most people speak *Kiswahili* while interacting with each other in town²⁰. Many Kenyans in Malindi speak Italian, especially those working with tourists, because of the large number of Italian residents and tourists here. In addition to dealing with Europeans, and other tourists, the residents of Malindi have to relate to one another. It seems to make a difference whether you are Giriyama, Italian, German, or from upcountry (for example Akamba, Luhya, Kikuyu, Luo, Kisii), Indian Kenyan or Swahili. As mentioned, the population of Kenya is highly multi-ethnic and consists

¹⁶ This ethnic group is both referred to as Giriyama and Giriama.

¹⁷ This is an agricultural technique which involves cutting and burning forest to create fields.

¹⁸ Galla is the name of the ethnic group that used to inhabit the area around Malindi before the late nineteenth century.

¹⁹ The tsetse fly is a large, biting fly who feeds off blood from animals while transmitting diseases.

²⁰ Younger people from cities like Nairobi also use a mixture of English and Swahili referred to as *sheng*.

of several groups and sub-groups. An important factor is tribalism²¹, where each group has a certain stereotype connected to their ethnicity that most Kenyans are aware of. This is also the case in Malindi, and people are often prejudged according to the group they belong to. Somewhat surprisingly I realized that Italian residents also make use of such stereotypes about Kenyans of various ethnic groups. This became obvious during a lunch I was invited to through a friend of mine.

I meet with Elisabeth, a house girl²² working for an Italian man and his wife living in Malindi, at the beach and I am invited by her boss to have lunch at their house. During lunch the man, Lorenzo, manage to ask me if I have a husband. I tell them that my husband is a Kenyan Luo (from up-country). Lorenzo explains, with Italian and English words accompanied by hand gestures, that he likes “the Luos” and that they are “good”. He says that here in Malindi there are only a few Luos, and mostly “stupid Giryama” (a common stereotype about Giryama in Kenya). Elisabeth is standing by the table and Lorenzo points at her, saying that Akamba (another ethnic group from up-country) are *malayas*²³ (prostitutes). They all laugh, including Elisabeth herself, who is Akamba. Lorenzo adds that Kikuyu (the largest group in Kenya) “are thieves”. I ask if they have Kenyan or European neighbours and Lorenzo’s wife tells me that the next door neighbours are German. Lorenzo says that they are “stupid too” and that they have created many problems for him.

The word *malaya* is degrading and signifies someone who sells sex for money (Elisabeth regularly had sex with Lorenzo as part of her job), and is something I will get back to in the following chapters. It seems that Kenyans are not the only ones to make use of stereotypes about other ethnic groups. Aside from ideas about each ethnic group, there also exists a division between groups from the coast and the up-country groups as well as divisions between the European residents in Malindi (as I was told several times). The most direct impetus behind the ethnic diversity in Malindi is the attractiveness of Malindi as a tourist destination and hence the financial opportunities related to tourism for both up-country Kenyans and others. Many people from up-country, who have migrated to the coast in order to find jobs, have grown up here and some of them consider it to be their home. Despite this, some coastal inhabitants believe that the jobs here belong to them and not to the other ethnic

²¹ Tribalism refers to the strong ethnic identity that one has in belonging to an ethnic group, or so-called “tribe”, separating oneself from other people in other ethnic groups.

²² A house girl is more or less the same as a house maid. The usual tasks performed by the house girl is cleaning the house and clothes as well as cooking and serving.

²³ The word *malaya* is used as the Swahili word for prostitute (often referring to female prostitutes).

groups. During a conversation with a Giriama boy and a Kikuyu woman (from up-country, but working in Malindi) this topic was brought up. We started talking about jobs in Malindi.

Baraka, who is Giriama, thinks that people from upcountry steal the jobs that are here in Malindi. Beatrice, who is Kikuyu, says that the Giriama would not get the jobs anyway because of their lack of education. Baraka agrees that most Giriama do not value education as much as other “tribes”²⁴ in Kenya. He still thinks, he says, that the jobs here at the coast should be exclusively for the coastal people (like Mijikenda and Swahili) and he adds that most Giriyamas want up-country peoples to go back where they came from. Beatrice tells us that she has no problem with the Giriama, but that she dislikes the Swahili as she claims they always try to con her.

Although both Beatrice and Baraka can see each others point of view, they nevertheless disagree on this topic, as do many in Malindi. Aside from the division between up-country and coastal Kenyan ethnic groups, yet another group has settled down in Malindi for the same reasons as the upcountry group; namely Bajuni. They are originally from the southern coast of Somalia, and the northern parts of the Kenyan coast. They practice Islam and they are known to be skilful fishermen. Most Bajuni I met in Malindi have their families in Lamu, a coastal town north of Malindi, but live and work in Malindi because of the opportunities related to tourism. The relationship between Bajuni and Giriama in Malindi might be seen as an example of the difficulties that can arise from working side by side at the beach, trying to get in contact with tourists. I experienced this one day as I was walking along Silver Sands with a group of Giriama beach boys.

A Bajuni, Captain Isaac, from The Marine Park approaches me and asks what I am doing here “with all of these beach boys”. This question seems to provoke the beach boys as Lolani, Juma, David and his brother, all start yelling at him in Swahili. They object to the way he talked to me, telling him “*we enda!*” (“get lost!”). Captain Isaac just smiles at them and tells me in English that they are all jealous of him because he knows me. I feel somewhat stupid standing in the middle of the shouting-match between them and I try to end the conversation. After Isaac leaves, Lolani tells me that Isaac is Bajuni and that they (Giriyamas) do not like

²⁴ In Kenya they normally refer to ethnic groups as “tribes” on a regular basis.

Bajunis. Lolani says that all Bajuni men are “homosexuals” and that “they have sex with men all the time”²⁵.

One might question whether it was the tension between two ethnic groups or the relation between them and me that sparked hostility between the two parties here. It nevertheless points to what the beach boys portray as a century-long conflict between the Giriama and the Bajuni. A few weeks earlier I had also experienced the tension between the two ethnic groups while having a conversation with a fisherman who is also captain of a boat in Marine Park; Mustafa. I had asked Mustafa if he was from Malindi, and he told me he is Bajuni, originally from Lamu. He continued by telling me that Bajunis are fishermen, and that beach boys are all Giriama, and hence farmers. “They don’t understand the beach and the ocean, some of them can’t even swim”, Mustafa told me. He also said that another reason why he does not like beach boys is based on a general Kenyan norm that a man is supposed to take care of, and provide for his woman. This is reversed in the relationships between beach boys and tourist women, where the women provide for the men. “If a man doesn’t provide for his woman, he is not a man”, Mustafa concluded.

On the one hand it is possible to make use of Barth (1969) and his writings about social organization based on ethnic groups and boundaries; where Bajunis are against Giriama men ‘operating’ within their area. Although Barth refers to social boundaries, it is nevertheless relevant to compare our situation to his point of regarding ethnic identity as an imperative status, constraining all activity (1969:17). On the other hand, Mustafa points out that their deviation from Kenyan, or East African, gender roles are what makes him dislike Giriama beach boys. Although the relation between Giriama and Bajuni, or between up-country and coastal Kenyans, is portrayed here as negative, this may not always be the case. It might even be said that the tourism industry, and the way it affects people and businesses in Malindi, may have influenced dynamics between ethnic groups in other ways. Jamison (1999:944), who did research in Malindi, writes how his observations of inter-ethnic relations should be understood as having been mitigated by tourism. Still, and without having a large body of material on this, I dare to disagree when it comes to beach boys, as I witnessed several incidents of the quite opposite. At times it would appear as if the inter-ethnic relations were rather intensified as the competition for attention and success, in the form of interaction

²⁵ There is a high rate of intolerance for homosexuality in Kenya; it is also criminalized by law.

with tourists, would create cliques of beach boys and others at the beaches. This will be exemplified towards the end of this chapter as well as in chapter 3.

Tourism in Malindi

Malindi's more recent history is connected to the expansion of the town based on its status as a tourist destination. There have traditionally been two types of tourists in Malindi; East African residents, especially from Kenya, and overseas visitors from Western Europe (Martin 1973:249). Since the first chartered flight arrived in Malindi in 1965 there have been tourists arriving from England, France, Switzerland and Germany (Martin 1973:250). The tourist industry was (and still is) the largest single employer in Malindi, not only because of the hotel-jobs but also the travel agencies, estate agents or agencies, deep-sea services, and various cafes and shops around town (Martin 1973:258). The first tourists to arrive, during the 1920s and 1930s, were British, while German investors showed interest in Malindi as a tourist destination in the 1960s (Jamison 1999:950). Italians began arriving for the same reasons during the early 1980s, building more hotels and establishing tour companies (Jamison 1999:950). By bringing in foreign currency, employing local residents and making use of local food and products, tourism was directly influencing the economy of Malindi and the hotels were thus increasing the well-being of the community (Martin 1973:263). Today, Malindi has a concentration of various facilities aimed at tourists like curio shops, travel agencies, internet cafes, bars, restaurants, guesthouses, as well as hotels and villas of international standards. The Malindi area has become a mass tourism destination, attracting people on the basis of sand, sun, sea and (to some extent) sex (Kibicho 2009:162).

An aspect of tourism in Malindi is the sex-trade. Some Western males travel, or move, to Malindi for this purpose alone. *Malayas* work along the beach or in town at night looking for 'clients'. Even though you may also find male prostitutes (both homosexual and heterosexual) this seems to be more hidden and not as openly portrayed as the female prostitution in Malindi. I experienced meeting many of the girls and women working as prostitutes both in town at night or at the beach during day time.

A day I was walking along Silver Sands I heard a friend of mine, Sofia, calling me and I went to sit down with her and a group of young women.

One of the girls, Helen, introduces herself to me and tells me that she is from Uganda. She is a hairdresser but she can not make enough money doing that so she works on the beach instead

(meaning prostitution). In Uganda, she says, it is not like in Malindi; you would be an outcast as a prostitute there. She says that everything is “a lot stricter” in Uganda than in Kenya. I ask all of the women what they do during a day like this. They tell me that they basically sit here waiting for white men to walk by; often Italians. Helen tells me that she is 27 years old and that this makes it harder for her to attract men. She says the men tell her she is too old and that they rather want girls as young as 15-16 years of age. I ask her why she thinks that is, and she says there are several reasons for this. Helen says the Italian men prefer young girls and that these men are “tricky” and know that they can exploit the girls easier than the older women. The young girls can have sex with them as long as the men have promised to pay for their rent, buy them a phone or other valuables, she says. After they have had sex, the men do not keep their promises; giving them nothing. Helen says that older girls, like her self, know how this works and will not as easily be fooled; they can often tell if the man is honest, but even then they do not trust anyone, she says. Helen tells me that all Italian men want anal-sex and she asks me if this is normal in Italy. I tell her that I would not know. She says that most of the girls here in Malindi do not want to do this but that they have to if they want to earn money. She adds that most of the men do not force girls to do something because they know there are plenty of girls who will do anything for money in Malindi.

Along with others who depend on tourism, these women have a difficult time when tourists stop coming to Malindi. The rainy seasons keep most of them away for periods of time. This forces hotel-owners and other tourist operators to lay-off or send some of their employees on unpaid leave until the peak-season arrives (Kibicho 2009:122). Whether a person is directly or indirectly related to tourism, it is said to be tough during low season; where large numbers of unemployed are looking for jobs. Neither Swahili nor Mijikenda can be said to be directly dependent on the industry, although both are depending on it indirectly (Jamison 1999:952). While Mijikenda often work for hotels, restaurants and as sales personnel, Swahili have taken over the transportation in town; buses and *matatus*, as well as local eateries in town (Jamison 1999:952). Indians seem to have benefitted on the need for Western groceries, and they run several of the Western oriented supermarkets in Malindi. It is nevertheless difficult to generalize on the basis of how an entire ethnic group relates to the tourism industry as a whole.

It is possible to see the effects of tourism on Malindi during off-peak season; the town itself becomes quiet, bars and restaurants are empty, and people tend to stay home in their houses instead of meeting up in town or in local bars. As mentioned, many of the hotels close down during this time, and there are only a few tourists to be spotted in town and along the

beaches. It is even possible to notice a difference in how Kenyan residents dress and behave during the absence of tourists, and more importantly, the jobs and money they bring to Malindi. When visiting a Giriama village with my friend Benny (who grew up close to Malindi but is originally from up-country), he told me about this.

On the path back to the main road we encounter a man with long dreadlocks, or “Rasta”²⁶, greeting Benny. I greet him too and I notice that he hides something behind his back while talking with us. Benny tells me after he has gone that he is a “retired beach boy” and that he is addicted to drugs, which he was hiding from us. Benny explains how this usually happens to beach boys after they “end their career or during low-season”; they are left with no money from the time they have spent on the beach or with *wazungu*²⁷. He tells me how beach boys are notorious for “wasting” the money they obtain. Come low season, he says, you will begin to see them selling their watches, jewellery, clothes and other things given to them from the female tourists. He also says that their entire attitude changes as well; they physically transform due to the lack of proper food and training (Benny illustrates by hunching his back).

When tourism is gone, it is thereby said to be visible in the way local residents dress, behave and act; in this case on beach boys. When focusing on tourism, it is necessary to take a look at the biggest group of European residents and tourists in Malindi; Italians. Because of the nature of this research, and as mentioned in the outset of chapter 1, I will not fully be able to explore Italians and their existence in Malindi. It is of importance however to portray some of the issues concerning Italians that I encountered during my stay in Malindi.

“Little Italy” on the Kenyan coast

A number of Italians have become permanent, or semi-permanent residents in Malindi and many of them own businesses here. In a Kenyan national newspaper, Daily Nation²⁸, it was noted how 80% of the Caucasian population in Malindi is Italian, while another 30,000 Italian tourists visit the town every year. At the time the article was written there were nearly thirty Italian-owned beach hotels, six safari lodges and hundreds of private homes in Malindi²⁹. Large parts of town are dominated by Italian restaurants, travelling agencies, internet cafes,

²⁶ In Malindi, and in Kenya in general, someone who wears their hair in dreadlock is referred to as “a Rasta”.

²⁷ Wazungu means white people or European in plural.

²⁸ [http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Malindis love hate affair with Italians /-/1056/925742/-/8phg56/-/index.html](http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Malindis%20love%20hate%20affair%20with%20Italians%20-%201056/925742/-/8phg56/-/index.html)

²⁹ [http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Malindis love hate affair with Italians /-/1056/925742/-/8phg56/-/index.html](http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Malindis%20love%20hate%20affair%20with%20Italians%20-%201056/925742/-/8phg56/-/index.html)

grocery stores, various companies and hotels. For this reason, Malindi is by some referred to as “little Italy”. Some Italians also own a lot of land and it is rumoured that Italian mafia make use of real-estate in Malindi to launder money. During a conversation with Mani, the owner of a small guesthouse in Malindi, he told me how he views tourism in Malindi, and the areas around, as a problem.

“The problem is mainly the Italians”, he says; money-laundering, mafia-activity, paying off the police and governmental officials, prostitution (also dealing with children), the demand for drugs, and many other issues. He also talks about how the tourists rarely leave behind any money after visiting, meaning money that can benefit the local population of Malindi. The tourists buy “all inclusive deals” at the hotels, which mean that they rarely buy food or drinks outside the hotel gates. Mani continues to stress the issue, saying that “Kenyans are poor, and tourism is not really helping”. He goes on to tell me how the Italian residents in Malindi have now started to demand commission themselves for recruiting other tourists (mainly Italians) to visit Malindi and use the various safari-operators and shops of different kinds. “They are taking over the town”, Mani says, and repeats throughout our conversation how “stupid and ugly” the Italians are. Mani finishes by asking me not to mention him by name as he is afraid of the Italians in town; “if anything were to happen between me and an Italian I would not go to the police”.

Mani obviously sees Italians as the problem. He has worked in the tourism industry since it started thriving in Malindi, and is more sympathetic to the tourists who used to visit Malindi in earlier times. As already mentioned, there used to be tourists from other nationalities visiting Malindi before Italians became a majority. I get this confirmed during a conversation with one of the fishermen at Marine Park.

I am sitting alone when a fisherman approaches me and asks a few questions; where I am from, what I am doing here and so on. He says that he is happy to meet someone from Norway and that he misses the times, about twenty years ago he says, when there used to be Germans, Dutch, and also Norwegians here in Malindi – and not only Italians. He tells me that he does not like Italians much. He thinks they have ruined business for the locals; him and the other men here at The Marine Park (mostly Bajunis) sell trips with boats out to the reef and to the closest islands. Further he tells me that Italian tourists book their trips in Italy – ‘all inclusive’ – through other Italians that live and do business here in Malindi. He concludes that because of this, the money from tourism does not reach the local population like it used to.

Besides these issues, that both Mani and the fisherman have told me about, I also get the impression that people in Malindi dislike the Italians and their behaviour (at least when talking about them). Walking along the beach with some of the beach boys; Baby Rasta, Bond, Brian, and the older Jacob, they told me about how they all view Italians as “sex-crazy.”

Bond tells me about an older white male having sex with a Kenyan *malaya* in the water, close to where we are standing, the day before. He tells me that people did not object to this because the man was white; assumed to have money and therefore respect. The others remind him of the time an Italian film-crew had set up the making of a porn-movie just at the north end of Silver Sands. The male actors were Italian and the females were Kenyan women. They all tell me that nothing was done to stop it and that people were just at the beach watching during the filming. Baby Rasta says that this would never have been tolerated if the producers of the movie were Kenyans, but since they were Italians nobody would say anything³⁰.

A few days later I am sitting in the sand with one of the boys who work at Marine Park renting out sun-beds. He points to a Kenyan woman and a white man with a group of children sitting close to us. James tells me that the white man, an Italian, paid off the former (Kenyan) husband of this woman to leave her and the kids they had. The man wanted to assume the role as her husband and the father of the children. The former husband left, and now the Italian man is the new husband and father. James tells me that there are many similar stories around Malindi about how some white men pay the women’s husbands to leave so that they can take over.

The fact that Italians, and probably other tourists, at times act inappropriate according to local traditions and rules, may be seen as increasing the negative aspects of tourism in Malindi. Along the lines of Bourdieu and his notion of symbolic power and capital (1990 [1977]), it is possible to suggest that being white in colour, or a *mzungu*, automatically provides power to a certain degree. What is more, being Italian in Malindi may also convey another symbolic power as Italians often relate to local Kenyan residents as their bosses or superiors. A majority of Italian residents own restaurants, hotels, or other companies where Kenyans are employed. Italian tourists are usually guests at hotels, customers at restaurants and bars, and often friends and relatives of residents who own businesses in Malindi. This is an important factor in the relation between Italians and other residents in Malindi. Although all tourists in

³⁰There are the strict rules, concerning behaviour along the beaches, based on the predominant Islamic religion in Malindi

Malindi are not Italian, and neither are all of the European residents, it is relevant here to focus on Italians as they are the dominating European nationality. Relating it to the relationships between beach boys and tourist women it is important to point out that most European women who are in relationships with Kenyan beach boys in Malindi are in fact Italian.

Giryama beach boys in Malindi

During my stay in Malindi, and my interaction with beach boys, I realized that only a handful of the beach boys are Swahili or Bajuni while the majority of them are Giryama. This is different than what is portrayed by Peake (1989), who did his fieldwork in Malindi on beach boys and their relationship with the Old Town elders between 1981 and 1982. Peake (1989:210) writes that beach boys are from different ethnic groups with a significant proportion from Old Town (where a majority of the residents are of the Swahili ethnic group). I did not encounter Swahili beach boys who interacted with female tourists in the form of romantic relationships. I did however come across a few Bajuni men who had, or used to have, relationships with elderly white women. I also realized the close bond within the ethnic divisions, especially related to beach boys, as does Peake (1989:211) when he writes that although there is little trust between these youths, the few trusted friends are almost always of the same ethnic group. An example of how tourism may directly affect the interaction between ethnic groups in Malindi, is a story I was told by a beach boy named Jonny at Silver Sands.

I ask Jonny how “business” is going and he tells me that it is going well; he did some business with a Scottish man the other day. He managed to persuade him to book a safari-trip which means that Jonny gets a ten percent commission of the price paid for that trip. We talk some more and Jonny tells me there was a fight yesterday at Silver Sands between a Giryama beach boy and a Bajuni beach boy (Jonny is Bajuni himself). Two beach boys had taken a few tourists out to the reef together. When they got back to the beach after the small trip, the tourists gave the payment to one of the two young men. The other ‘snapped’ the money out of his hand and started running (which one was Giryama, and which one was Bajuni he did not know). The two boys ended up in a physical fight and other beach boys had to get in between to stop them. Jonny explains that Silver Sands is divided into a Giryama area and a Bajuni area. The former is bigger because there are more Giryama beach boys than there are Bajuni beach boys.

This story provides an example of how tourism influences the local society, in this case particularly the ones that work on the beach. Recalling what Jamison (1999) wrote about ethnic groups in Malindi coming together in relation to the increasing tourism is here, in contrast, actually proving to have an additional dividing effect. In this study, the focus will be on Giriyama beach boys as they were the ones I got to know and learn about during my stay in Malindi.

Summary

As this chapter is intended to provide a basis for the other chapters, an attempt has been made to offer accounts of geographical and historical material concerning Malindi. In looking at the position of Malindi along the Swahili coast, its history of being a centre for trade highlights the aspect of including history in current studies. The ethnic diversity in Malindi and in Kenya in general, further implicates the need to include ethnicity when doing research on beach boys. The beach boys I encountered are Giriyama and as they have their own history and relations to other residents of Malindi their ethnicity is of importance. Tourism has also been enhanced as relevant to this study, in particular the great majority of Italians that have also, to some degree, settled down in Malindi. With its unique history, mixture of ethnic groups and nationalities, prevailing presence of Italians, as well as being a popular tourist destination for East Africans and Westerners, Malindi is home to a large number of beach boys. They are as much a part of the scenery of Malindi as the tourists and European residents, as well as other local residents. In the next chapter I wish to narrow the focus for now; aiming to provide a thorough presentation of the beach boys in question. In highlighting such aspects as appearance, behaviour, and the general presentation of self along with private notions and actions in general, an attempt will be made to portray a comprehensive picture of beach boys in Malindi.

Chapter 3

PUBLIC ACTIONS AND PRIVATE NOTIONS

In this chapter I attempt to describe beach boys' specific style and appearance, using Hebdige (1983) and his notion of style as intentional communication. The ways in which they interact with one another as well as the levels of organization between them will be enhanced by using Jenkins (2004) and his 'good to think with' distinction between groups and categories, as well as Goffman's (1959) notion of teams. Leaning on the approaches to "why people do things they do", suggested by Holy and Stuchlik (1983), I will exemplify the value of distinguishing, and looking at the relationship between, people's actions and notions. Focusing on how beach boys present themselves to others, through behaviour and appearance in relation to their own statements concerning motivations and goals, I make use of Goffman (1959) who draws on a theatrical angle and dramaturgical principles and concepts. He looks at how roles, presentation of self and impression management are fundamental features in every society, while I attempt to demonstrate such an approach to beach boys in Malindi. Along the lines of what Kibicho (2009) points out, beach boys may be said to act on ideas of masculinity as they perform what might be said to be a more feminine role in their relations with foreign women. In the process of exploring their actions I here argue that the inclusion of myself in the text, especially in relation to empirical cases, is vital to the prospects of attaining honest and balanced accounts of the beach boys I interacted with.

Beaches and boys

It is early morning and a light breeze from the ocean makes the heat from the sun seem less intense. I am walking along Silver Sands beach towards the area where the big hotels are located. As I stop to take off my flip-flops and carry them in my hand, I can hear someone shouting "*ciao! ciao!*" I notice the voice coming closer as the person is trying to catch up with me from behind. I turn around. A young man is smiling at me. He says "*ciao bella!*" He is wearing beige shorts and a black tank top matching his skin tone. I tell him in English that I do not speak Italian well and I greet him in Swahili instead; "*habari ya asubuhi?*" ("how is your morning?"). He seems to be delighted by this and tells me that he is Bajuni, originally from Lamu. As we continue walking side by side he asks where I come from. The question is followed by a row of other questions such as what my name is, where I live, whether I am

alone in Malindi and so on. While trying to answer the questions he touches my hand and tells me that he thinks I am “very beautiful” and that I “look nice”. Unsure of how to respond to this I smile and look away, spotting Jacob, an older man I had talked to a few days earlier. Jacob comes over to greet me and takes the attention away from the man I was speaking to. Both of them are trying to talk to me, ignoring each other completely.

The beach is curved and as the three of us round the corner, a long stretch of sand appears; with the ocean on the left side and the hotels on the right. From afar, people on the beach look like small dark spots against the bright sand. As we walk closer I notice a cluster of about 20 to 30 young men standing around the stairway leading up to Karibu Hotel. Others are lining up by the brick wall separating the public beach from the hotel property. There is a uniformed *askari* standing on the brick wall with a baton in his hand. His job is to make sure no one, apart from the hotel guests, touches the wall or enters the hotel property. I leave the two men I was with and walk into the crowd of men when I recognize Baby Rasta and Bond from the other day. Both of them are young; in their early 20s. They have dreadlocks and their clothes look dirty. None of them are wearing shoes. I greet them and ask what is going on. Baby Rasta tells me that there are “new arrivals” today and that this means “business” for them. We stand here for a while, looking up at the tourists sunbathing and walking around on the elevated plateau marking the beginning of the hotel property. In addition to all the men there are a few women here too, some with baskets of fruit and others carrying clothing and souvenirs. Suddenly something happens and the people standing next to me start shouting while running towards the stairway that leads up to the hotel; a female tourist is moving towards the stairs, heading for the beach. She seems to be Italian because both the men and women at the beach are trying to get her attention in Italian; “*Bella! Come stai? Tutto bene? Mona Lisa! Vai a safari? Bella donna!*”³¹.

I leave the crowd of people and walk by the water as I plan to cross the Jakuzi area, over to The Marine Park, before the water rises. I can already see several young men with dreadlocks sitting in the dark caves carved into the rock. Some of them shout to get my attention and I smile and wave back. I can see one of them getting up and walking towards me. He tells me that his name is Simon and I tell him about myself while we continue walking in the direction he came from. He asks me if I want to sit down with him and talk. I accept. He introduces me to a woman he says is his sister and her baby, sitting on a rock in one of the caves, attempting to sell *khangas*³² and bags to tourists passing by (later, I realize that it is in fact his wife and child). We sit down a few meters from them. On the other side of us, two young men with dreadlocks are leaning on the rocks, each of them holding a beach-bag. I am

³¹ Translated from Italian to English; “Beautiful! How are you? All well? Mona Lisa! Go on safari? Beautiful woman!”

³² *Khanga* is a printed cotton fabric, worn by wrapping it around the body, used by women, and occasionally men, in Eastern Africa.

guessing the bags belong to the two older women bathing in one of the natural pools of water. I greet the boys and they talk to Simon in Giriama. The two women get up from the pool and walk over to the boys as I predicted. The two couples then pass us without saying a word or giving us a single glance. Simon comments that “*wazungu* are very jealous”. After talking for a while, and watching the water rise some more, I decide to keep on walking towards The Marine Park and I say good bye to Simon for now.

The Marine Park is a closed off area with several trees and a small *duka* facing the beach. The captains of the boats sit in groups under the shade provided by the trees closer to the road. Some of them wave and greet me in Swahili as I walk by; “*Mariamumu! Miriamumu! Habari ya mchana?*” (How is your afternoon?) I greet them back. I reach the *duka* and chat for a while with the men inside as I buy some water. Although it is after lunch-time some tourists are dining at the plastic tables placed outside in the shade. Others are lying on the rented sun beds that belong to The Marine Park. James, the young boy renting out sun-beds, call me over. I sit down with him and we talk for a while. He is aware of my project in Malindi and has told me earlier that he wants to help me. A few meters away from where we are sitting is a couple; a young Kenyan man with dreadlocks and an Italian woman who looks to be in her 40s. James tells me that the man is a “famous beach boy” called Frank and that this is one of his women. I nod and say that I would love to be able to speak with him some time. We observe the couple for a while before James calls out to Frank and asks him in Giriama if he has any stories for me (pointing at me). He explains briefly about my project (still speaking Giriama so that the woman next to him does not understand). Frank laughs and seems surprised. He shouts back to James, while smiling at me, that he would love to give me some “stories” but that he will have to do it another time so that the girlfriend will not “feel bad”. I smile, but avoid saying anything to Frank; afraid that I could create problems for him. James tells me that “these women”, meaning the female tourists, “are very jealous” and that I can not expect any conversation with their boyfriends while they are there.

Out of all the boys, men, women, and also young children, spending time on the beaches of Malindi, I found it difficult in the beginning to single out beach boys in particular. I quickly realized that the term beach boy is in Malindi often used to describe all men that frequent the beach, in this case Silver Sands. I was mainly interested in finding beach boys who were already involved with female tourists romantically and I had a vague image of how they would look like. This was based on reading other’s accounts of beach boys, both in Malindi and elsewhere (Peake 1989; Brown 1992; Pruitt and LaFont 1995; De Albuquerque 1998; Dahles and Bras 1999; Herold et al. 2001; Nyanzi et al. 2005; Kibicho 2009) and relates to what I will get back to, when using Jenkins (2004), about groups and categories across

national borders. I had no problems getting in touch with beach boys at Silver Sands or in town, that is; the ones without a *mzungu*. Rather, the problem was getting in touch with beach boys who were already engaged in romantic relationships with female tourists; they were either together with their tourist girlfriends, which made it difficult for me to approach them, or they did not seem interested in talking to me. Despite this, I quickly learned how to point out a beach boy already involved with a *mzungu*; he would not seem interested in talking to me, he would wear certain types and combinations of clothes and he would be ‘flashing’ his money in one way or another (wearing accessories, driving expensive cars or motorbikes, and frequenting tourist restaurants and bars).

Appearance and style: ‘the real deal’

Beach boys typically wear Western clothing as do most of the other residents in Malindi. During the peak season beach boys often wear long and baggy shorts of different kinds combined with tank tops and t-shirts, while during the off-peak season they at times replace the shorts with jeans. Flip-flops and sandals, often in bright colours, are used at the beach and in town, while sneakers are more common during the off-peak season. Bright colours like green, blue, yellow, red and pink are often favoured among beach boys. Silver and gold chains, rings, and bracelets are very popular and are worn with pride. Other accessories include sunglasses and fanny packs, this also in bright colours. Schoss (1996) has studied the way tourist guides and beach boys in Malindi dress. She writes about how beach boys consciously combine their clothes into a specific and identifiable style and notes that the style they have often consists of outlandish and unexpected combinations of colours and patterns of clothing and accessories (1996:168-171). Furthermore style, as intentional communication, attracts attention and demands to be seen by others according to Hebdige (1983:93). He writes that communication of a significant difference, and further a certain group identity, is the particular point behind all subculture’s use of style (1983:93).

I suggest that the accounts of “dressing well” made by Martin (1995), who has looked at the city of Brazzaville in Kongo relates to the context of Malindi. Martin (1995:155) writes that personal display of dress was essential in exercising power as well as in statements of identity and well-being. He further notes that while new clothing was being introduced by foreigners, they were being embedded into an existing practice of social distinction, rather than creating new ones (1995:157). Concurring to my own findings in Malindi, Jamison

(1999:15) notes how Giriyama beach boys were particularly interested in fashionable items connected to Western culture in an obvious way. He further explains how experience and evaluation of interaction with tourists and their consumption lifestyles is combined with beach boys' own appraisal of style, quality, and features (1999:16). In Malindi, beach boys make use of western clothing, and creating their specific combinations of them, on the basis of their own values and lifestyle. Beach boys have the desire to fit in with the tourists' style and what is more; specifically enhancing what is perceived as attractive by female foreign tourists, such as having a fit body and growing dreadlocks.

It is important to note that this style; shaping their bodies and combining clothes and specific accessories in a certain way, is largely made possible through having access to money. Beach boys mainly gain access to this through friendships and romantic relationships with tourists. The irony here is the difficulties they face in achieving that same attention, and further trust, from tourists without this specific style in the first place. There are nevertheless certain traits nearly all beach boys have in common. Making their bodies fit (although this may at times be problematic without the means to eat properly) and styling their hair does not cost as much as new clothing and accessories. Most beach boys also seem to have adopted a neo-Rasta identity³³. They typically wear their hair in dreadlocks (a result of letting the hair grow naturally without combing it) although there are a few exceptions of this. Kibicho, who has studied beach boys in Malindi, notes that to some of them dreadlocks signify sexual and erotic powers, marijuana, naturalness and the liberation from all forms of power (Kibicho 2009:117). Prevailing during my stay in Malindi was the use of nicknames referring to famous reggae artists from Jamaica and the popularity of reggae music amongst beach boys. Aside from this, and perhaps more importantly, I was several times told by beach boys how their dreadlocks attract female foreigners which should be added as an additional motivation for this specific style. In relation to Jamaican beach boys' use of a Rasta identity Pruitt and LaFont write that it provides a model of masculinity that is not dependent on disbursing cash (Pruitt and LaFont 1999:432).

As mentioned, style is the major external divider of beach boys who have foreign girlfriends and the ones who do not. Beach boys without foreign girlfriends often walk bare-foot and wear clothes that are dirty as opposed to the ones with foreign girlfriends. Moreover, their approach to tourists is being perceived as more desperate than the other's. Having

³³ Rasta is short for Rastafarian, and is based on a Black religious movement and sub-culture that was established during the 1950s in Jamaica.

established this along with observing them in town, at the beaches, and in restaurants, it seemed like things were set to change and that I was about to encounter ‘the real deal’.

After lunch I head back to Silver Sands. I see Baby Rasta and Bond together with a few other boys and I walk over to chat with them. They are all quite short, and except for Bond, every one of them has dreadlocks. I can tell that the ones talking are Giriama by the language they use amongst themselves. It is calm by Karibu Hotel now and the boys walk over to sit down under the shade provided by the stairway. As I walk towards the stairway with the group of boys I recognize a young man I had seen in town a few days earlier; holding hands with an older Italian woman. I had remembered his face hoping that I would get a chance to talk to him another time. He smiles and walks towards me while he starts laughing. He is not very tall, with a shaved head and a fit body. He looks to be in his early 20s and is wearing a bright blue t-shirt, that seems to be very tight on his upper-body, and long military-patterned shorts with plastic flip-flops on his feet. I also notice the silver chains around his neck and wrists. He is still laughing when he reaches me and asks in English if I “remember?” “Remember what”, I ask him. He then says that he knows I saw him with his *mzungu* in town the other day. I laugh and tell him about what I am doing in Malindi. He says that if I want, I can meet him for a drink later that day; “bring your book, I will tell you many stories”. He asks for my name and tells me his name is Lolani. I give him my phone-number and he repeats that he will let me know a lot about his *nyanyas* (grandmothers, referring to his foreign ‘girlfriends’).

We are interrupted by Baby Rasta and the other boys who wave at me and yell that I should come and talk to them. Lolani says I should keep on walking, but I tell him that I will go and greet them again. He walks with me over to the eight boys squeezed in under the stairs. They make room for me and I sit down with them while Lolani stands out in the sun. We talk about my interest in beach boys and their life. Although some of them seem intrigued, while the others seem uninterested, they are more focused on giving me compliments on my looks; “*sura yako ni mzuri sana*” (“your face is very nice”). They joke with me and start talking about sex while pointing out parts of my body to each other. Not knowing if their intention is to make me uncomfortable, I ignore it. After a while I get up to leave and Lolani decides to walk with me towards Jakuzi at the end of the beach. As we walk by the edge of the water a tourist couple jogs past us in their swimwear. Lolani stops and turns around to watch them. He asks me what I think of the woman’s bum. I tell him that I think it “looks good”, but I can not help laughing a little. Lolani says that he thinks it “looks great; with an ass like that I can have sex with a woman five times in a row without problems”.

Secret society

In the process of getting to know various beach boys I noticed that the topic of any conversation usually entailed sex or sexual matters. Conversations with me included were no exception. There was an over communication of sexual matters. Relative to beach boys is Goffman's (1959:79) introduction of the term "performance team", referring to any set of individuals co-operating in staging a routine. Goffman (1959:104) writes that if a performance is to be effective, the co-operation making this possible is to be kept concealed; something of the character of a secret society. If indeed beach boys fit into the idea of a secret society, the difficulties concerning outsider's access to such a society is made even more prominent. My own experiences regarding beach boys in Malindi may relate to what Goffman poses as an informal initiation device employed by a team; that is teasing, to test the capacity of an outsider or a new member (1959:217). I suggest that the beach boys' constant focus on sex in relation to me, and what I perceive as a test, relates directly to this. Further, the core of this issue conveys the centrality of my own role during interaction with Malindi beach boys. It is fruitful to place this within the context of the discursive aspects of producing cultural representation, and the general trend towards a specification of who speaks and writes, when and where, and with whom, in ethnography (Clifford and Marcus 2010:13). As mentioned in chapter 1, this wide and complex discourse within the subject of anthropology points to the decision of placing myself in the text. Ignoring my role in any given situation would be, if not deceiving, avoiding the potential influence I might have as well as reminding the reader of the subjectivity impossible to escape as an anthropologist. Incidentally, it here also works to highlight me as an outsider in dealing with a seemingly closed collectivity, possibly adding another dimension to this study of beach boys.

Models of interaction

The work beach boys do at Silver Sands is the reason why some of them at times refer to themselves as beach operators; they approach tourists and ask if they would like to go for *safari*, *safari-blue*³⁴, see the coral reef or just have a guided tour around town or in some of the villages. They are basically offering their services to tourists on a freelance basis.

³⁴ *Safari-blue* refers to a trip with boat to visit one of the islands outside Malindi.

Considering the large number of beach boys, and the limited area they can operate within, I was curious to know whether there was any form of organization amongst beach boys.

I am walking along Silver Sands and again I meet with a big crowd of beach boys waiting by the brick wall up to Karibu Hotel. I ask a couple of the men that are standing next to me about how they are able to talk to tourists when they have to compete with all the others to get a chance. One of them explains that they have a system; in the early morning, around 7 am, they all meet at the beach to draw numbers. The number one gets indicates where you are 'in line' to approach tourists. Number one gets the first opportunity (to approach tourists) and so on. When the numbers are done, it is free game. Another boy tells me that you might as well go home for the day if you pull a number higher than 20 or so.

In addition to having a number-system the beach is also divided into areas; as I will get back to shortly, nearly every beach boy 'belongs' to a specific area. Fights and confrontations may erupt if a beach boy goes outside his area and approaches tourists for the purpose of selling tours of different kinds. Even though I have seen this happen several times without any confrontation, I have also witnessed episodes where cliques of beach boys started fighting because of this. One of these times I saw a beach boy by Karibu Hotel approaching a female tourist, asking her if she wanted to go for safari. Although she was not accepting his offer, the beach boys I was sitting with started shouting at him in Giriyama. The men ended up in a loud discussion with the beach boy who had approached the tourist and he finally left the area after defending himself verbally. It is productive to compare this incident to what Goffman refers to as a "scene", or "creating a scene", where an individual acts in such a way as to threaten the appearance of consensus within the "team" (1959:210). When one of the beach boys, seemingly aware of the rules on the beach, acts in this manner he may consequently affect their (future) interaction with tourists at Silver Sands.

Some scenes occur when teammates can no longer countenance each other's inept performance and blurt out immediate public criticism of the very individuals with whom they ought to be in dramaturgical co-operation (Goffman 1959:210-211).

These cases show clearly which beach boys are linked together more strongly than others. Normally it may be family ties and friendships, or a common past that links beach boys to each other. Most of the beach boys at Silver Sands are of the Giriyama ethnic group while there are some belonging to Bajuni and Swahili ethnic groups as well. This may also be a

source of separation between beach boys. Bajuni beach boys are ‘confined’ to the north end of Silver Sands, away from the big hotels, while the middle part of the beach is considered a Giriyama area. I assume that Jakuzi is a Giriyama area as well, because of the Giriyama beach boys who are operating in this area (though I was never told this explicitly by anyone). The dividing of the beach into areas was confirmed during a conversation I had with Lolani. He told me that beach boys in Malindi have a chairman who divides the beach into certain areas and that they at times come together to go through the rules. Despite this, he says, there are many beach boys who do not respect these rules and operate within other’s area. Leadership, apart from a chairman, who in turn was an employee at one of the respective tour-companies in Malindi, was a vague aspect of the beach boys’ organization. Rather, it was specific skills, such as seducing foreign women (which again would lead to increased material wealth) and having the ideal appearance that was vital to the way other beach boys interacted with you. Being of the same age, more or less in their early twenties, beach boys would focus on skills, appearance and experience before seniority. For instance, Kavuu, a former beach boy well-known to both Lolani and Juma, was someone they told me they had looked up to since they were younger. He was successful; living in a big house and driving a nice car; both bought by his Italian ‘girlfriend’. Juma once told me that Kavuu used to be “very big” (well-built) and that they (him and other beach boys) used to work out to become as “big” as he was.

While Goffman (1959), with his notion of a team, does not consider a group in relation to a social structure or social organization but rather in relation to interaction, Jenkins (2004) looks at social identity, both individual and collective. He defines collective identification as a plurality of people with similarity among and between them; people with something significant in common (2004:79-80). One may suggest that being a beach boy indicates taking part in a collective identity. Jenkins (2004:81) introduces two different ways of looking at interaction; one is where the members of the collectivity identify themselves as such, while the other is where the members are ignorant of both their own membership and the collectivity itself. Using this as a basis, Jenkins makes a conceptual distinction between groups and categories. While group identity is the product of collective *internal* definition, categorization is a result of collective *external* definition (2004:82). The group and its members are the ones to define and identify themselves as opposed to a category which is entirely defined by others without the members participating. Applying this directly to beach boys, one might pose the question whether beach boys may be seen as a group or a category.

It is here necessary to make the distinction between beach boys in general and beach boys in Malindi, the latter being the obvious focus. Although beach boys around the world

might be aware of the category they are placed in by others, as a collectivity across national borders, I would argue that they relate to Jenkins' notion of a category, and not a group. On the other hand, beach boys in Malindi relate more closely to what Jenkins defines as a group, although they can not be said to be ignorant of the category they are placed in by others. They seem to view themselves as belonging to a group as they clearly have relationships with, and recognize, other members of the same collectivity. Holy and Stuchlik (1983:45-49) argue that the only way notions, that is the actor's knowledge of the natural and social world, can be related to a collectivity is through assuming that the members share roughly the same notions and principles for organizing them into sets, systems and models. They further characterize groups by having a certain degree of shared knowledge, while the concept of sharing nonetheless opens for the perception of the individuality of notions (1983:50). Whether collective or individual notions, Holy and Stuchlik points out that any study of social phenomena is a study of the relationship between notions and actions (1983:81). With this in mind, I proceed with what is usually seen to be central in anthropology; observable actions.

Beach boy parties

I spent a lot of time with Lolani and his cousin Juma as they over time became my closest friends amongst the beach boys. Juma is tall compared to Lolani and has short dreadlocks. He is also a fan of silver and gold chains and bracelets, and he would at times wear a green and pink fanny pack on top of his outfit; usually consisting of a t-shirt, long shorts and flip-flops. They one day invited me along to a party for beach boys in Malindi. This party takes place once a year and is hosted by one of the local tour-operating companies in town. I was unsure whether the manager of the tour-company hosting the party was in fact the chairman that Lolani had earlier referred to. Juma and Lolani had talked about this party for weeks and they told me it would be a celebration of this year's peak season. Drinks (two beers each) and food was to be paid by the tour company as appreciation for the business beach boys had brought them in bringing tourists to their offices in town.

It is Saturday and the day of the beach boy-party, as Lolani and Juma call it. I meet them outside town around noon and we take the *Bajaj* for a few minutes into a village beside the main road. We enter something that looks like a small pub, but it is more a shed with an empty bar inside. I sit down at one of the two tables inside while Juma gets drinks for us. It is midday

and really hot. Outside some women are cooking *ugali*³⁵ in a large pot placed on the fire, and by the fire some men are grilling “*mbuzi na kuku*” (“goat and chicken”). As we sit and talk, more and more beach boys, both strangers and others I have met before, come inside and greet us. I notice that Lolani and Juma seem to be well respected amongst the others. Some are asking Juma to buy them a drink, which he does, and others just want to chat. All the beach boys present are after a while called into a meeting that is being held outside by their host; the manager of the tour-company. I get up to follow the boys outside but Lolani tells me that I can wait inside for them and that the bartender will make sure that no one bothers me while they are in the meeting. I sit down and wait for them to finish. An hour passes and Lolani comes back to the table while Juma walks around talking to other beach boys. Some of them have started drinking *mnazi*³⁶ and are already drunk. Others are smoking *bhanghi*³⁷ and are high. The food is served and we all eat a lot. The tour-company manager comes over to greet us at the table and takes a few minutes to joke with Juma and Lolani before he leaves.

It was obvious that both Lolani and Juma enjoyed the attention, both from the other beach boys and also from the tour-company manager. They were pleased with their own efforts this season, and there was not doubt about their success in general. Experience and skill, with the outcome of success in terms of having at least one foreign girlfriend, seemed to be essential in being regarded highly by others. Beach boys often had small groups of friends that they would relate to. These ‘cliques’ were often a combination of more or less successful beach boys and there would usually be harmony and friendliness between the different groups. Less fortunate beach boys, the ones with less money to spend, would rely on the more fortunate ones to assist them in buying drinks and meals at various occasions. As Peake (1989:211) comments in his study from Malindi aside from having valuable European clothes and possessions, status came from being generous to other beach boys. Although being successful as a beach boy would harvest the respect and admiration of other beach boys, there were also times where one could question the reality of this.

I am having lunch with Lolani and Juma at the usual place in town. A boy comes over and tells Juma something in Giriama. Both Juma and Lolani look surprised and tell me to get up and that we are “going to check out something”. We walk over to a big pub that is normally empty. There is a lot of noise and several men are standing by the entrance. We enter the pub

³⁵ *Ugali* is one of many names for a typical East-African dish of maize flour and boiling water cooked into a dough-like porridge.

³⁶ *Mnazi* is a homemade alcoholic drink extracted from coconuts.

³⁷ *Bhanghi* is a version of cannabis.

and I see most of the beach boys I have met in Malindi along with many others who also appear to be beach boys. I ask Juma what is going on and he tells me that this is a party for beach boys celebrating that the season is coming to an end. I ask Lolani if they knew about the party and he says no. Seemingly annoyed he says that this is “typical”, and that the others “always” try to exclude them (meaning him and Juma) from “these things”. He then laughs and tells me; “but now we are here, and even with you!” They find a table for me to sit down at and Juma goes to buy drinks for the three of us. There is not much space, and the two big rooms in the pub are filled with beach boys – most of them with dreadlocks and the usual outfits; tank-tops or t-shirts, long shorts, flip-flops and various accessories. Lolani explains that the party is for beach boys from Malindi, Watamu³⁸, and Jacaranda³⁹.

The fact that Lolani and Juma were not invited to the party, and did not even know about it, is significant to the understanding of how beach boys within the same area relate to each other. The usual disagreements were over potential customers; tourists that would potentially pay them as guides or facilitators for safaris, the dividing of commission and the particular areas of Silver Sands. Having several foreign women, and hence more material wealth, would usually increase the status of a beach boy. At times this could also lead to jealousy and competition amongst the beach boys I got to know. Despite this, I seldom experienced backbiting or direct confrontations between beach boys and there seemed to be a basic respect between them at the beaches and in other places such as bars and restaurants in town. However, I knew that they were extremely careful with including me in this, and it was only a few times I heard stories about how “stupid” other beach boys were. How one behaves and talks, and who one interacts with, also seemed relevant to ones status within the group. Adding to this, the intricacy of my own correlation to beach boys at Silver Sands, in particular Lolani and Juma, would at times leave me in perplexity concerning my effect on various situations.

I am sitting under the stairs up to Karibu Hotel together with Baby Rasta, Ziggy, and three other beach boys. We talk about tourists and Norway. They are curious about what I do and how I live in Norway. The boys are discussing every tourist walking by on the sand. They compare the male bodies with their own – often in heated discussions, and they discuss and compare the female bodies to my body. Again, sex is the main topic of the conversation. After a while, Lolani and Juma arrive at the beach together. Juma greets me and sits down with us a

³⁸ Watamu is a small town some kilometres south of Malindi.

³⁹ Jacaranda is the name of a beach sited between Malindi and Watamu.

few minutes before he walks over to Lolani who has sat down further away, barely giving us a nod. Around midday I get up with the plan of going to town for lunch. Lolani and Juma get up too and catch up with me. Lolani says they want to walk me back to the road and get a *tuk-tuk* or a *Honda*⁴⁰ for me. I ask him why they did not sit down with me and the other boys like they usually do. He replies that he does not like some of the beach boys I was sitting with (without naming anyone) and that he did not feel like sitting with them even though I was there.

Whether or not I influenced the situation, an effort has here been made to show the ambivalent sides of being successful as a beach boy; not only harvesting status and recognition but having to handle slander and jealousy. Proving to be somewhat organized, beach boys occupy a significant part of (beach) life in Malindi. Not counting the obvious interaction with tourists on a daily basis, beach boys are known for behaving in specific manners when out in public. Leaving the topic of collective organization for now, I will move on to the essential aspect of behaviour.

Macho-boys

As part of their appearance, beach boys may be said to shape their identity through behaviour as well. The particular manner in which conversations were conducted is worth noting; the boys would raise their voices to the verge of yelling and they would laugh very loud. Body language as well as hand gestures were usually a large part of communication in general. To use Goffman (1981:1-2) and his language of performance, one should be reminded that individuals' responses to events in the presence of others carry various implications and meanings. Accompanying this, I am concerned with the (re)actions and behaviour of beach boys, in particular Juma and Lolani, with whom I spent most of my time.

The three of us would normally meet at Silver Sands and go back to town for lunch. In the evenings I would join them going from bar to bar in town, moving from one place to another on the *Bajaj* that Lolani had bought but Juma was driving. I did not always feel comfortable being out in bars and clubs with them. This was always related to the amount of alcohol consumed; the more they drank the louder they would get. The three of us; Lolani, Juma and I, could walk into a place and they would normally shout out greetings, lyrics to songs⁴¹ or just 'sounds' such as "EY! EY!" Sitting down, one of them, or both, would call the

⁴⁰ *Honda* refers to a motorbike, coming from the brand-name, and may also be called *Bajaj*.

⁴¹ Normally this would be popular Giriama songs sung by local artists.

waiter over to the table and order drinks for all of us. We would rarely sit down in a corner as they would rather choose the table in the middle of the room. Going out in the evenings expanded my interaction with them beyond the limitations of the beach. I had several times experienced both Juma and Lolani getting angry and further aggressive towards others, and one night we went out to a club in town this resulted in fighting.

Arriving at the club, Lolani and Juma were already drunk from drinking beers⁴² at a gathering for beach boys we had been to earlier the same day. We sit down at a table by the dance floor. It is still early and the club is half full. Lolani walks over to the bar and comes back with three beers. Juma takes a sip and drops the beer on the floor, smashing it into pieces. He yells, gets up and starts dancing by the table; ignoring the accident. People sitting at the other tables stare at the three of us. One of the waiters comes over to our table and tells “Juma” that he has to leave. He reacts by pushing the waiter and they begin a heated discussion in Swahili. Lolani then gets up and talks to the waiter. The three of them leave me at the table and disappear. They return without the waiter after a few minutes and I ask what is going on. Lolani assures me that everything is fine; that they had wanted to throw Juma out but that he has resolved it with the manager of the club. Lolani and Juma alternate between sitting at the table with me and going to dance at the dance-floor.

I spot Aisha, a Somali girl working as a *malaya* in Malindi. She comes over with another friend and they invite themselves to sit down at our table. Lolani and Juma are still at the dance-floor when Aisha introduces me to four Italian men she knows. She explains to me that one of them is her “customer” as she invites them to sit down with us. I look over at Lolani who is closely watching what is happening from across the room. He comes back to the table and asks me if I am “ok”, nodding his head towards the Italian men. Aisha tells Lolani to greet the Italians but he just nods at them instead of shaking their hands. He asks me if we should change tables and I tell him “ok” as he leans down to whisper that he “hates Italians” (meaning the men) and that “they are all crazy”. Lolani goes to get Juma and they start searching for another table as I say good bye to Aisha and her friends. It is not until I am in the middle of the club, looking for Lolani and Juma, when I notice a fight going on. I can see chairs being thrown and I back off to avoid getting caught in the middle of the fight. I can not see who is fighting and I am trying to look for Lolani and Juma. A man comes up next to me and I ask him what is going on. He tells me “the beach boys are fighting over you”. I tell him that I do not think so. He continues to say that “this is normal behaviour for beach boys you know, they are stupid.” I suddenly see both Lolani and Juma throwing punches at three or four

⁴² The most popular drink among beach boys was Guinness in a bottle.

men I have not seen before. The man by my side suggests that we “switch clubs” (meaning me and him) but I tell him “no thank you”. He replies to that by saying “you should watch out.”

Lolani comes over and the man besides me quickly disappears. He tells me to sit down and wait for him, pointing at a table. After a few minutes Lolani comes back and sits down with me; things seem to have calmed down and there is no more fighting as far as I can see. Reluctant to tell me about what had happened he says that he had taken a chair from another table to place at the table he had found for us. The man at that table apparently got angry and “talked shit” to him, he says. Juma had then joined in the conversation and suddenly someone had thrown a chair at them. I keep quiet and avoid asking too many questions. When Lolani gets up from the table again to join Juma in a verbal fight with one of the bouncers in the club, I finally leave the club to go home.

Schoss (1996:177) writes that beach boys in Malindi have a fairly earned reputation of generally causing scenes by drinking profoundly and fighting in public places. Relating it to my own experiences in Malindi I would not object to this statement. Establishing the beach boys’ macho⁴³-behaviour, if I might call it that, one may further question the motives behind this way of behaving. Kibicho (2009:117) presents a paradox as he points out how the ultra-macho posturing only is momentary as the beach boys occupy the feminine subject position in their relations with female foreign tourists. To understand this one must shed some light of an overarching Kenyan norm; where the man has the responsibility to provide for his wife or girlfriend. The roles in relationships between Kenyan beach boys and Western women are reversed. In addition to this, public display of affection and interaction between the sexes are uncommon and is seen as something private in Kenya. This contradicts the way beach boys, with their Western girlfriends, openly show affection through kissing, hugging and holding hands in public Malindi. The relationships between older Western females and young Kenyan men reverse the traditional African male-female model and goes against basic values concerning appropriate gender-role behaviour:

In an attempt to mask the fact that they are performing feminine roles, beach boys-cum-MCSWs⁴⁴ often stress and assert their masculinity to their audience. (...) In general, therefore, the MCSWs counterbalance their powerlessness *vis-à-vis* Western female tourists-turned-

⁴³ The word macho derives from Spanish and implies characteristics as virile, masculine, fierce, and domineering among others.

⁴⁴ “Male commercial sex-worker” (MCSW) is a concept that Kibicho operates with in relation to beach boys in Kenya (Kibicho 2009:118). The distinction between beach boys and MCSWs, made by Kibicho, will be dealt with in chapter 4.

'girlfriends' and their local community by developing a virile and a strong, self-confident self-image (Kibicho 2009:118).

In going against traditional ideas about gender, age and relationships, beach boys are suggestively placed in a feminine role, having to compensate for this by acting on ideas of what is masculine. Recalling a conversation with Mustafa (shown in chapter 2), one of the Bajuni Captains at The Marine Park, illustrates the point of going against local traditions as he told me how much he dislikes beach boys and their *makelele* (trouble or noise), adding that they go against "Kenyan tradition" when they let the woman provide for them.

Providers and protectors

Although beach boys are said to go against the (African) male role of financial provider by engaging in relationships with female foreign tourists, it is crucial to note how they at the same time are able to provide for their families. Both Lolani and Juma are able to supply their wives and extended families with the money that they receive from the various Italian women (Juma has three children while Lolani provides for his late brothers two children). It is interesting to note how beach boys, through occupying a 'feminine role' (in relation to their Western girlfriends) simultaneously live up to the ideal of providing for their families. Silberschmidt (2001) writes about the patriarchal ideology embodied by men in East-Africa, and how it has been challenged by the increased competition to survive economically. She looks at the stereotyped notion, also shared by women, that a man should be head of the household and provide for his family if he is to have social value and respect (2001:663). A predicament arises from this notion; on the one hand men are acknowledged as heads of households and on the other hand they find it increasingly difficult to meet this normative standard, resulting in the feeling of discontent and powerlessness because of their subordinate economic status (2001:668). Placing beach boys within this context one might suggest that their choice of pursuing female foreigners is based on the expectations of them as the provider of the family. Whether or not the consequences of the relationships with foreign women, such as occupying the 'feminine role', are anticipated, they are nevertheless left dealing with them.

Masculinity should be assessed in relation to femininity, and in this case beach boys may be said to compensate by behaving according to what they perceive as masculine; talking a lot and loudly, consuming large amounts of alcohol and fighting in public places. Another aspect I might add to this is the way beach boys at times take it upon themselves to protect

others, whether it is women or men. In regards to myself, I realized, through several incidents, that both Lolani and Juma were highly protective of me. At times one of them, or both, would object to any man approaching me out at clubs or bars. Other times they would defend me against strangers. One such time we were at a bar; sharing a table with a man and a few other women (all Kenyan).

The man sitting across the table from me sticks out his tongue, moving it in a sexual manner while he looks directly at me. Looking back at him, I must have reacted because Lolani asks me what the man had done. I tell him “nothing” but he refuses to give up. I finally tell Lolani about what the man had done and Lolani gets up and walks around the table to talk to the man. They talk and I can see that Lolani is angry but that the man just laughs. I ask Juma if we can leave and we start walking towards to exit. I pass the man with Lolani while Juma is walking behind us. Outside, Juma tells Lolani in Giriama that he is going back inside for a moment. Something is going on and I ask Lolani to tell me what. He says that Juma had heard the man at the table referring to me as a *malaya* and that he was going back in to beat him up before leaving. I beg Lolani to go back inside and stop Juma. It works, and they take me home instead.

In addition to ‘protecting’ me, I also experienced times when Juma and Lolani would take it upon themselves to help and defend and help others. A descriptive example of this is the night we were out at a local club.

While sitting at a table with Lolani, I watch Juma running in and out of the club. He would come back to our table and report something to Lolani and then run outside again. After a while Lolani tells me that they will be back soon, and both of them run outside. He yells at me that I should “not move”, before leaving out the door. Not even a few minutes have passed when a friend of Lolani and Juma comes over and sits down with me; closing me into a corner in the club. He leans over and tells me that he has been assigned by the guys to make sure I am ok and that no one bothers me (this is a club with no foreigners and it is known to be in a dangerous area). After about an hour they come back and tell me that we all have to leave and go to the hospital. On our way to the hospital on the *Bajaj* they explain what had happened earlier; there had been a young boy outside the club who was extremely drunk. He had bumped into an older man by mistake and the man and his friends had beaten the boy badly. The young boy had started bleeding from his head when Juma saw this. When they left me they had gone to stop the older men from hurting the young boy. They ran after the group of men into the woods, but with no luck; the men were gone. Coming back and finding the young

boy unconscious by the club they had taken him to Malindi General Hospital. Lolani says they came back for me, and we are now on our way to check if the young boy will live. Arriving at the hospital there is already a group of other men talking to the doctor. It seems the boy will be ok but that he needs rest.

On the one hand beach boys are portrayed as men who do not live up to the standards of what is in Malindi, and in East-Africa in general, seen as “a respectable man”. This is largely based on their romantic relationships with foreign women. On the other hand, one might suggest that their behaviour is, however ironically, related to precisely such ideas about “real men”. Can beach boys in Malindi be said to have found a way of merely doing what is expected by them; providing for their family economically? In their approach to earning money however, they lose sight of their own masculinity and spend their time living out general notions of what is perceived as masculine. This further relates to the relation between actions and notions. In the opinion of Holy and Stuchlik (1983:35); the study of action is not possible without giving attention to ideas, notions and concepts, and would hence be reduced to trivial descriptions of physical movements. Along with organization of collective identity, action also needs to be studied within the context of locality; in this case, beach boys in relation to Malindi and its residents. Before doing this in the following chapter, I will now direct the attention to motives and specific strategies used by beach boys to achieve their main goal; making money through relationships with female foreign tourists.

Money, motivation and migration

The meaning behind human phenomena lies in the actor’s intentions, purposes and motives (Holy and Stuchlik 1983:37). Along the lines of this, one of my research objectives was to understand the motives behind beach boys’ desire to enter into romantic relationships with elderly female tourists. The encounters I had with beach boys who were not involved with female tourists were supporting my initial perception that their biggest wish was to connect with a *mzungu*. The more intensive interaction I had with beach boys already involved with one or several (in this case Italian) female tourists matches this perception as well, although they were less ‘desperate’ in their objective due to their current success. Overall, beach boys aspire towards the constant ambition of having an elderly foreign ‘girlfriend’; usually signifying women over 50 years. They are considered (by beach boys) to be better in terms of both money and appreciation. I once asked Baby Rasta and Bond if they were in relationships

with any women and they both answered “no”. After explaining to me how much money it costs to have a Kenyan girlfriend, or just to have sex (having to buy gifts, food and drinks etc.), they said that they could not afford it. Bond told me that his biggest wish was to meet a white woman, no matter if she was old or young. Nodding along, Baby Rasta continued by saying “the older the better.” Despite this statement, Peake (1989:212) writes that while being seen with an elderly female tourist is avoided whenever possible, young tourists are always publicly displayed by beach boys. While the older tourists are an obvious part of their income, the younger tourists do not normally pay for companionship and is therefore considered status among beach boys (Peake 1989:212). The difference between an old and a young *mzungu* was explained to me by Lolani one day at lunch while he was taking a “break” from his 67 year old Italian ‘girlfriend’, Rosa, who was visiting in Watamu.

I am at the beach when Lolani calls and tells me that he has been looking for me. He has returned to Malindi to have lunch and he wants me to join him and Juma in town. During lunch I am interested in hearing about how it went with his *mzungu* this weekend. Lolani tells me that he was late to meet her when she arrived at the hotel, and that she had already checked in by the time he reached Watamu. He says that his Rosa had gone down to the beach and asked some other beach boys there where she could find her “husband”. Apparently she had told the beach boys there that she was the wife of Lolani. The boys there know him and when he arrived they were jokingly telling him that “his wife” was looking for him. Lolani tells me that it was very embarrassing for him and that it is “bad” for them to think he is married to such an old lady. I ask him why that is, adding that I thought it was “no big deal” because of the woman being a foreigner. Lolani says that I can think of the difference between being seen with her and being seen with me. He explains that everyone who sees me with him, or believes that I am his girlfriend, will be “very jealous”. He goes on telling me that it is “status” to be seen together with “a young, pretty *mzungu*”. Lolani adds that even though he is embarrassed to be referred to as the husband of Rosa, he has no problem being seen together with her; “this is what I do.”

This highlights the ambivalent side of dealing with older foreign women; on the one hand they are prioritized over younger females because of the money, but on the other hand it is seen as more prestigious to be seen with a young *mzungu*.

I found that beach boys in Malindi may have wanted to visit Europe (North-America was not normally an option), which alone was seen as great prestige amongst friends and family. Other than that, most of them do not wish to stay and live in Europe with their foreign

girlfriends. Therefore, it is not the imagined migration to Europe that is their main goal, like I had assumed before arriving in Malindi. Rather, it is the money and valuables obtained through a relationship with a female tourist that seems to be the aim, and further the motivation, behind engaging in these forms of romance. Asking beach boys themselves about why they did not wish to relocate to Italy with their girlfriends I usually got the same answer; “why would we go there and let the woman be in control when we can receive money from her and live nicely here in the place we grew up?” Although visiting Italy seemed like a wish for many of them, there were doubts about this too. Several beach boys told me they were scared to get locked inside a house and be under the control of their ‘girlfriends’ in a foreign country. Talking about this with Juma and Lolani one evening, I realized that they also have a fear of leaving Malindi.

Juma says that he wants himself and Lolani to be able to visit me and my husband in Norway. He has mentioned this several times before too. He wants to work and save some money while experiencing Europe. He says he will never want to go to Italy with one of his Italian girlfriends. They both tell me that they have heard many stories about how other beach boys have been locked inside the house by their ‘girlfriends’. I told them that when I first came here I was under the impression that beach boys got involved with older female tourists just for the opportunity of travelling abroad. They laugh and say that they will always stay here in Malindi and that they do not want to leave; “this is home”, Juma says. I continue to ask Lolani if he would go to Europe if he ‘got’ a young *mzungu*. He replies that he would still want to stay here (in Malindi) but that he might consider to go if there was a chance of him starting a family with her and most importantly; the possibility of making money there.

This was a major find; by choosing to prioritize money, and not migration, beach boys in Malindi separate themselves from beach boys in other countries. Nyanzi et al. (2005:563-564) writes how ‘bumsters’ (Gambian beach boys) openly fantasize and discuss about the aspiration of travelling to Europe or North America in order to escape the misery of the Gambian existence through a relationship with an older white woman. Brown (1992:364), who has also studied so-called beach boys (or ‘bomsas’) in Gambia, notes that they in the long run hope to obtain from the tourist, most likely through forming a sexual relationship with a female tourist, the gift of an airline ticket to Europe. Through presenting a conversation between beach boys in Jamaica, Pruitt and LaFont (1995:428-429) show how they view foreign women as someone who can provide them with a way out of their limited circumstances. Dahles and Bras (1999) were looking at beach boys and street guides in

Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Adding to the beach boys' chances of acquiring money and gifts is the enormous attraction of a possibly free ticket to stay in Europe, America, or Japan (Dahles and Bras 1999:284). Like Dahles and Bras, Herold et al. (2001:983) makes a distinction between a short term goal for beach boys (in this case beach boys in The Dominican Republic), which is money, and the long term goal which is trips to, and the possibility of living in, North America or Europe. While beach boys from various countries around the world dream of moving to Europe or other Western countries, the boys in Malindi are reluctant to give 'control' to their foreign 'girlfriends' and rather focus on the money as a primary goal. Or, earning money as a short term goal and establishing a business as a long term goal. Furthermore, I found that Kibicho's (2009:176-177) findings support this vital point:

In fact, female tourists are also regarded as potential associates who bring in money to start a business project. The foreign woman provides capital, while the local man becomes a business associate providing access to Kenya's heart-breaking and non-productive bureaucracy, and where necessary, to local networks. (...) This is a striking departure from most of the conventional CSWs from other developing countries whose ultimate goal in initiating relationships with the foreign tourist is to acquire a ticket to the Western world.

The economic aspects of beach boys' motivations are imperative to the understanding of their daily actions and behaviour. It necessarily relates directly to the informal, as well as the formal, economy in Malindi. This will be thoroughly explored throughout the next chapter. Before doing that, it will be fruitful to consider the various ways in which beach boys attempt to achieve their goal of making money.

Tactics of seduction

Capturing the attention of a female tourist, and initiating a relationship, is an obvious challenge for beach boys. Arriving in Malindi I was told by other residents how beach boys use their village witch-doctor (or "they go to see *babu*⁴⁵") to make female tourists fall in love with them. According to various people I talked to, beach boys can receive a mixture from the witch-doctor that they rub into the palm of their hand before greeting female tourists with a handshake. This is said to make women fall in love with the man they are greeting. I was

⁴⁵ *Babu* refers here to the village medicine man (also called *mganga*), but is also the Swahili word for grandfather.

warned about this, and advised by others to greet boys at the beach with a closed fist. When asking both Juma and Lolani about it, they agreed that other beach boys do this but none of them ever admitted to applying this approach on tourists themselves; I was told they were not in need of witchcraft because of their skills in seducing women. Considering that they rarely talked about witchcraft in relation to themselves, but often in relation to others, I do not think they would have admitted to this in any case. Kohnert (1996) writes how magic and witchcraft can work as a disadvantage for some, but at the same time also serve as a form of struggle by the underprivileged across Africa. He further notes how, due to lack of information and concern, Western attitudes towards witchcraft are often based on ignorance and intolerance, resulting in the difficulties of openly discussing this topic with African counterparts (1996:1355). Both Lolani and Juma were well acquainted with Western tourists in general, and based on the prevailing awkwardness the few times I brought up the topic of witchcraft, I would say they were reluctant to share their obvious knowledge with me.

Apart from the modest insight I got into beach boys' dealings with witchcraft in their pursuit of foreign women, I was curious to know about other strategies applied in such a process. Dwelling for a moment on the concept of strategy it would be rewarding to make use of the distinction made by De Certeau (1980) between tactic and strategy. In "the oppositional practices of everyday life" he writes about how strategy is organized by power as a precondition, while tactics on the other hand is determined by the absence of power (1980:7). While strategies are actions within "the space of power", activities that may be seen as tricks of "the weak" within an order of "the strong" are referred to as tactics (1980:7-8). Bearing in mind that beach boys seldom have knowledge about, or power over, their preconditions when it comes to seducing foreign females, it is plausible to apply De Certeau's idea of tactics, rather than strategies, to their everyday actions and activities.

Baby Rasta and Bond are both working at the beach like other beach boys, advertising tours for various tour companies in town. Using this approach as a way of getting in contact with tourists in general, and female tourists in specific, they one day told me "how it is done".

Sitting with Jacob and a few of the female prostitutes on Silver Sands talking about all the problems in Kenya, which is Jacob's favourite thing to educate me in, Baby Rasta and Bond come over and sit down with us. I ask, and they tell me about how one can get in touch with female tourists. Baby Rasta says that they always start off by offering tourists help to book safaris and trips to various destinations in Kenya; "for a special price". From there on they get to know each other, maybe by taking a walk or joining them on trips or at dinners, waiting for

the tourist to start trusting them. When this happens it is finally possible to “make a move”, Baby Rasta says. After this you can never know what will happen; maybe you become a couple, or friends, “or you might even end up visiting them in Europe”, he adds.

There is no mention of money, although that seems like the obvious goal. Neither Baby Rasta, nor Bond, have ever had, or have, foreign ‘girlfriends’ and their accounts may simply be based on own attempts or what they have heard from other beach boys. It concurs however to what I have been told by others. Every so often there are “new arrivals”, and therefore chaos, at Silver Sands. It is important for beach boys to get in touch with new tourists because of the increased chances of getting them to book a safari, a boat-trip or simply making contact. There is then a greater possibility of creating bonds and trust with the tourist, which again could lead to friendship or romance. Considering what was earlier mentioned about shared knowledge, it is here relevant to embrace Holy and Stuchlik’s (1983:46) suggestion of looking at how structures of knowledge are presented and made public by the people who hold it. Using Holy and Stuchlick, such shared knowledge, or so-called notions, between beach boys may be classified as “operational”; ones of practical task orientation (1983:52). Gaining the woman’s trust seems to be a crucial factor in succeeding as a beach boy. I have heard both Lolani and Juma saying this several times. Getting the husband of a woman (if he is present) to trust them is important as well. At a beach boy-party Lolani tells me about this.

We are talking about how I am studying and doing my masters degree. Lolani says that while I will have a degree in anthropology, they (meaning him and Juma) already have degrees in “seducing”. Lolani continues saying that he does not really know why these women like him so much. Juma agrees, saying that “they just like me”, and that he does not know why. I notice that both of them portray it as if the women are falling in love with them without them knowing exactly why. The fact that most of them already have husbands does not stand in way; “it is just to get the husbands to like me too”, he says. Lolani explains that if he gets the husband to trust him, he can then do whatever he wants with the wife; without the husband suspecting anything. He will from there make the woman trust him as well and start off with some “innocent flirting” to make her fall in love with him.

Building on the notion that beach boys have little control over their preconditions, or conditions, one might suggest that statements like “they just like me” relates to a desire of being in control. Being more or less aware of their dependency of, and further lack of control over, foreign females they might be said to portray themselves in a way as to disguise this

detail. Furthermore, the specific use of tactics to maintain this image, while at the same time undertaking the task of seducing foreign women, is an important aspect of beach boys' everyday life.

Repeating what I have been told by for instance Baby Rasta, Lolani tells me that he will “hold back and not seem too desperate” in his approach to the women in the beginning. After helping them book a safari or other trips he will usually join them for that particular trip; using this as an excuse to get to know the woman more. During the trip, Lolani says, he will flirt a little; just enough to catch the interest of the woman. He then waits for the woman to take the next initiative. From there on he will spend time with her until he feels that she trusts him. When she finally seems to trust him, he starts the so-called “seducing”. I was curious to get an understanding of how he might do this and during a trip with him and Juma to Watamu I learned more.

After lunch in town the three of us head for Watamu. It takes about half an hour to get there on the *Bajaj*. I ask them why they come all the way here and they explain that they usually go to Watamu during the off-peak season, when it is “boring in Malindi”. We walk from the road out on a beach where Lolani tells me that they normally bring their *wazungu* for a romantic day-trip. Juma points out a half-island he says is called “the island of love” because of its shape – a heart. They tell me that the Italian women “love this” and that “if they are not in love before this trip, they will definitely be in love after it.” Lolani tells me that they have to be as romantic as possible to seduce these women.

The process of getting in touch with, and further seducing, a female foreign tourist does not appear at all easy. Not seeming desperate in the eyes of the woman is a tactic used specifically to attract their attention. Herold et al. (2001:986) tell of how the more successful beach boys in The Dominican Republic use more subtle, rather than aggressive approaches to tourist women. Some (the more experienced beach boys) even go to the length of using a reverse seduction strategy which involves playing hard to get (2001:986). This applies to the more successful beach boys encountered in Malindi as well. Like in Malindi, Dahles and Bras (1999:282) notes how beach boys in Indonesia will take the female tourist to “romantic places” as part of the process of becoming friendly with one another. In general, the challenge is to be noticed by the female tourist, and from then on use more or less direct flattery as a way of ‘winning’ their hearts. Romancing the women and gaining their trust is then crucial to build the foundation for a potential relationship. Other, and even more specific, tactics are usually applied once finally engaged in a relationship with a female foreigner. This relates

more closely to the fundamental economic aspects of such relationships, and will function as a preliminary approach to the next chapter concerning economy.

Summary

I early on recognized the distinct difference between beach boys with and without foreign 'girlfriends' in Malindi. Looking at appearance and style proved to be crucial in the process of knowing more about beach boys. As well as relating strongly to other accounts of beach boys from around the world, beach boys in Malindi progressively portrayed themselves to me as a collectivity. Although beach boys seemed to have a shared knowledge of an economic motive, and various tactics to achieve this, the outcome was rather varying; some were more successful than others. I have particularly given attention to the more successful beach boys I got to know; Lolani and Juma. Taking into account my own role as anthropologist and young white female, I have occasionally attempted to show the complexity of participant observation in the given circumstances. Through stressing the macho-behaviour of beach boys, I have suggested that it is a consequence of their aspirations towards being providers for their families. Beach boys make use of 'masculine behaviour' to make up for the 'feminine role' they occupy in relation to their foreign 'girlfriends'.

One of the common factors connecting beach boys across national borders are the consciously applied tactics used to attract female foreign tourists. Regardless of how this is done, or to what degree they admit to apply such tactics, the main goal, and the purpose of it all, is engaging in romantic relationships with female foreign tourists. I arrive here at the core of this study, and what separates beach boys in Malindi from other beach boys around the world. Their intention and motive behind these kinds of relationships (with female tourists) is not the possibility of migrating to Europe, but rather the opportunity to make money. In search of a better (material) life beach boys in Malindi aspire towards finding a foreign 'girlfriend', preferably old because of the prospects of more money. The centrality of money, and further economy, when it comes to Malindi beach boys makes it necessary to elaborate more on this topic. Along with economy, the aspect of locality will be presented as a much needed backdrop in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

INTERACTION AND EXCHANGE

In the previous chapter I limited my focus to beach boys and their collectivity, and further social organization, which has provided a necessary foundation for further exploration of their connections to both their surroundings and the female tourists they interact with. To continue where we finished, the details of interaction between beach boys and their foreign ‘girlfriends’ is provided in this chapter to shed some light on the fundamental economic aspect of this social phenomenon. The large informal economy directly related to tourism in Malindi, which is comprised of self-styled tour-guiding, commission-arrangements, prostitution and drugs, will here be explored through accounts of beach boys and their lives. Building on the notion of reciprocity, using Mauss (1995 [1950]) and Sahlins (2004 [1972]), I relate the romantic relationships between beach boys and foreign women to the distinction made, by among other Baldwin (2004), between commodity and gift exchange. The exchange of intimacy and money, as well as gifts and affection, within these liaisons illustrates the difficulties of making such a distinction. Basing my arguments on Bourdieu’s (1990 [1977]) contribution to the idea of reciprocity, I also claim that the aspects of time and skills demonstrate a distinction between beach boys and male sex workers. Making use of Barth’s (1966) and Grønhaug’s (1975) notions about transactions and signification, it is fruitful to take a look at the incentives and constraints that influence beach boys in their daily lives. In relation to this, I suggest that beach boys may be seen as various types of entrepreneurs. Finally, through providing insight into how beach boys make use of their economic profits, I wish to connect them to their surroundings throughout this chapter.

Ways to succeed

As stated in the previous chapter, there is a significant difference between beach boys who are successful; having one or more foreign girlfriends, and the ones who are not. How one achieves such success varies a great deal from one beach boy to another. Lolani told me how he went from having “nothing” to where he is today.

Juma leaves and I am left alone with Lolani in his house. Lolani takes out some photos he has in a box under the bed. He says that he will show me some pictures and that I should not laugh

when I see how thin he used to be. I look at photos of his mother and his extended family. There are also several pictures of him together with an older Italian woman with her two teenage children; on the beach, on a boat trip and on safari. Lolani tells me that she was his “girlfriend” for a while but that it ended for no particular reason; she stopped calling him and coming for visits. He hands me a photo of an elderly white woman, saying that this was his first *mzungu* and that she was from Belgium. He met her on Silver Sands beach and they had started talking. At the time, he says, he was very thin and had no money for food and living. The woman had asked him if he could help her find some nice souvenirs, in particular a key-chain. Lolani went and got this for her and they met later that day at the beach. He sold it to her for a higher price so that he could get commission off the sale. She asked him if he was hungry, and later that evening she took him out for dinner. After dinner she had given him 100 dollars as a gift, to help him, he tells me. Lolani says that he will forever be grateful to this woman. She continued to give him smaller amounts of money and she even sent him money after she had gone back to Belgium. They were not having sex but their relationship was “romantic” according to Lolani. He explains that it was not until after this woman had helped him that he started becoming successful in seducing foreign women. This was because he actually had money to spend; buying nice clothes and eating properly. Before her, Lolani says, his life was very tough and he was struggling. I ask what happened to her and whether they are still in contact. He tells me that it ended for no particular reason and adds that she did not give him “that much money” after all.

Whether one might call Lolani’s story one of coincidence or good fortune, it nevertheless accounts for how a beach boy can make the transition from being disadvantaged to, through contact with foreign females, being rather well-off. Lolani was usually candid about giving accounts of his past, and would proudly tell me how he went from “having nothing” to being where he is today. Juma, on the other hand, was always more reluctant to tell me about his past and his relationships with foreign women. He nonetheless told me parts of it one afternoon we were all together at a restaurant outside town.

I ask Juma about how he ended up having so many *wazungu* ‘girlfriends’ during the past years. He explains that he used to work at Seashell, a hotel (and club, open for all with an entrance fee at night) on Silver Sands, as an animator⁴⁶. Among other things, he was in charge of the water-aerobics in the swimming pool accessible to guests at the hotel. I ask Juma why he does not work there anymore and he says, without wanting to elaborate, that he did not like

⁴⁶ An animator works in a hotel, making contact with the guests; ensuring that they are content and happy about their stay.

the job; his boss constantly told him what to do. He quit. Before he quit he had managed to meet a few Italian women at Seashell and he tells me that he had ongoing relationships with them at the time. He started working on the beach instead; operating alone. He was also receiving money from the various women he was in relationships with. Juma reminds me about a photo I had seen of him, hanging on the wall in his home, and tells me that he was “really big” (well-built) at that time, asking me if I agree. I agree.

As shown here, Juma was employed at a hotel, and through his job he had gained access to several foreign females on vacation. His situation and starting point for becoming a beach boy was therefore different from Lolani’s story. Juma did no longer feel the need to remain in the job he had as an animator, and decided to rely on the job as an independent beach boy.

An issue closely related to the opportunities of obtaining a job in Malindi, is that of education. Most of the beach boys I encountered had none or little formal education. Both Juma and Lolani started frequenting the beach in their early teens, instead of continuing their education. This was the usual story I got from other beach boys as well. Some explained that it was the pressure of making money (for their families), as well as the admiration for others already working at the beach, that resulted in their decision to become a beach boy. Although Juma had managed to get a job within the formal economy, he told me how he used to look up to young men such as Kavuu (who were older and already established as beach boys). Other than observing the older beach boys closely, they were given advice and guidance on how to train their bodies as well as the ways to behave at the beach. Kavuu, who today is a ‘retired’ beach boy’ in his 30s, told me how he went from working at the beach, to working at a hotel as an animator, and finally getting a permanent Italian ‘girlfriend’.

Kavuu tells me that he used to frequent the beach before he started working as an animator at Palm Beach Hotel. He says that while he worked there, he was several times offered sex by female tourists visiting the hotel. They used to ask him to go out with them at night, to bars or clubs, and he accepted it as part of the job. The women would buy him drinks all night and flirt with him, he says. Once, he was offered to act in a porn-movie with four Italian women. I ask Kavuu if he accepted but he tells me that he did not feel right doing it so he turned down the offer; they were not offering him a lot of money and he felt bad about it (he gave me the impression that he would not do it anyway; whether he was offered more money or not). He says that there were “a lot of crazy things” going on at the hotel and that he got to see a lot while he worked there. This is also where he met his current Italian girlfriend. She did not want him to work there anymore after they became a couple and she bought him the car he

drives now so that he would be able to make money another way; using the car as a taxi. She has also bought a big house outside Malindi Town. He lives in the house and watches over it while she is away. “She is old”, Kavuu says, “and she even has grand-children so she does not want children with me.” He already has a daughter, he tells me, but is separated from his Giriama wife at the moment.

Kavuu had been working as a beach boy before starting the job as an animator. His job and the encounter with the Italian woman, made him quit as a beach boy and instead enter into the taxi-business. The three accounts, from Lolani, Juma and Kavuu, depict the variety of ways in which a beach boy may become successful. Still, what these stories have in common is the significance of interaction with one or more female foreigners. Another common factor is that they are all led by economic gain.

Families and children

Aside from having money to spend on themselves, I was curious to know whether the money would also be used to provide for others, in particular their families. Kavuu told me that he spent a lot on his daughter and her education, as well as providing for his siblings and parents. I was also told by Lolani and Juma that they “take care of” their families in the village. The first time I met with Lolani and Juma for a drink, Lolani told me that he lives with his wife, who is also Giriama, and added that he has been “clever” because he “picked her from the village.” This means, he explained, that it is less likely that she will “go hunting for wazungu” (meaning white men). I asked him about children, and he said he had none, although he told me that he has to take care of the two children of his late brother, who both live with the family in the village. Lolani said that he is “good in the game” and that he earns about 200 000 Ksh (\$2380) every month through his *wazungu*. His wife was pregnant at the time, but she miscarried and Lolani’s wish is still to have a baby as soon as possible. Juma, on the other hand, has three young children with his Giriama wife. We often spent time in his house together with his children.

The low season (now in May) has brought noticeable change; most beach boys are not at the beach anymore, and the ones I know spend all their time in town or at home. Today we go to Juma’s house after having lunch together in town. The house is only one room, with a bed taking up half the space inside. We sit in the small couch besides the bed and watch TV.

Juma's oldest daughter (6) spends all day 'styling' my hair. The younger children climb and jump on me. Both Lolani and Juma are very involved with the children; Juma helps his wife feed and hold the young baby and then we all go through the homework of his daughter. Juma tells me that the most important thing for him now is that all his three children get proper education. He says that he does not want them to be like him. Lolani also wants children and he says that this will be his first priority in the future. I ask them if they would like to have children with any of their foreign women. They both tell me that they would not mind, but that they would have to find a young girl like me (not older women like they have now). Lolani says that he thinks "half-cast" (meaning a mix between African and European) children are beautiful, and that he wants a child "like that." Juma adds that if you have a child with a *mzungu* you will have that *mzungu* for life. I ask Juma if he would be able to move to Europe and leave his family here in Malindi. He says that he can do it for a period of time, especially if this means that he will be able to provide for them better. He adds that he will never let them starve and that he will always take care of them. Lolani says that he can also go (to Europe), but that this will only happen if he is in a relationship with a younger woman.

Even though both Juma and Lolani have their families here in Malindi, they would not mind moving to Europe if this gives them the chance to work and earn money. This, however, is not the case when it comes to travelling to Europe with their current Italian 'girlfriends'; they want a young *mzungu*. Despite this, they still focus on having relationships with older foreign women; creating the possibility of earning money right here in Malindi.

Difficulties and dilemmas

In the previous chapter I focused on the various tactics applied by beach boys to attract the attention of female foreigners. Proceeding to what might seem to be a more complex and delicate matter I now focus on the various aspects connected to maintaining a romantic relationship with a female foreigner. The actuality of the relationships; that beach boys are in it for the economic gain, is a crucial factor when looking at such liaisons. One of the biggest challenges for a beach boy is to keep the woman's trust, and the illusion that he loves her, alive. Having several relationships simultaneously becomes not only more challenging but more risky as well; the beach boy has to make sure that the women do not know about each other. This, I was told, is "hard work". If two or more women decide to visit during the same period of time it is up to the beach boy to avoid this and make various excuses to all but one.

Some also arrange for the women to visit them in other places, like Watamu or South Coast⁴⁷, to avoid people seeing them together in Malindi and possibly telling the other women. I have been told that some beach boys may try to steal another man's *mzungu* by telling her that he has other women, although this was apparently rare. While the women are visiting one should also switch off the phone to avoid 'accidents', like making the woman suspicious if another woman calls. To avoid upsetting the other women (who are in turn trying to call) they make use of various excuses like "my phone got lost", "I was visiting my grandmother in the bush" and so on. A beach boy will need (strategic) skills, while at the same time keeping the woman's trust.

Currently, Lolani has five different Italian girlfriends who do not know about each other. However, only three of them seem to be 'serious' relationships. I have previously asked him if he loves any of them and he denies this; adding that they all love him very much. The woman that I saw Lolani with the first week of my stay in Malindi is 51 years old according to him, and is called Martina. She first visited Malindi with her husband of 15 years, and during a trip on *safari-blue* Lolani gained the trust of both Martina and her husband. He met Martina in the evenings and they would check into hotels to spend time alone. Martina kept in touch with Lolani over the phone and came back to Malindi (this time alone) to visit him after three months. During her week-long stay at Karibu hotel, where Lolani stayed with her, I was told to keep my distance and I did not hear from Lolani while she was visiting. After about a week he contacted me again.

Lolani calls early in the morning and wakes me up. "I am free", he says. "Martina has gone back to Italy." I ask him how it was and he replies that it was fun staying at Karibu Hotel; waving down at the other beach boys from the sun-beds on the plateau by Silver Sands beach. Lolani wants me to meet him and Juma at Bob Marley restaurant.

It is nice to see both of them again and we catch up. Lolani shows me a picture on his new phone; that he got from Martina as a present. The picture shows Martina from behind wearing a bikini-thong on the beach. He wants to know what I think of her body. I laugh and say that "it's nice" and he and Juma laugh too. Lolani says that even though she is old he likes her body and the fact that she is not hiding it.

A few weeks later Lolani tells me that he has "a dilemma" and that he needs my advice about how to deal with Martina.

⁴⁷ South Coast refers to the area south of Mombasa (see map 1).

Lolani says that Martina is sending him messages on the phone asking him if she should leave the husband or not. She tells him that she does not love her husband anymore and that she wants to be with Lolani instead; “she wants to get married”, he tells me. I ask Lolani what he will say to her and he tells me that he does not want to tell her what to do and that he feels he is in a dilemma; if he tells her to leave her husband he has to be with her “forever”. If he tells her to stay with the husband she will interpret that as if he does not love her enough, he explains. I ask him what he has to lose if something goes wrong and he reveals that she has told him she wants to buy a house here in Malindi for about 20 million Ksh (\$238,000). This means that Lolani might be able to get commission (which will be about 10 percent). He obviously wants this money and he needs to keep her trust. Lolani asks me what I think he should do but I tell him that I can not give him any advice; I really do not know.

I ask him more about his relationship with Martina and he tells me that he has only been with her the two times she has been here for vacation (the first time she was with her husband). He also tells me that out of all his *wazungu* she is the one who gives him the least money. He explains that he once had to get her some bandages. He bought them, but when he gave them to her she did not refund him the money for it. Lolani says that this was “a big deal” for him and that he will never forget that; “it’s not normal”, he concludes. He adds that she is extremely jealous. I ask him what he thinks it would be like if she moves to Malindi and they got married like she wants them to. He would be “in prison” and would not be able to live his normal life anymore, he says. Even from Italy she does not want him to go out at night with friends and she calls him to check if he is actually home when he says he is (resulting in Lolani running out of places when his phone rings).

The obvious “dilemma” that Lolani is talking about here, shows the importance of carefully considering what he says and does so that his actions are not at the expense of the possible financial gain (the commission). Interaction and the degree of trust between a beach boy and his *mzungu* may often lead to delicate situations that require careful managing.

Phone calls and trust

Juma has two separate phones that he usually carries around with him; one for normal outgoing and incoming calls and another for calling, and receiving calls, from Flavia. Currently, she is one of the two Italian women he is in a relationship with. I ask him about her one day we are having a drink together.

Without going into detail about how they met, Juma tells me about Flavia. She is an Italian woman in her 50s living in Rome. He has been involved with her for a few years. I ask more about her and Juma says that she has two grown up children, she is divorced, and has moved back in with her parents. He adds that she is very rich. Juma says he is especially grateful for her helping him out with the money that she sends him every month. She visits only once or twice a year but she calls Juma every day at breakfast, during lunch-time and before she goes to bed, Juma tells me. Spending time with Juma almost every day I have noticed this myself. He will quickly try to escape any noise or voices before picking her call. According to him, she does not want him to work at the beach or go out drinking when she is not there. This means that he has to lie almost every time he talks with her and she asks where he is. Juma has several times said that he does not mind this because of the money she sends.

Juma has, like Lolani, had some trouble with Flavia being jealous, but he is more reluctant to tell me about it. Having a drink before dinner at local pub near their houses, Lolani and I wait for Juma to arrive as he is late.

We are watching the news with everyone in the pub when Juma walks in and sits down. He greets me but is obviously upset about something. He talks fast and in a low voice to Lolani in Giriyama. I pick up on something about his phone, his *mzungu* Flavia, and *safari-blue*. Juma's phone rings and he jumps up and runs outside to answer it. I seize the opportunity to ask Lolani about what is going on with Juma and his phone – implying that I already understood some of it. Lolani tells me that Juma is upset because Flavia had tried to call him all day while he was accompanying some tourists on *safari-blue*. His phone had been switched off because he forgot to charge it and he had no chance of charging it during the boat trip. I ask Lolani what the big problem is and why Flavia would become so mad if she could not reach him for a few hours during the day. He tells me that Juma has promised Flavia not to work with tourists at the beach and that the money she sends to him every month should be enough for him not to work. When Juma did not answer his phone Flavia had accused him of cheating on her and turning his phone off on purpose. They had a fight over the phone because of this and Juma tried to come up with an excuse for why the phone was switched off. Juma comes back inside and I ask him if it was Flavia he was talking to on the phone. He says yes, but continues talking to Lolani about the situation in Giriyama. Lolani tries to include me in the conversation by talking English – Juma does not speak English as well as Lolani and keeps on talking in Giriyama. After a while they both turn to me and tell me “it's ok now” and that Flavia is not mad at Juma anymore. Juma's mood suddenly picks up and he starts yelling; “*haya, haya,*

haya!" ("ok, ok, ok" - typical of him and other beach boys) and gets up from his chair to dance.

This was not the first time I had seen Juma stressed about Flavia; if we (me, Lolani and Juma) were on the *Bajaj* and Juma's phone (for calls from Flavia) would ring, we had to stop by the road for him to answer the phone. This shows various challenges and the need for beach boys to assess a range of aspects relative to the romantic relationships they involve themselves in.

The dream of starting a business

The importance of seriously assessing how to behave and act in relation to their female 'girlfriends' relates directly to their motive of 'extracting' money and valuables from the relationship. To maintain the possibility of these potential outcomes, beach boys are forced to sustain the women's trust through lies when necessary. Closely related to beach boy's economic motive is their more specific goal of attaining assistance from the women to establish a small business in Malindi. Lolani has a dream of opening up a bar in town where he can sell drinks and food. He has also talked about buying a car, with assistance from one of his 'girlfriends'; that he can use to rent out for safaris. Juma has also told me that he has received money from Flavia to buy a *tuk-tuk*. If you own a *tuk-tuk* you can rent it out to a driver who pays you 1000 Ksh (\$12) per working day while he keeps the surplus for himself. Kavuu is an example of a beach boy who has entered into the formal economy, making money from tourists who are in need of transportation. He was given a car by his Italian 'girlfriend' that he now operates as a taxi, often driving tourists to and from the airport in Mombasa. Kavuu is living the dream of many beach boys today; running his own business. Beach boys aspire towards a job in the formal economic sector, rather than relying solely on the position they hold in what may be referred to as the informal economic sector. The wish to start a business of their own relates to the awareness that they are getting older, and hence will have difficulties attracting tourist women in the future. This was made clear during a conversation I had with Juma and Lolani.

We are talking about the importance of making money. Lolani and Juma agree that they both know "this" (referring to being a beach boy) will not last forever, meaning their ability to attract foreign females, and that they some day will be "too old". They explain that "these women want good-looking, big (meaning well-built), young men." It is therefore better, Juma

says, to make money and save it to build a business for when you get older. Lolani agrees and reminds me of his dream to start a pub in town (with the money and help from one of his Italian girlfriends).

Beach boys over 30 years seem to appear less attractive to foreign women visiting Malindi, something they are well aware of. If they manage to establish a business they will secure a source of income in the future.

Peak and off-peak tourist seasons

Malindi's economy relies heavily on tourism, and contributes over 85 percent of the area's economic activities (Kibicho 2009:158). Tourist-related businesses like hotels, tour-companies, transportation, restaurants and supermarkets (that cater to tourists) are today vital to the local economy. Most of the jobs available are more or less directly, or indirectly, related to the tourism industry. Although there is a high number of Germans and other European visitors, it is (as described in previous chapters) Italians that dominate the tourism-industry in Malindi. Over 70 percent of tourists in Malindi are Italians (Kibicho 2009:167-168). Many Italians have settled down in Malindi to make money off the tourism industry; running hotels and restaurants, cafes, beauty-parlours, supermarkets and tour-companies. Mbugua and Cornwell (2008) write that the prices of goods and services are a lot higher in Malindi than in cities like Mombasa and Nairobi. Based on information from various "informants", they add that the introduction of an Italian market in Malindi was the beginning of the rising prices (2008:103). The centrality of tourism to the formal economy can be illustrated through looking at the vast difference between peak and off-peak tourist seasons. During a conversation with me, Ted (a good friend of Lolani) revealed some of the challenges beach boys are faced with in relation to the shifting of tourist-seasons.

I am left alone at the table in the bar with Ted, as Lolani and Juma leave to buy more *miraa*. Ted tells me that he works in Jambo Villas, north of Malindi. I ask him if he has a *mzungu* and he confirms this. He seems a bit embarrassed to tell me that she is 52 years old and from Italy. He shows me a photo of her in his wallet, but is obviously bothered. I change the topic and ask him instead about the different options of making a living here in Malindi and along the Kenyan coast in general. He tells me that they do not have any resources; like agriculture or other things. They only have the production of salt (north of Malindi) and of course tourism,

he adds. When it comes to tourism, Ted says, it is hard to get a job; “this is why it is necessary for Kenyans to get friends or girlfriends who are white, and willing to help people like me.” Ted also tells me about a male *mzungu* that helped him (financially) a few years ago to buy a car (to be used for safaris or as a taxi). He said that this did not work out because he had bought it right before low season, and he eventually had to sell it to survive until the next high season.

Ted was not the only one I encountered who told me about this; many beach boys explained that they have to sell valuables and gifts that they receive during high season to survive in the low season. Kibicho (2009:122) divides the seasons into three periods; peak season from November to March, off-peak season from April to July, and mid-season from August to October, where the off-peak and mid-seasons are considered low-business tourism periods. People who have a job during peak season may be left unemployed come low season. It is customary for restaurant or hotel-owners to send their workers on unpaid leave until the high season brings more tourists again. These workers are forced to find jobs elsewhere to survive. During low season I encountered Charles, an animator at one of the big hotels along Silver Sands, who was now working as a *Bajaj*-driver. He told me that he was struggling, and asked if I could “promote” him (give him some money).

The people who rely on tourists for a living, for example curio⁴⁸-dealers, employees at tour-companies and hotels, and taxi-drivers, all have a difficult time earning enough for themselves and their families during low season. This is notable in Malindi; the bars and restaurants are empty, the beach is vacant, and the occasional heavy rains leave the streets in town empty of people. On one of these rainy days I bumped into David, a beach boy I had met on Silver Sands during high season. He was rolling a wheelbarrow full of sand along with a group of other young men. I asked him if this is what he works with when he is not at the beach. David says; “you know it’s low season now, *hakuna wazungu*” (“there are no white people”). Like Charles, David had to find another way of making money, although this is not easy at all. I was told that most beach boys go back to their *shamba* (garden), or village, to live and work there with their families during low season. The same way many employees in Malindi are forced to take leave during low season, beach boys may be said to do the same. Even so, it is not said that it is easy for beach boys to make money during high season either; they often have to rely on ‘tricks’ and the central aspect of commission.

⁴⁸ Curio is used on unusual or ‘curious’ objects or artefacts that may be sold; here meaning souvenirs.

Commission: co-operation and disputes

During high and mid-season, beach boys in Malindi often present themselves as ‘beach operators’ selling safaris. In reality they are not formally employed by the tour-companies, but if they manage to make arrangements with tourists (usually at the beach) they will show them to the booking office (preferably in the afternoon) and there they will receive their commission from the tour operator. This is how they make money (aside, but not entirely separated, from their relation to tourist women). An important feature of the informal economy related to tourism in Malindi is therefore the aspect of commission. Beach boys, along with waiters or hotel-employees, receive commission (from the place visited) for taking tourists almost anywhere; to a restaurant, to a bar or club, or to various tour-operators. At Silver Sands, David once told me that if you bring a tourist to eat “*kuku na chipsi*” (“chicken and chips”) for 1500 Ksh (\$18) at Seashell Hotel one receives 200 Ksh (\$2) in commission. Even when tourists buy souvenirs from someone a beach boy introduces them to, he will get commission – that is normally 10 percent of the price paid – most often without the tourist knowing about it. During the week my husband visited me in Malindi, Kavu gave us an example of how this works.

Kavu has asked to meet with us for a drink. He is eager to tell my husband what he has earlier told me about his life. He says that he used to work as an animator at Palm Beach Hotel, where he used to help tourists get what they needed. Kavu gives an example where a tourist came to him, asking for help to find a *khanga*. He says that he used to get them from one of the beach mamas, cut them in half, and then sell each piece to the tourist for double the original price. This way he would earn more than just the commission from the sale. He says; “you become clever like this when you live here.” Kavu says that he used to be more “fit” (referring to his body) when he used to work as a beach boy. He says that he is tired now, and that he is grateful for the *mzungu* he has been together with for over 6 years.

At the table next to us there are four Italian men sitting together with a beach boy named Samuel. Kavu tells us that Samuel is about to persuade the Italians to buy a big hotel here in Malindi, and that if the deal goes through he will be “a rich man” (off the commission). Three Maasai-hawkers enter the pub and approach the four Italian men, attempting to sell various souvenirs. We observe them from our table and the Italians finally buy some souvenirs each before the hawkers leave. Samuel comes over to our table and whispers something to Kavu. Kavu then tells us that he will “be right back.” When he comes back I ask him what is going on. Kavu explains to us that Samuel wanted him to go outside to receive the

commission from the Maasai-hawkers without the Italians noticing. Kavu says that he did not mind doing this for his friend, adding that he also gets something out of this; a part of the commission.

Through assisting each other, based on the widely recognized arrangement of commission, beach boys manage to make money through their interaction with tourists in general. Although this is a good example of the cooperation that often exists between beach boys, the aspect of commission may also function as a source of dispute. Such disagreements may even occur within the smaller groups, or cliques, of beach boys. I realized this when I unexpectedly witnessed a quarrel between Juma and Lolani.

Sitting at the beach with Lolani, and some of the beach mamas, he asks me if I will join him for lunch at his house. We leave the beach. Lolani says that he, together with Juma and Michel, has gotten a group of tourists to go for safari. Since he has his *mzungu* here for the week (at a hotel in Watamu) they decided that Juma should go with the group on safari (they usually go with them as company to ensure that they are having a good time and possibly create bonds with the tourists). After lunch, Juma comes by the house and I can tell there is some kind of issue between him and Lolani by the way they are talking to each other. They talk fast and loud about money and something about the safari that Juma has just been on. Juma seems upset and he leaves. Lolani also looks upset and I ask him what is going on. He tells me that he knows that Juma and Michel have given him less than his share of the commission received from the tour-operator they co-operate with. He says that since he was not there, they (meaning Juma and Michel) gave him less than he was supposed to get. Lolani explains that he is disappointed, but that it is not surprising at all. I ask him if not he, Juma and Michel are good friends. He tells me that they are indeed, but that “this is how it works”, and that “it’s always like this when it comes to money.” Lolani ends the conversation by telling me that he will just do the same towards them the next time he gets the chance.

This was the first time I had experienced any disagreements between Juma and Lolani, but as Lolani explained; this was not unusual when it came to the dividing of money. Even though such issues point to disagreements that may take place between beach boys, I can not stress the importance of the network they have created, and certainly maintain, enough.

Brokers and romantic entrepreneurs

Beach boys have a wide range of connections within the local society; in particular people in tourist-related work (such as waiters, bartenders, taxi-drivers, and hawkers). These connections inform beach boys about “new arrivals” (of tourists), single women having coffee alone, or tourists interested in various types of assistance. Such networks are given great value by beach boys, and are directly related to their main goal of getting in touch with female foreigners. My friend Benny, who works as a waiter in one of the most popular Italian restaurants in town, tells me that he will receive “*kitu kidogo*” (“a little something” - meaning a smaller amount of money) from beach boys if he gives them information about tourists in the restaurant.

I here introduce Boissevain (1974) and his idea of a broker, as a special type of entrepreneur. He defines brokers as expert network specialists who have access to strategic contacts who control such resources as land, jobs and specialized knowledge, and are further willing to manipulate these for his own profit (1974:147-148). Although Boissevain’s idea of brokers may be said to relate more closely to political issues, I propose that it applies to beach boys in Malindi as well. Influenced by his social environment, a broker needs to be willing to use his social network to his personal gain, normally through skill and cunning (Boissevain 1974:153-158). Looking at how brokers are able to profit from their communication channels, Boissevain describes this as role relations, which are further governed by the notion of reciprocity or transactions (1974:158). Aside from using their networks within the local community, another dimension of their role as brokers is how beach boys profit from foreign women without them knowing about it. Taylor (2001), who writes about beach boys in the Caribbean, notes how the female tourists not always realize how the beach boys extract a financial benefit from them. Beach boys there are said to have several tricks, one of them is to have dinner at a friend’s restaurant where they are overcharged and the reward is split between the beach boy and the friend (Taylor 2001:757-758). In Malindi, I several times observed how beach boys dining with one or more *wazungu* usually would stay behind and (secretly) receive commission from the staff before leaving. It seems that beach boys, through their practices, have found a distinctive way of taking part in the tourist-related economy. Making use of their networks, and through specific tactics engaging in relationships with female tourists, they seem to have created the possibility of a more or less direct access to tourist’s assets. Consistent with my own reflections, Dahles and Bras (1999:281) note that Indonesian beach

boys' romantic and sexual behaviour must be seen as part of their entrepreneurial strategies to secure a living. They label beach boys as "romantic entrepreneurs" on the basis of looking at their romancing of tourists as a major economic strategy (1999:281).

Beach boys or sex workers?

Kibicho (2009:174) writes that "male sex workers" in Malindi are eligible to be called entrepreneurs as he defines the term as someone consciously deciding to undertake an innovative enterprise, assuming risk for the sake of profit. It is here vital to point out how, throughout his book, Kibicho refers to both beach boys and what he calls "male commercial sex workers" (MCSW). Even though he includes CSWs (commercial sex workers) in what he refers to as beach boys (2009:116), his writings concerning MCSWs in specific are more related to my own definition of 'beach boys' in Malindi (see chapter 1). This brings me to the issue of sex work and prostitution. Some might argue that beach boys' relations to foreign women may just as well be referred to as prostitution, or sex tourism (as shown in chapter 1). In a strict sense prostitution is the practice of providing a sexual service to another person for payment. Bataille (1957) relates what he refers to as, the "lowest form of prostitution" directly to poverty. Based on his notion that shame and prohibition serve as the human aspects of lust and sexuality, he writes that extreme distress (poverty) unties human beings from these feelings of prohibition (1975:138-139). In other words, it is important to take into consideration the extreme poverty that often influence people's choices. Although this might be helpful in reflecting on why beach boys engage in sexual activities with foreign women who are a lot older, it does not solve the issue of whether or not they may be called sex workers. I choose to refrain from referring to beach boys as prostitutes. To support this notion I will shed some light on the aspect of reciprocity and transactions as well as including the importance of time. The notion of reciprocity, as Mauss (1995 [1950]) has associated with the obligation to give, receive, and to repay, may be used as a basis for reflecting on beach boys' practices in relation to their foreign 'girlfriends'.

Reciprocity: money, gifts and affection

Through providing their 'girlfriends' with the promise of loving commitment, and expecting money and valuables in return, beach boys may be said to make use of the aspect of

reciprocity. This may in turn relate directly to Sahlins' (2004 [1972]) proposed spectrum of reciprocities. Where generalized reciprocity is based on transactions that are altruistic, and balanced reciprocity refers to direct, balanced exchange, the notion of negative reciprocity is by Sahlins regarded as more impersonal transactions that are opened and conducted toward a utilitarian advantage (2004 [1972]):193-195). Sahlins points out how social or economic circumstances that impel reciprocity may be specified in one of the above mentioned categories of reciprocity (2004 [1972]):196). Through assuming the relevance of reciprocity to the interaction within romantic relationships between beach boys and Italian women in Malindi, I specify his notion of generalized reciprocity.

The material side of the transaction is repressed by the social: reckoning of debts outstanding cannot be overt and is typically left out of account. This is not to say that handing over things in such form, even to "loved ones", generates no counter-obligation. But the counter is not stipulated by time, quantity, or quality: the expectation of reciprocity is indefinite. It usually works out that the time and worth of reciprocation are not alone conditional on what was given by the donor, but also upon what he will need and when, and likewise what the recipient can afford and when (Sahlins 2004 [1972]):194).

This relates to how beach boys normally are given things and valuables by their foreign 'girlfriends'. Through his relationship with Carmen, Lolani gives us an example of how his romantic commitment may affect her willingness to bring him gifts from Italy. Carmen is from Rome and works as a principle at a school there. Lolani is not sure of her age but says that "she is old." She has two children of the ages 32 and 40. Every other day she would call Lolani from Italy.

After having lunch with Lolani and Juma we all go back to Juma's house. Lolani gets a phone-call from Carmen. She is planning a trip to Malindi and wants to know what Lolani wants her to bring for him from Italy. He tells Carmen that he likes *Diesel*, *Guess*, *D&G* and other famous brands. He also tells her that he desires *Nike-shoes*. They talk about the car she has promised to buy for him, and Carmen asks Lolani if he has checked out prices on the type of car he wants. Lolani tells her that he is in the process of doing it, but that he needs more time to figure everything out. The last part of the conversation is analogous to the conversations both he and Juma have with all their Italian 'girlfriends'; Lolani tells Carmen how much he loves her, how much he misses her, and how he can not wait to be with her again; "*ti amo*

*tanto tesoro, mi manchi come sempre, amore*⁴⁹. After he hangs up, Lolani seems happy and tells me how lucky he is to have Carmen, adding that “she is nice and kind.”

In addition to bringing gifts of clothes and shoes, Carmen wants to buy a car for Lolani. He tells me that she is good to him because he lets her know how much he loves her. Following Sahlins’ generalized reciprocity (2004 [1972]), the donor’s (Carmen) idea of reciprocation relies on what she wants, and when, as well as what the recipient (Lolani) can give back, and when. In other words, Carmen expects to have Lolani’s full attention and devotion when she arrives in Malindi, while Lolani expects gifts and money in return.

Beach boys and foreign women may therefore be said to be in a relationship of exchange; beach boys provide the women with the promise of commitment and intimacy while the women provide the men with money and valuables. However, it must be duly noted that the women relevant to this study are first of all not aware of the beach boys’ manipulation of them (as far as I have been told), and secondly have not been prioritized (in this study) like the beach boys. Even so, the interactions between beach boys and foreign women relate to a wider topic within anthropology; the exchange of gifts and commodities. The defining characteristics of commodities is their exchange-value, which refers to the quantitative proportion of which sorts of values are exchanged for other sorts of values (Gregory 1982:11). Mauss (1995 [1950]) has argued that gifts, on the other hand, are the exchange of inalienable things between people who are in a reciprocal dependence. Gregory (1982:19) points out that by following such definitions; commodity exchange establishes a relationship between objects while gift exchange establishes a relationship between subjects. Along the same lines, Baldwin (2009:385) discusses the distinction between these types of exchange, and points out that while commodity exchange establishes objective quantitative relationships between what is transacted, gift exchange establishes personal qualitative relationships between the transacted.

Bloch and Parry (1991) disagree on this distinction and bring the aspect of money into the discussion. They note that the idea of the very impersonality of money, making it inappropriate as a gift, seems to be a thought from our own (Western) culture that may further be problematic to apply on other societies (1991:8). This may be illustrated through how beach boys rather want money, instead of gifts, from their foreign ‘girlfriends’. The Italian women will on the other hand usually bring gifts of clothes and electronics, or sponsor specific purchases like cars or motorbikes. Money, that is cash, is nevertheless seen by beach

⁴⁹ Translated from Italian to English: “I love you very much honey, I miss you as always, love”.

boys as the ultimate gift from a *mzungu*. Still, the beach boys are in fact receiving money from the women (through Western Union⁵⁰), which shows the complexity of these relationships. By approaching ideas about money in a relativistic way, as Bloch and Parry (1991), one might suggest that beach boys and their Italian women have two very different understandings of money and the exchange of gifts and commodities. Further, it is hard to make a distinction between money, commodities and gifts in such a context. I argue that the interaction between beach boys and foreign women works as an empirical example that blurs the distinction made by Baldwin between commodity and gift exchange.

Transactions and significations

According to Barth (1966:38), transactions are those sequences of interaction which are systematically governed by reciprocity, and he writes that there is a track of gains and losses which affects further action and changes the strategic situation which subsequently channels choices. Transactions may therefore be of importance when it comes to revealing how systems of values are maintained, how they are relative to culture, and to show how a basic social process can generate a variety of social forms (Barth 1966:40). Transactions between beach boys and female tourists can be a good basis for analysis, and may further be fruitful in the understanding of certain choices made by beach boys. Grønhaug (1975) also uses the aspect of interaction, and includes within it the aspects of transaction and signification. He builds on Barth's definition and defines transactions as the exchange of interest objects that are scarce resources to the participants, while he adds that no transactions occur without some simultaneous signification (1975:25-26). He regards signification as the essential element of consciousness, which he writes is inherent in what one may term as choice, action, interaction and social relation (1975:27). Relative to this is then the two separate participants in interaction; on the one hand the beach boy and on the other hand the Italian woman. The very first time I met Kavu was during a night out with Lucia; a 45 year old Italian woman who was staying in the house next to me, while visiting Malindi for two weeks. Through her, I got a unique chance to observe the interaction between an Italian woman and a (former) beach boy.

Lucia is scared to travel with a *tuk-tuk* or a *Bajaj* so she takes a taxi almost anywhere she goes. She tells me that she will call a man she knows to come pick us up from the house. The driver

⁵⁰ Western Union is a financial service company where one may transfer money across countries.

is Kavú, a man in his early 30s with long dreadlocks; to me he looks like a slightly older beach boy. He is nice to both of us and is obviously flirting with Lucia who is sitting in the front seat. He drops us off where we are to have dinner and Lucia says that she will call him later.

After dinner he picks us up before picking up a friend of me and Lucia outside town. Deciding we all want to go have a drink in town, Lucia invites Kavú to join us as the 'designated driver'. I notice that Kavú greets most of the beach boys in the club and I ask him if he used to be a beach boy. He says yes, but that he stopped when he got a job at a hotel and met his Italian girlfriend.

During the evening, Kavú devotes his full attention to Lucia and she seems to like it. When he leaves our table I ask Lucia if she likes Kavú. Lucia says that she does not think he is flirting with her but that if he was, she would not want him anyway. It is getting late and we decide to end the night. Kavú drives our friend home before driving me and Lucia to the gate of our houses. I thank Kavú while Lucia pays him for the taxi ride. I walk over to call the *askari* to open the gate. Turning back, I can see Kavú and Lucia kissing.

Although Lucia tried to make it obvious that she did not want anything to do with Kavú, her actions indicated otherwise. Lucia had told me that she wished to go to Watamu for a day, and since Kavú had a car he was driving as a taxi she told me that she wanted him to take her there. The morning after their trip together Lucia came to tell me about it.

Lucia lights a cigarette and sips her espresso carefully before she suddenly says "the sex with Kavú was very, very good" (she does not speak English well, but good enough to make her self understood). I ask her why she had sex with him. Lucia explains that she was tempted by his continuous persisting. She goes on telling us that "it was just for the sex" and that she does not want a relationship with him, adding that she only wants "a good time" in Malindi. I ask Lucia how much she had paid Kavú for driving her to Watamu and she replies that she paid him 2000 Ksh (\$24) at the end of the day.

The sequences of interaction between Kavú and Lucia may be viewed in light of Barth and Grønhaug's ideas of transaction and signification. Lucia on her part, may be said to make choices based on her statements about wanting to have "a good time." Kavú, on the other part, is basing his actions on the possibilities of entering into a romantic relationship with Lucia that may further result in financial gain for him. The different ideas and values canalizing their choices and actions are illustrated through their interaction.

The aspect of time

I learned more about the relationship between Kavu and Lucia when he invited me out for “*nyama choma*” (“grilled meat”) after Lucia had gone back to Italy. During her stay in Malindi, Lucia had made it clear to me that she did not like Kavu in a serious (romantic) way. Kavu had a different perception, and was obviously torn between the possible benefits of being with Lucia and the fear of putting his current relationship with the other Italian woman at risk.

During dinner, Kavu starts telling me about Lucia. Kavu complains that she calls and sends him messages all the time. She has told him that she wants to come live in Malindi and start a business here with his help. He says she has even uttered that she wants to have children with him. Kavu tells me that he is worried because he does not want to jeopardize his 6 year relationship with the other Italian woman whose house he lives in. Lucia has earlier called me from Italy and asked if I can “keep an eye on” Kavu. I tell Kavu this. He is surprised, he says, because she has told him specifically not to talk to, or meet with me. I tell Kavu that it seems like Lucia is very much in love with him and I ask him if he will use this to get something out of her (in terms of money). He says yes, and that he only wants money to start a business or something like that. He tells me that he does not want another relationship, and definitely not children. Considering his other Italian girlfriend, he says it might be too complicated for him to have two different women. In a serious tone he says that I can not tell Lucia about meeting with him; “I promised her not to see you.”

A few days later I am told by Kavu’s friend Joyce, a girl that I usually spend time with because she works in the area that I live, that he has tried to get money from Lucia. He had approached Joyce, who also knows Lucia because she helps Joyce with money occasionally, and asked her for a favour. The favour was to call Lucia and tell her that Kavu is in the hospital and that he needs money for paying the hospital-bill. Joyce did not want to do this because she was afraid to jeopardize her much needed financial help from Lucia. Apparently, Kavu had then asked Lucia directly for money instead, saying that he wanted to buy a *Bajaj* and that he would need 100 000 Ksh (\$1190). Joyce explains that Lucia reacted with anger to the request and told him that the relationship between them was over.

Looking back at how Lucia initially expressed her relationship with Kavu as nothing serious, it may seem as if she wanted to conceal her true feelings. All the while, Kavu was aware of these feelings and was further willing to use them in the attempt to make her send him money.

In his haste to do this, deriving from the fear of jeopardizing his relationship with his other Italian ‘girlfriend’, he failed in his tactics and ended up breaking off the relationship. When I told Lolani and Juma about the incident between Kavuu and Lucia they reacted by saying that it was far too early in the relationship to ask her directly for money. If it was up to them, they said, they would have waited longer and found a different way of asking the woman for money. Their comments stress the meaning of time and the sensitivities around asking the woman in question for economic assistance. Interpreting signs and assessing time, or timing, when it comes to implying the need for money can be difficult and may alter the situation, and the relationship, completely. My thesis shows that the aspect of time is crucial in reciprocal relationships. Bourdieu (1990 [1977]:6) makes the importance of time explicit in relation to giving and receiving gifts:

It is a question of style, which means in this case timing and choice of occasion, for the same act – giving, giving in return, offering one’s services, paying a visit, etc. – can have completely different meanings at different times, coming as it may at the right or wrong moment, while almost all important exchanges (...) have their own particular moments; the reason is that the laps of time *separating* the gift from the counter-gift is what authorizes the deliberate oversight, the collectively maintained and approved self-deception without which symbolic exchange, a fake circulation of fake coin, could not operate. (...) In short, everything takes place as if agents’ practice, and in particular their manipulation of *time*, were organized exclusively with a view to concealing from themselves and from others the truth of their practice, which the anthropologist and his models bring to light simply by substituting the timeless model for a scheme which works itself out only in and through time.

The importance of time, or more specifically the importance of including people’s manipulation of time, is crucial in this case. Although one might speculate in whether or not Lucia would ever have given Kavuu money, it is possible to suggest that through his mistake of asking her directly for money prematurely, he destroyed the possibility of this happening in the future. Again, the concept of time makes itself essential here. It is the same aspect of time that I argue differentiates beach boys from prostitutes or sex workers. Bourdieu (1990 [1977]:15) points out how exchanging gifts in a short span of time breaks off the exchange. While sex workers and clients usually exchange a service for money or valuables within a short time-period, beach boys make use of extracting time and delaying the request for ‘repayment’. Bourdieu (1990 [1977]:6) notes that to abolish the interval (of time) is to abolish strategy. Keeping in mind the distinction made by De Certeau (1980) between strategy and

tactics (presented in chapter 3), the tactics applied by beach boys towards their financial goal is apparent here. This further relates to what Bourdieu refers to as the concealment of the truth within the participants practices, as shown above. As opposed to sex-clients, the Italian women here are not aware of their role in ‘purchasing a service’. One might say that through their ability to manipulate time and make use of reciprocity, beach boys separate themselves from sex-workers. What is more, beach boys do not view themselves as sex workers, and in some incidents they do not even engage in sexual contact with their older foreign ‘girlfriends’. In general, the emphasis is placed by beach boys on romancing and companionship, rather than sexual acts. The beach boys in question also made it clear that they distance themselves from sex work. Even though the term *malaya* usually refers to a female prostitute, I was aware of the existence of male prostitutes in Malindi; providing their services to both women and men. Even though many will argue that beach boys are male prostitutes, they do not acknowledge themselves as such.

Incentives and constraints

It will be imperative to connect the beach boys’ economic profits to their surrounding environment. Barth (1966) writes that all behaviour takes place in a matrix of values and social relations. He looks at how choice, strategy and role-play, based on ideas and values in society, create patterns of behaviour (1966:60). Following Barth, one may recognize beach boy-practices as ‘cases’ of human behaviour and thereby having to take into account the constraints and incentives that canalize their choices. The lack of jobs in the formal economic sector, the pressures of providing for their families, along with the desire to earn enough money to start their own business can be mentioned as important incentives behind working as beach boys. Hence, the main motivation is purely economic. Building on the notion of beach boys as entrepreneurs in an African context, Volker’s (1997:xxiii) idea that traditional beliefs in witchcraft, social and familial obligations, personal ambition, and the desire for status, are all important influences on African entrepreneurs. This closely relates to the specific incentives for young men in Malindi to become beach boys.

In terms of constraints, one should keep in mind the informal sector which beach boys operate within. This might be compared to Volker’s (1997) findings in Zimbabwe. He notes that the governmental administration in Zimbabwe formed a marginalized informal sector through their policies towards traders and other workers within the informal sector (1997:83).

In Kenya, certain constraints are put on beach boys from the authorities. I have been told stories about how beach boys used to represent crime and *makelele* on the beaches of Malindi, both from others and beach boys themselves. I once asked Lolani about the stories I had been told, about beach boys robbing tourists and creating problems for the boat-operators at the beaches. He told me that 10-20 years ago beach boys were notorious for “making problems” along the beaches of Malindi. This has changed now he said; “now we are organized and sell safaris to tourists.” Even though beach boys organize themselves there are signs of both police and *askaris* connected to the various hotels, attempting to impose regulations on beach boys. The hotels have rules for them (for example the restriction of certain areas), and they are also said to warn tourists about beach boys; telling guests not to engage in conversation with the boys they meet along the beach. Sitting under the stairway up to Karibu Hotel we were several times told to move by the *askari*. The police, more precisely the tourist police⁵¹, have imposed a rule that beach boys advertising tours have to carry an id-card. I was told how complicated this can be by Brian, a Bajuni beach boy spending his time along the northern parts of Silver Sands.

Brian tells me that he has been arrested by the police on many occasions. I ask why that is and he says that it has happened the times he has approached tourists. “They will demand to see an id-card from me and when I can’t show a card like that I get arrested.” The problem, Brian says, is to get one of these id-cards that prove you are advertising safaris and trips. This card apparently costs around 7000 Ksh (\$83), which is a lot of money for a (so far) unsuccessful beach boy. This puts Brian in a difficult position and he explains to me that he is “still in training” as a beach boy and that he has a hard time making contact with tourists.

Unlike Brian, both Lolani and Juma have id-cards which they carry around with them. The tourist-police visits Silver Sands from time to time and my first experience with them was during one of the many mornings I spent sitting with a group of beach boys under the stairway leading up to Karibu Hotel.

Suddenly a policeman appears where we are sitting and grabs Juma by the shoulder. He drags Juma over to another group of policemen a few meters away. I try to ask some of the other beach boys about what is going on; I am getting worried for Juma. They tell me not to bother and that it is “old business” between the police and Juma; “the policeman only wants some

⁵¹ In Malindi they have their own tourist police; Tourist Unit Police (TUP) and their job is to protect tourists visiting the town.

money.” I am told that this happens all the time. They also explain that the way to handle it is to be quiet, respect the police, and to give them some money. After a few minutes Juma comes back over to us. I ask him about the situation and he quickly changes the topic, clearly not wanting to talk about it.

On the one hand, a number of young men in Malindi choose to become beach boys based on certain incentives like providing for their families and the desire for money and status. On the other hand, specific constraints are placed on them by the authorities and also by the local community. I will now look more into the latter, as I shed some light on how beach boys relate to, and are viewed by, other residents in Malindi.

Profit not for profit's sake

It should be pointed out how some residents in Malindi disapprove of, and object to, the way beach boys interact with tourists. Peake (1989) talks about how the elders in Malindi are concerned about the impact of tourism, and that beach boys are cited as the worst example of moral decline. I nevertheless found that the elders in Malindi were accustomed to what you might call the beach boy phenomenon although they, when asked, would under no circumstances want their own sons to work as beach boys (as shown in chapter 2). Similar accounts are shown by Naomi Brown (1992) from The Gambia where the ‘bomsas’ (beach boys) activities are strongly disapproved of by the elders. Still, as Peake (1989:214-215) points out, the elders have to tolerate it because the beach boys may share their profit. As a specific example of how beach boys may be said to share their profits, or their direct access to tourists, is when they bring their ‘girlfriends’ to see their families. Lolani told me about how he brought Martina to see his mother in the village; they spent the night in there and Martina gave his mother some money for her and the family. Juma have also told me about how he would bring Flavia to see his family, telling her that his wife is his sister and the children his niece and nephews. He said that she will provide money for him to assist them economically as well. This is not uncommon among beach boys, and is used as an additional way of ‘extracting’ money from their relation to the foreign women.

Benthall (1988), in his reference to Peake’s study of beach boys in Malindi, writes that their display (of money) is public, while they keep the means private. He further notes that beach boys do not contribute to (local) ritual expenditure (1988:20). This does not match my own findings among beach boys in Malindi, where I experienced how beach boys contribute

to events like burials and weddings. However, it may be related to the fact that Peake (1989) focused primarily on beach boys of the Swahili ethnic group and therefore may have reached opposing conclusions. Aside from providing for their own immediate family, beach boys contribute economically to their locality in various occasions. I was a few times invited to join Juma and Lolani to their home area in Magarini⁵². The first time we went it was because a new pub had opened up close to their home-village and they wanted to “check it out”. The second time it was to attend the burial of an older Giriyama woman in one of their neighbouring villages.

After almost an hour on the *Bajaj*, driving into the woods, we reach the village of Buja. Women and children are sitting together on one side of the open area and the elders are sitting under a patch of shade on the other side. The young men and boys have placed themselves in the centre of the village area. I greet the older men, following Juma and Lolani, and I am handed a chair to sit on. Lolani and Juma present the elders with some money as a contribution to the burial. Some women are singing, some are crying, and others are dancing. I notice that both Lolani and Juma are behaving differently here than they usually would in town; they are not loud and attention-seeking. We respectfully sit in the same spot for over four hours before we have to leave due to the mounting darkness.

Beach boys are often ‘accused of’ (by other residents) spending all their money on alcohol and *miraa*⁵³, leaving nothing for savings or investments. A friend of mine in Malindi once told me that beach boys are notorious for “wasting their money.” Come low season, he says, you will see them sell everything they have received as gifts from the *wazungu*. I also noticed that the more successful beach boys were being generous with other beach boys; buying them drinks, *miraa*, and meals. Peake (1989:211) notes that such generosity generates status among beach boys. An approach to understanding why beach boys seemingly waste their money is to look at how Volker (1997:xxiii) characterizes African entrepreneurs as “subsistence entrepreneurs”:

A subsistence entrepreneur seeks profit, but does so in order to support his family, to enhance his own standard of living and to inflate his status, in short it is a means to a social end, not as an end in itself. (...) However big the enterprise, it is still viewed as part of the

⁵² Magarini is a Giriyama-area some kilometres north of Malindi.

⁵³ *Miraa* is a flowering plant that is normally chewed; releasing a natural amphetamine-like stimulant (also known as *khat*).

household, not a separate entity. Its proceeds are spent rather than used in a productive manner.

Hence, beach boys might be said to continue their profit-seeking entrepreneurship as they make use of this to redistribute money into their local surroundings. Further, this may be said to generate status while filling the role of the masculine provider (refer to chapter 3). I witnessed countless times how Juma and Lolani were generous with other beach boys, both voluntarily and when requested. Although this may be seen as ‘wasting’ money, there seemed to be a thought behind it. When being generous, they portray to others a certain impression of themselves. Jenkins (2004:19) notes that it is not enough to create a social identity for oneself; this identity must be validated (or not) by those one interacts with. He refers to the internal-external self- and public image as a process of internalization (2004:20). Although being generous may be the ideal, there were at times exceptions of this. Juma was once asked for some money by another beach boy while we were having a drink, but he turned him down. Juma explained to me that sometimes he gets angry; “that *jamaa* (guy) has not saved the money he got in high season, and now he wants money from me – me, I have even three children and he has none.” Juma has also admitted to me that he during peak tourist season gives some money to his wife to save for the off-peak season, so that he does not spend it all. She is the one who buys food, clothes, and other things the family need. Juma said that he would not be able to save the money if he had them “in his hand”. Lolani has also, along with Juma, set up a bank account to be able to receive the money that the women send from abroad. They also claim that this also makes it easier to save the money.

A traditional aspect, specific for Kenya, is the so-called *Harambee*⁵⁴. People with money are in other words expected by the rest of the community to assist others economically. Beach boys do not seem to be an exception of this, and may be said to act according to such traditional ideas through generosity towards peers, family, and the local community (especially home-villages).

Summary

In this chapter I have mainly focused on the economic aspects relating to beach boys and their romantic relationships with foreign females. The main goal of obtaining money, and possibly

⁵⁴ *Harambee* means “all pull together” in Swahili, and works as an event of fundraising (for various purposes) in a community.

starting a business of their own, compels beach boys to work hard in keeping the woman's trust while at the same time assessing when and how to make use of certain tactics to get what they want. This has led me to apply Dahles and Bras' (1999) labelling of romantic entrepreneurs to beach boys in Malindi. They make use of informal networks and reciprocal interaction to create profit for themselves, which relates to Boissevain's (1974) notion of brokers. Bearing in mind the rapid overtaking of the formal (and to some extent the informal) economy in Malindi by Italians, one might see beach boys as (romantic) entrepreneurs; tapping into an economy that is increasingly difficult to participate in. Along the lines of this, the importance of beach boys' social life, and their wish to stay in Malindi rather than migrating to places like Europe, has been highlighted in this chapter.

Through Bourdieu, and his emphasis on the aspect of time and skill in a reciprocal relation, I have also argued that beach boys should not be viewed as prostitutes. Using Grønhaug and Barth I have looked at the transactions, or interaction, beach boys engage in. Using this as a basis I have applied Volker's notion of the African subsistence entrepreneur in placing beach boys within their local surroundings. Finally, through sharing their economic profit with others in their community, beach boys may be said to intermediate a larger flow of money. This relates directly to the next chapter where larger cultural and material flows across countries are connected to beach boys and their actions.

Chapter 5

ACTORS WITHIN SPACE AND TIME

While I have presented a thorough image of beach boys and their interaction within their community at large in the previous chapters, I here wish to shed light on their participation within, and connection to, larger global flows. By applying Grønhaug's (1975) notion of social fields, and the interactions between them, I attempt to illustrate how beach boys manoeuvre their way as actors within such abstract fields. Considering how Malindi is situated along the Swahili coast, and has been affected by globalizations through times, I rely on Manger (2006) and his point of historicizing globalization. Today, the aspect of modernity, as part of globalization, is ever more present in Malindi in the form of tourism. This is further illustrated through the now so familiar relationships between beach boys and foreign women. Such relationships imply various stereotypes, both about Western women as financially wealthy and "the Black male" as hypersexualized (Nyanzi et al. 2005). The exchange and flow of services and goods within these relationships have already suggested the complexity of the reciprocal aspects of romance tourism. However, what is clear, using Appadurai (1990), is that it relates to a larger, transnational flow of, among other, people, money and ideas. As Grønhaug points to the natural distinction between emic and etic codifications and analysis, I relate this directly to the issue of referring to beach boys as sex workers. Further, the beach boys' idea of their practices as "work" is tied up in their role as entrepreneurs within their African surroundings. Finally, their desire to stay in Malindi, and not move to Italy with their 'girlfriends', is directly related to the issue of power and control, or in using Emerson (1962); a power-dependency relation, although the issue of leaving home never seems to be of diminishing importance. The purpose of this chapter is to relate what I found about beach boys to larger flows of ideas and history on a global level.

Social fields

Grønhaug (1975:36) defines what he calls social fields as the overall outcome of interaction and consequences of interaction between actors as they pursue specific issues or tasks. Any social field is necessarily stretched out in space and time, making both smaller and larger fields, and it is possible to investigate how the fields condition certain aspects of the actors'

lives empirically (Grønhaug 1975:36). The notion of social fields, and the interrelations between them, is thus fruitful in the study of beach boys and the different roles they have in relation to other beach boys, their families, residents in Malindi, tourists in general, and their foreign ‘girlfriends’. Important here is Grønhaug’s idea that social events often occur in several social fields simultaneously (1978:94). By noting the interrelations between social fields, he looks at how this implies clusters of roles, attributes, and opportunities, when actors move from arena to arena (1978:115-116). Through my focus on beach boys, and further their role as actors within various, interrelated social fields, I have throughout this thesis tried to consider the implications and conditions placed on them by precisely the same social fields they illuminate through their own interaction. Grønhaug (1975:37) points out that the analysis of society as a multiple-field system includes qualitatively very different relations in human life, as well as naturally creating the distinction between emic and etic; the complexity of the field implies emic codifications while the etic analysis points at subjectively non-recognized factors. Even more relevant in this case is his suggestion that one can identify a number of smaller (micro) and larger (macro) fields and analyse their empirical interrelations (1975:37). As actors (in this case, beach boys) participate and are moulded within various fields, the study of society as a multiple-fields system implies the study of the social person (Grønhaug 1975:38). Having presented a large part of what might be said to be the smaller social fields beach boys interact within, such as interaction with their families, other beach boys, and their relationships with foreign ‘girlfriends’, I wish to focus here on the larger social fields that are connected to beach boys in Malindi. Beach boys partake in what clearly is a global phenomenon; where young men from Third World countries engage in romantic relationships with older, Western females on vacation. This relates directly to the well-known concept of globalization.

Historicizing globalization

Therborn (2000:154) has defined globalization as referring to “tendencies to a world-wide reach, impact, or connectedness of social phenomena or to a world-encompassing awareness among social actors”. While pointing out that globalization should not be taken to mean processes of homogenization, Manger (2010) makes use of Therborn’s definition when looking at the spread of “the West” in the Indian Ocean, represented by colonialism and imperialism, global capitalism, and Western modernity. Manger (2010:150) writes that from a

very early period, the Indian Ocean region has been a meeting place for “civilizations” and that it through times has had elements of what one today would refer to as “globalization”. He argues elsewhere for the need to historicize globalization, moving away from the tendency that exists in social science literature to make globalizing processes a Western and contemporary phenomenon (Manger 2006:1). The population movements across the Indian Ocean, as well as in the Kenyan and East African interior, show the importance of what Manger calls historicizing globalization. Manger argues the need for comparison in time (not only in space), while avoiding dualisms and dichotomies such as modern-pre-modern, traditional-modern, and local-global, if we are to look at histories in their context (2006:2-3).

Malindi district, situated as it is along the (Kenyan) Swahili coast, has been a part of the so-called globalizing processes from early times. Giriyama had been part of the early Indian Ocean trade in Mombasa through supplying grain from the hinterland for export (Brantley 1981:60). In 1912 British colonial agents, after establishing a settler economy up-country, returned their attention and imperial efforts to the Kenyan coast (Brantley 1981:1). As mentioned in chapter 2, British colonialists imposed a “hut tax” on Giriyama. They hoped that this would encourage people to offer themselves up for wage-labour (Brantley 1981:56). Although Giriyama resisted, the British won the war, and they were forced into a peace settlement (Brantley 1981:152). However, in the occurrence of a famine, the British removed earlier posed land restrictions and labour demands; moving their officials away from Giriyama hinterlands to the coast as there was not much left to benefit from (Brantley 1981:152). Yet, Brantley (1981:152) writes that the gratification of short-term goals for the Giriyama might have been destructive on a long-term range:

Although the Giriama had fought against a form of capitalist penetration that would relegate them to wage-labour, they had not necessarily been desirous of being excluded from participation in the capitalist economy on any basis.

Giriyama links to worldwide capitalist systems became disadvantageous, and their local, small-scale producer economy became subordinate to and detached from the colonial economy from 1920 and onward (Brantley 1981:152-153). Today, Giriyama are still said to be outnumbered by other ethnic groups in participating in the formal economy of Malindi. As mentioned in chapter 2, Giriyama kept away from Malindi Town in fear of the British. As a result of this, up-country Kenyans and other residents came to occupy most of the jobs in the formal sector (Martin 1973:92). Giriyama beach boys may be directly linked to these historical

events as they currently look for ways to make profit within the informal economy related to tourism. Although Giriyama no longer have reason to avoid Malindi Town, their history can be said to underpin the realities of today; possibly influencing the choices made by young men of the Giriyama ethnic group.

Robertson (1992:8) writes that “globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole”. Friedman (1994:196) interprets this to mean both an increase in global interdependence and the awareness of that interdependence. Applying this perception to the lives of beach boys in Malindi, it is possible to suggest that their interaction with foreign women may be seen as an example of the two proposed aspects of globalization. Beach boys are dependent on tourism, and the female tourists, to make a living. The female tourists in these relationships are dependent on the possibility of travelling abroad to engage in romantic relationships with beach boys. Such interdependence manifests itself in the compression of the world; where we today can travel and relocate across national borders within a short span of time. When it comes to being conscious of the world as a whole, beach boys, at least, may be said to be aware of their dependence on tourism and further the tourist women. Their daily lives are built around the movements of tourists visiting Malindi; low and high seasons, “new arrivals” at the big hotels; spending day time at the beach and the night time in town. The interrelations of the various social fields that beach boys interact within may be shed light on through a focus on how they relate to, and make use of both space and time.

Managing space and time

Globalization may be said to relate closely to the aspects of time and space. Referring to a technological speed-up, and the rate of transportation of people and information of various kinds (as well as money), Harvey (1990) calls this a “time-space compression”. Giddens (1994:xii) points out that space-time have become an organizing medium of modernity. He refers to the mechanical clock and the universal global map as examples of how time and space have become “emptied and disentangled” categories. The de-contextualized organizations of modernity will only be possible if the “empty” dimensions of space and time are fully incorporated in everyday life, and insofar as space is separated from place and further reintegrated in the “empty” dimension of time (Giddens 1994:xii). As globalizations represents the formation of social ties of indefinite space-time spans, the intimate aspects of

peoples' personal lives shed light on the growing, complex ties between the global and the local (Giddens 1994:xii). In other words, it is through accounts of people, their lives and actions that one can expose the connection between global and local, or the interaction between larger and smaller social fields. Following the focus on space and time, and connecting it to place, I attempt to make use of the accounts of beach boys in Malindi to highlight aspects of modernity and globalization. Further, this relates to how beach boys on a local level deal with impacts of global tourism and its effect on daily life in Malindi.

As presented in chapter 2, Malindi as a town is characterized by the large group of Italian residents, as well as the more general influences of being a great tourist destination. The town itself has several bars and restaurants, along with smaller cafes and shops, catering specifically to tourists and European residents. Aside from this, some parts of town and most of its surrounding areas are lived in and frequented by Kenyans, showing little impact of the otherwise so prevailing tourism. Although it is not uncommon to see local residents visiting so-called tourist areas, they are nevertheless dominated by tourists (including East African tourists). Beach boys will frequent these places while together with their foreign 'girlfriends'. These are places to 'be seen' as beach boys often depend on displaying to others which *mzungu* 'belongs' to them (and is 'off-limits' to others). More interestingly, they will also go there without the tourists to enjoy the facilities with other beach boys. Peake (1989:211) notes that status for a beach boy comes from being seen regularly in tourist areas, giving the impression of being wealthy without working hard for it. During my stay in Malindi I also experienced how the more successful beach boys, like Lolani, Juma and Kavuu, usually preferred going out to 'tourist places' rather than local bars for a drink. Attempting to create specific impressions of themselves to others, through appearing in such places, beach boys may be said to make use of space in a meticulous way. They use tourist-places to display a partaking in Western (leisure) culture; signalling to other beach boys and local residents, as well as tourists, that they have money and therefore status. The display aimed at local residents becomes apparent during off-peak tourist season when most tourists and European residents have gone back to their countries; leaving Malindi and its bars and restaurants empty. The bars, hotels, and restaurants that are still open are in these times frequented by beach boys. Beach boys make use of space that is created specifically for tourists, and incorporate this into a local idea of what signifies status and wealth. The vast difference between peak and off-peak season also highlights the overall aspect of time.

The pressures of making contact with tourists (preferably older female tourists) during the high season are based on the limited opportunities of making money off tourists during

low season. Another challenge is to save the money or valuables obtained during high season for the difficult times during low season. The change from peak to off-peak and mid-seasons is noticeable in Malindi as both the formal and informal economy relies heavily on tourism. Most beach boys rely on tourism alone, or more specifically their interaction with tourists, and it follows that every low season is seen as a challenge by most beach boys. The more successful beach boys are better off financially (having saved some money along with having their 'girlfriends' as financial security) than the beach boys without foreign connections. Still, common for all beach boys is the limited period of time one may operate as a beach boy. Beach boys are normally somewhere between their late teens and their late 20s. Basically, after the age of 30, the beach boy is not as attractive to female foreigners on vacation anymore. In turn, this means that beach boys are conscious of their somewhat short 'carriers'. Comparing it to any other job, a beach boy may be said to 'retire' at the age of 30 (such as Kavuu). A part of a future plan for beach boys is often the desire to start a business with the (financial) help of their foreign 'girlfriends'. This way, they may secure an income for the future. They are nevertheless dependent on the tourists' idea of time, and age; having to comply with these perceptions to make a profit.

Beach boys are attempting to deal with the challenges of limited time, both in terms of high and low seasons as well as getting older. However, time works in their favour when it comes to having more than one foreign 'girlfriend'. The women visit for shorter periods of time (although this can be up to three months at a time), before going back to Italy. This opens for the opportunities being in relationships with several women simultaneously, even though this is seen as risky at times. Kibicho writes that "commercial sex workers" meticulously schedule when their 'boyfriends' (or in this case 'girlfriends') will visit and depart from Kenya; which suggests that they (in a minor way) can be said to influence the temporal distribution of international tourists in Kenya (Kibicho 2009:191). Aside from this, it is said to be easier to have the woman at a distance when implying the need for money as it will be harder for her to see through lies. One may also speculate in whether or not the distance between the female and her 'boyfriend' may increase her longing for him; making her more susceptible to the beach boys' indications of a need for money. Whether this is in fact the case or not, it nevertheless sheds light on how beach boys have to deal with, and at times are able to make use of, time as an effect of their situation. Furthermore, it is possible that the very aspects of time and space, or the so-called time-space compression, may act as a sustaining, and even essential, factor within the relationships between beach boys and foreign women. Through the use of phones and frequent visits, they manage to maintain a romantic

relationship. Interestingly, as I will come back to later in this chapter, complications arise if either the woman or the beach boy is expected to relocate permanently. As beach boys act within the 'emptied' categories of time and space, relating to the globalizing aspects of modernity, they also highlight their position as locally integrated actors. Unlike

Tourism and the local set-up

While noting that globalization is a plural phenomenon, Therborn (2000) claims that globalizations are not new phenomena to the world. However, tourism may be said to be an aspect of globalizations that relates to, and has a profound importance in, the contemporary world (Crick 1989:309). Kibicho (2009) notes that all tourism destinations are social spaces where distinct cultures meet with one another, often in asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination. Approaching the relationships between beach boys and female foreigners in Malindi, Kibicho writes that what is an interlude to the tourist could lead to the destruction of various foundations of the local social set-up; that of ordering social life according to gender, age and generation gaps (2009:118). A common argument against tourism is its impact and alteration of authenticity and cultural identity belonging to the tourist destination. Crick (1989:336) argues that it is frequently forgotten that such societies have often dealt with Western influences for centuries, and that their cultures (like all cultures) are constantly changing. This is not to say that tourism, or in this case the dealings beach boys have with Italian women, do not influence the local social set-up in Malindi.

Looking at the relationships between older, foreign women and younger beach boys; reversing local ideas about gender-roles and age, one might use this as an example. Peake points to the disapproval of the beach boys' practices by the town elders in Malindi over 20 years ago, while I, as mentioned in chapter 4, did not experience this during my stay in Malindi. In light of this, one might suggest that there has been an increased acceptance of the beach boy phenomenon in Malindi through the years (even though Peake focused on beach boys where the majority of them were of the Swahili ethnic group). If so, this illustrates the possible effects of tourism on host communities over time. Recalling what Jamison (1999:944) wrote about inter-ethnic relations being mitigated by tourism, I questioned this notion based on accounts that imply the rather opposite (as shown in chapter 2). Regardless, the effect of tourism on inter-ethnic relations remains evident. The presence of tourists and European residents in Malindi is as mentioned noticeable, and may also be said to affect the

local social set-up. Tourists who dress inappropriately (wearing only swim-wear in the streets), sex-tourists in search of *malayas*, and tourist-local relationships with great age-differences, are only a few examples of what is becoming increasingly accepted in Malindi. Still, these conducts are only accepted from tourists and are still frowned upon if practiced by a local resident (as the various incidents involving Italians, presented in chapter 2). The double-standards may be related to social fields that are interrelated in Malindi. Beach boys are actors within such fields, and may be descriptive examples of the challenges related to this. On one hand beach boys have to relate to and incorporate the values and ideas of tourists. On the other hand they still seem to prioritize their local, Giriama traditions, albeit, downplaying this while interacting with tourists and their foreign 'girlfriends'.

The beach boy phenomenon is directly linked to tourism, hence the term romance tourism, and it is fairly obvious that beach boys would have lost their 'jobs' if tourism in Malindi was to cease. Although Crick (1989:330) notes that detailed and descriptive studies can provide answers to the questions of what sort of social relationships grow up in tourism encounters, I hope strongly to avoid making the study of beach boys one of tourism. While beach boys are a 'product' of tourism, they are at the same time locally integrated in Malindi as sons, fathers, husbands, friends and neighbours. Their actions are based on their ties to the community at large. On the other hand, it is the money from outside the country that is used to build local relations, and it is therefore of importance to include tourism in an approach to beach boys and their surroundings.

Beach boys are found in various countries around the world, and the phenomenon is directly connected to Western tourism in Third World countries. Yet, while beach boys in other places are said to migrate out of their country if given the opportunity, Malindi beach boys wish to stay while making profit. Through shedding light on their surroundings and actions within their locality, I do not attempt to ignore tourism as an effect on local ideas and practices. My approach accounts for the implications of tourism on beach boys and their community at large, but avoids looking at tourism as a cultural force alone. One of its implications is the idea that tourism keeps alive, and even reinforces, stereotypes of others, and should be examined further.

Stereotypes: the exotic Other

Although international tourism is often represented as a force for understanding, the empirical evidence suggests that individual perceptions are increasingly replaced by stereotypes (Crick 1989:329). Stereotypes refer to assumptions about groups of people, whether it is based on experience or not. The interaction between Giryama beach boys and Italian women implies various stereotypes. Focusing on beach boys, Herold et al. looks at how they (in the Dominican Republic) attract foreign females on the basis of their “exotic nature” (2001:982). Nagel (2000:174) refers to this as foreign females viewing local men through a racialized lens; as exotic Others. Similarly, Pruitt and LaFont (1995:430) write how “the exotic Other” has been constructed as more passionate, natural, emotional, and sexually tempting. They also refer to stereotypes of black men and their sexuality in relation to Jamaican beach boys’ display of “machismo” (1995:430). This may be said to apply to beach boys in Malindi as well; through building on various ideas about what foreign women are looking for in a man, they try to appear in a certain way as to attract tourist women. Style; the use of clothes and accessories, as well as behaviour, are consciously considered by beach boys as tactics to get what they want; a *mzungu*.

Pruitt and LaFont (1995:430) also emphasises the idea of the black man as closer to his African heritage; embodied in the Rasta identity. Along with Jamaican beach boys, beach boys in Malindi often believe that they receive more attention from foreign women if they have dreadlocks (addressed in chapter 3). As Kibicho (2009:117) notes; Rastamen’s style and behaviour allows them to access tourist space and time as they represent a major attraction for female tourists from the Western World. Nagel (2000:174) refers to Cabezas when she writes that beach boys capitalize on the demand for racialized fantasies of erotic encounters. Looking at beach boys in The Gambia, Nyanzi et al. (2005:557) notes the embodiment of racial myths about male Black bodies and Western affluence in the complex web of sexual activity between “bumsters” (beach boys) and foreign tourists. This also relates to what De Albuquerque (1998:50) writes about beach boys in the Caribbean; where West Indian fiction has celebrated the sexual power of the Caribbean male:

It has been suggested that the relentless celebration of phallic imagery is, in part, a playful response to white stereotypes of primitive black male potency, that these works of culture, high and low, “signify” on the exoticist tropes of the racial imagination.

Whether or not it is possible to suggest that the beach boys' emphasis on, and exaggeration of, sexual powers can be seen as ironic, it is obvious that the foreign women they interact with can be said to carry on and reproduce such stereotypes of African or Black men as hypersexualized. There is also another dimension to this, concerning the relationships where sexual activities are highly downplayed in favour of the companionship alone. Many might be seduced believing that the beach boy "loves them for who they are", and do not care about age and appearance the same way the men in Western countries are perceived to do. Even though I point out that not every relationship between foreign women and beach boys in Malindi are based on sexual interaction (like the one of Lolani and Rosa), it nevertheless seems to serve as part of an initial attraction. Through approaching common stereotypes like "the exotic African male", beach boys aim at attracting female tourists.

When it comes to how beach boys perceive foreign women or tourists in general, there are also preconceived ideas, or stereotypes, involved. For instance, beach boys will 'target' an old rather than a young female tourist because of the perception that they have more money. In Jamaica, De Albuquerque (1998:51) notes that beach boys have a hierarchy of preferred 'clients' based on nationality, affluence, age and attractiveness. If it is only for sexual conquest it is preferably a young, attractive, blond woman (De Albuquerque 1998:51). If a beach boy is concerned with making money he will either target women who are older or younger women who are overweight (De Albuquerque 1998:51; Herold et al. 2001:984). This also pertains to beach boys in Malindi, and it further implies that beach boys have stereotypical ideas about female tourists and act accordingly. The idea that all *wazungu* have money, in particular the older women may be seen as part of a stereotype beach boys have about tourists in general. As opposed to the notion brought on by Said (1979) of "Orientalism"; where Western ideas about Others are strongly criticized, "Occidentalism" refers to stylized images of the West (Carrier 1995). As these two notions are opposing, they also describe the dual ideas or stereotypes about Others that are exemplified here through the interaction between African beach boys and Western females.

Stereotypes are also prevalent within communities themselves, and are not limited to Western notions of Others or vice versa. In Malindi and in Kenya in general, stereotypes have for long been a part of daily life. As described in chapter 2, Malindi is home to several Kenyan ethnic groups, as well as newer residents and tourists from other countries. There are over 40 ethnic groups in Kenya and many of these live side by side along the coast. Various stereotypes are attached to each group, something most Kenyans know about (tribalism). Giryama (the ethnic group of Lolani, Juma and Kavuu as well as most of the other beach boys)

are said to be “good lovers”. This was something I was told by others as well as beach boys themselves. A Kikuyu man once asked me, after having seen me with together with some of the beach boys, “why all wazungu love Giriyamas?” “They must really be good lovers”, he added surly. In *The Gambia*, Nyanzi et al. (2005:565) writes that ‘bumsters’ (beach boys) believe and act on the myth that they have superior sexual strength and special virility in addition to emphasising the size of their genitalia. Giriyama beach boys also seem to make use of the idea of their sexual superiority, and often refer to it during conversations with both Kenyans and tourists. Whether or not it is a coincidence that a stereotype about Giriyama men in Kenya relates directly to the stereotype foreign women may be said to have in mind as they are being ‘seduced’ by the beach boys, it nevertheless shows how local ideas are in accordance with, in this case, global stereotypes of the exotic Other. On the basis of this, one may ask whether beach boys can be said to make use of such stereotypes or in fact be ‘victims’ of these. This necessarily relates to a discussion around power-relations and exploitation that I will get back to near the end of this chapter.

Global flows

Bringing up the exchange of gifts, money, and affection between female foreigners and beach boys within their romantic relationships, has shed light on the aspect of reciprocity. I have previously argued that these transactions may be used as an example of the difficulties in making strict distinctions between gift and commodity exchange. Holding characteristics of gift and commodity exchange, as well as barter exchange (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones 1992), transactions like these indicate the difficulties of placing them within a strict mode of exchange. However, it is possible to place such transactions within the larger context of globalization. Appadurai (1990:301) writes that current global flows occur “in and through the growing disjunctures between ethnoscaples, technoscaples, finanscaples, mediascaples and ideoscaples”. In other words, the speed, scale and volume of how people, machinery, money, images and ideas flow across national borders are central to today’s politics of global culture (Appadurai 1990:301). The exchange of services and goods between beach boys and Italian women, as part of the exchange of larger ideas between Malindi and Italy, or The Third World and The First World, may be seen as part of the global flows that Appadurai presents; connecting beach boys to a larger social field that may be said to be defined by transnational flows of exchange. Following Appadurai (1990), globalizations do not only imply a cultural

flow of ideas, but it also entails specific material flows across national borders; making the exchange and interaction between beach boys and foreign women an illustrative example of global flows.

The importance of emic codification

In chapter 4, I argued that beach boys in Malindi should not be viewed as sex workers or prostitutes. Enhancing the notion of time in reciprocal interaction, building on Bourdieu (1990 [1977]), I apply this as an argument against referring to beach boys as sex workers. Through delaying the request for ‘payment’, and accessing time when it comes to asking or implying the need for money, beach boys separate themselves from sex workers. Yet, through simplifying such interaction, some might argue that it nevertheless accounts for the exchange of intimacy and ‘sexual services’ for money; relating directly to the common idea of what constitutes prostitution. However, aside from the fact that not all beach boys engage in sexual activity with their foreign ‘girlfriends’, it is important to point out that they do not define themselves as sex workers. Pruitt and LaFont (1995:423) makes a similar point when they write that neither actor (the beach boy and the foreign woman) considers their interaction to be prostitution; placing an emphasis on courtship rather than the exchange of sex for money. In relation to this, Cabezas writes that “there is no justification for imposing the term sex worker on people who do not identify as such”, and she further writes that “the term sex worker imposes an arbitrary derogatory and racist label” (2004:1003). The obvious distinction between the emic codifications beach boys have of their practices versus others’ etic analysis, manifest themselves here. And while researchers like Kibicho (2009) and De Albuquerque (1998) imply that beach boys are sex workers (and their female ‘girlfriends’ sex clients) based on the beach boys’ own statements, I did not encounter any beach boys who referred to their own practices as sex work. Hence, to say that the beach boys I encountered in Malindi are in fact sex workers would be to impose on them a label that they do to relate to themselves. Concurring to Cabezas’ statements, and based on my previous arguments, I conclude with the need for other, and more adequately appropriate, terms for describing the beach boy phenomenon. I have chosen to use the term romance tourism, posed by Pruitt and LaFont (1995), on the beach boy phenomenon. When it comes to beach boys as actors I have emphasised their role as entrepreneurs.

“Hard work” as African entrepreneurs

Crick (1989:331) notes that tourist-local relationships are in many ways odd; one member is at play, having economic assets and little cultural capital, while the other member is at work, having cultural capital but little money. Such a relationship may be illustrated by the interactions between beach boys and Italian women in Malindi. The women are on vacation, having money to spend, but do not know Malindi and its residents to a great extent. The beach boys, on the other hand, are at work; they are in search for money and have knowledge of the area and culture, using it to their advantage. Crick (1989:332) points to the middle men, entrepreneurs, who benefit of the transactions between two systems brought together by international tourism. This applies to the case of beach boys in Malindi and brings up the earlier proposed perception of beach boys as entrepreneurs. In the previous chapter, I made use of Dahles and Bras’ (1999) suggestion that beach boys in Indonesia may be called romantic entrepreneurs. I also related beach boys to Boissevain (1974) and his idea of a broker; someone who makes use of his social network for his personal gain.

Placing beach boys within their (African) surroundings, I also made use of Volker’s (1997) idea of an African entrepreneur as a subsistence entrepreneur; pursuing profit not for profit’s sake. The redistribution of money and valuables earned differentiate African entrepreneurs, or beach boys in Malindi, from other entrepreneurs. Volker (1997:158) notes that although status has been one of the motives of business men all over the world, the quest for status overrides all other motives in early African business. Through times, however, former status symbols lost their value and the craving for money and further conspicuous consumption, became a hallmark for African businessmen who could afford it (Volker 1997:162). Relating directly to how beach boys are said to “waste” their money, Volker (1997:163) describes how African businessmen tend to invest their money in buying beer and entertaining friends, as well as buying expensive cars and large houses. Although the beach boys I knew were successful, they lived in humble one-room houses; sharing a bathroom and ‘kitchen’ with others. This contradicts the desire to display wealth and status, and may possibly be related to the aspect of witchcraft, although this was not something they themselves emphasised too often. Volker (1997:135) writes that social success and failure are frequently explained by magic, as I was told by others in Malindi as well. An Akamba⁵⁵ man told me once that Giriama will notoriously “sabotage themselves” through witchcraft if one

⁵⁵ The Akamba are one of the Kenyan ethnic groups, located in the Eastern province.

of them has become successful. Asking Lolani and Juma about this, they told me that they were afraid of people who were envious, adding that there were a lot of them who could “do *juju* (witchcraft) on you”. These issues illustrate how money, and the appropriation of wealth, must be understood in light of their surroundings; here related to Giriama traditions and the larger African context.

The various ways in which beach boys may be seen as entrepreneurs should be related to the idea of their practices as work. I was several times told by beach boys that they perceive the seduction process that leads to relationships with foreign women as work. They also referred to their interaction with their ‘girlfriends’ (constantly romancing and keeping the woman’s trust) as “hard work”. Although beach boys in many ways may be seen as living a certain lifestyle, they nevertheless emphasize that it is a way of making money like any other job. This topic normally came up in conversations concerning the families of beach boys. I once asked Lolani and Juma what their wives thought of them having various foreign ‘girlfriends’. They both replied that neither of their wives minded; as it is a job that provides economic profit. Beach boys in Malindi have proven to prioritize money as their main goal (with the short term goal being money and the long term goal being to start a business), as opposed to beach boys in other countries who are said to aim primarily for the chance to migrate out of their country. It is possible to propose that the beach boys’ view of their practices as work, and not as a way of life, may form the basis of their wish to stay in Malindi. This connects to how beach boys are anchored in their local community, and may be a fertile point for further exploration of their unique prioritizing of goals in their interaction with female foreigners.

Nothing like home

As I was told many times by Kavuu, Lolani, and Juma; they consider Malindi to be their home and neither of them wish to move to Italy. If we talked about going to Europe it was always in relation to the opportunities of making money for a shorter period of time. Both Juma and Lolani said that they would have no problem living in Europe for a while to earn money, albeit with the expectancy of moving back to Malindi with more money. Hence, their focus remained on the money and wealth they aspire towards. Yet, Lolani once told me that he would want to move to Europe if he was to fall in love with a young *mzungu* and have the possibility to create a life, and a family, with her (which may be related to the fact that he did

not have children of his own at the time). I was also told by beach boys about peers that had moved to Europe with their foreign 'girlfriends'. Such stories were always connected to the fear of leaving Malindi, their home, and being in a foreign country without having friends or family around. One of my friends from The Marine Park, a Bajuni man named Ismail, told me the first time I met him that he had a German *mzungu*. He explained that she was a lot older than him (he was around 27 years of age), and that she wanted him to visit her for three months. She had sent him money for the ticket, and he had tried to go once already but told her that he missed the plane and that he needed money for a new ticket. This time, he told me, he really wanted to go (the first time he wanted the money) but that he was terribly scared; "what if she kill me?" As time went by, and he delayed buying a new ticket, we had several discussions about what he should do together with the other men at The Marine Park. He finally decided to take the money, stay in Malindi, and change the SIM-card on his phone; he was too scared he said, while downplaying the fact that he had earned the money of two return tickets from Kenya to Germany.

Kavu was the only one of the beach boys I met that had been to Italy. He described it as "boring" and did not wish to go there again. He explained that he had nothing to do there, and was just confined to the house while his Italian 'girlfriend' was out or at work. Many beach boys talked about the reluctance to give the women 'control' over them by moving to their country. This would also relate to the possibility of the women settling in Malindi; expecting to create a life together with the beach boy. Pruitt and LaFont (1995) also write about when such relationships extend beyond the casual vacation romances. They emphasise the disappointment and conflict that arises as the actors realize that they both entered into the relationship with a different agenda; making apparent the economic dependency within the liaison (1995:434). Although Kavu was satisfied with his 6 year long relationship with the Italian woman, she nevertheless lived for the most part in Italy without him, only visiting Malindi and the house she bought for Kavu during the holidays. As long as the women are visiting for shorter periods of time it seems easier for the beach boys to cultivate relationships with other women (including their wives) as well as maintaining 'control' in the relationship. This is indeed one of the main reasons for why beach boys in Malindi do not wish to migrate; and move to Italy with their 'girlfriends'. Neither do they wish for the 'girlfriends' to settle down in their own community. One might suggest that this relates to the difficulties of interacting within the various social fields, when time and space is no longer working to their advantage. It would indeed complicate how they balance their 'work', their social time spent

with peers, and their time devoted to family, both in Malindi and in the home-village. As it is, leaving Malindi entirely means to leave home and hence loose 'control'.

Control and power relations

The time Lolani told me about his "dilemma" with Martina, who wanted to move to Malindi and marry him, the issue of control and power relations within such liaisons became evident. The time she left Malindi, after visiting Lolani, he described it as being "free" again. When I asked him what would happen if she were to move here, Lolani said that he would be "in prison" (see the full account of this in chapter 4). Pruitt and LaFont (1995:427) write that the economic and social status the women enjoy while abroad provides them with an independence and security that translates into power and control in their relationships with beach boys. Consistent with beach boys in Malindi, Jamaican beach boys are placed in a subordinate role to the women as the relationships are in conflict with their own gender ideals of male dominance (Pruitt and LaFont 1995:429). Through having financial means, the women hold the position of control over the beach boys they engage in relationships with. As Pruitt and LaFont (1995:430) notes, the beach boys continually seek new ways of demonstrating their domination over the women. A way of doing this is to stress their masculinity in various ways (as shown in chapter 3). When beach boys display their masculinity, they seem to simultaneously attract more foreign women (which may in turn be the reason for a successful beach boy's continuous success). Pruitt and LaFont (1995:436) continue writing that the women are drawn to the potency and strength of the masculine while they at the same time experiment with the power they acquire through financial superiority. While the beach boys I met would probably not agree that their 'girlfriends' place them in a subordinate role, their apparent need to emphasize their own control in the interaction with foreign females might suggest a power relation. As proposed in chapter 3, the way both Lolani and Juma pointed out that they are pursued by the foreign women without knowing why, and in doing that, ignoring the tactics they apply to make this happen, shows their desire to be in a dominant position in their relations with foreign woman. However, Herold et al. (2001:996) points to how female tourists have more economic power but that this is counter-balanced by the interpersonal social skills of the beach boys who use this knowledge to their advantage in manipulating the female tourists for the purpose of economic gain. While this may be an important aspect, it can also be said to conceal larger power relations.

Emerson (1962:32) points out that power is not an attribute of an actor, but rather a property of social relation. He describes social relation to entail ties of mutual dependence between parties, where each party is in some position to grant, or deny, facilitate, or hinder, the other's gratification (1962:32). Following this, he claims that the concept of dependency is vital to understanding power relations, where "power resides implicitly in the other's dependency" (1962:32). While beach boys are dependent of the foreign women's money and gifts, the women may in turn be said to be dependent of the love and affection. As their interaction illustrates a social relation, and a dependence upon each other, it is vital to emphasize the greater dependence of beach boys upon their foreign 'girlfriends'. Further, any assessment of dependency must include the costs of alternative avenues of achieving one's "goal" (Emerson 1962:32). As Emerson (1962:33) writes; "the power of A over B is equal to, and based upon, the dependence of B upon A". As shown in chapters 3 and 4, beach boys have limited ways of making money, placing them in a position of greater dependency upon their foreign 'girlfriends'. Hence, the costs of achieving their goals, which is making money, through other ways is greater than the costs for foreign women to achieve their goals, of love and affection, elsewhere.

Still, it might be difficult (especially considering the obvious lack of accounts from foreign women in such relationships) to detect the dominant party in these romantic relationships. Emerson (1962:33) writes that the notion of reciprocity in power-dependency relations raises the issue of equality or inequality of power in the relationship. He points out that a pattern of "dominance" might not emerge in interaction among actors, but that it does not imply that power is inoperative; it is simply balanced, instead of unbalanced, relations (1962:34). Unbalanced relations set in motion processes which Emerson refers to as "cost reduction" and "balancing operations". In other words, to create the image of a balanced relation, the actors apply certain operations to equalize the unbalanced relation. Cost reduction refers to the cost involved for one party in meeting the demands made by the other and may involve a change in personal, social or economic values; reducing the pains of meeting such demands (Emerson 1962:34-35). As the demands of love and affection by foreign women upon beach boys may be difficult to meet, the beach boys can be said to change their values in reducing these difficulties. How they allocate their time, overemphasize their masculinity, and their overall behaviour, may be related to the above. Balancing operations is divided into what Emerson (1962:36-39) refers to as "motivational withdrawal", "extension of power network", "coalition formation" and "emergence of status". The ways in which beach boys may be said to communicate their independence from their foreign

'girlfriends' concurs to the operation containing denial of dependency of the actor holding power. As beach boys aspire towards, and at times are successful in, engaging in various romantic relationships, they simultaneously diffuse the dependency into new relations. The way Lolani and Juma include each other in their relations with the various foreign women, relates to how forming a coalition of two weaker and one stronger actor may act as balancing for the relation. Lastly, beach boys may be said to increase the formerly more powerful actor's motivational investments in the relation through giving the women status recognition; what Emerson (1962:39) refers to as "ego-gratifications", that in turn are "highly valued by recipients while given at low cost to the giver".

The power relations within the liaisons between beach boys and foreign women in Malindi may be said to relate to the wider context of their African surroundings. Regardless of what one might call this phenomenon, it is a fact that First World women from various countries travel to Third World countries and engage in romantic relationships with local men they meet during vacation. Peake (1989:210) compares modern Western tourism in the Third World with the characteristics of a leisure class. He notes that with their work set aside, the tourists are passive recipients of other people's labour, creating connotations to the West's power over the underdeveloped world (1989:210). In relation to beach boys, Peake suggests that "hustling" (referring to various beach boy practices) can be seen as a form of attack; a way of exploiting the exploiters (Westerners), although this is problematic as the hustling is based on an economic dependence upon tourists (1989:213). This may relate to what Larsen (1999:106) refers to as the opposition's problem; how to offer resistance without being caught by the counterpart's language. Comparing beach boys to an opposition should be understood within the frames of their colonial history. Assuming that the relationships between beach boys and foreign women can be seen as initially unbalanced in terms of power, using Emerson, one might question the balancing operations described above. Is it possible to say that beach boys, as young men from a Third World country, will not entirely be able to balance the power-dependency relations they have with 'First World women' because of their status as the Other? It is certainly possible to view such balancing operations as a set of tactics in reducing their role of dependency, consequently concealing the power of the foreign women (or tourists in general).

A new form of colonialism?

Peake (1989:213) points out that beach boys he had talked to came to see tourists as a part of a new form of colonialism; not only exploiting the country economically, but also using it as their “playground”. From this one might argue that tourism in general, and the relationships between foreign women and beach boys in specific, raises the issue of a new form of colonialism. While this may remain a question, it is nevertheless of importance to consider the colonial history of the Kenyan coast, and the greater level of interaction between the First World and the Third World. Concurring to this, the social field-approach, posed by Grønhaug (1975), and the importance of historicizing globalization, noted by Manger (2006), provide the necessary tools in placing Malindi beach boys within their surroundings. Kibicho (2009:106) writes that tourists will make use of time-space strategies to separate their roles “at home” from their identity as (sex) tourists. I have argued that beach boys also make use of space and time in their interaction with tourists, giving accounts of how they assume tourist places in Malindi and manipulate time to their own advantage. Crick (1989:332) writes that tourism is “out of place and time”, making it difficult to study as an anthropologist. This might be true or not (and relates to a wider discussion within the discipline of anthropology), all the while enforcing my point of looking at beach boys within place and time, or space and time; making this study one of beach boys and not one of tourism. However, the implications of the ever present tourism in Malindi have been discussed here; focusing on stereotypes of the exotic Other. Nagel (2000:175) brings up Kempadoo’s notion about how First World consumer and Third World supplier sex exchanges might reproduce hegemonic racialized and sexualized views of people with dark skin as subordinate and hyper sexualized. As already pointed out, the exchanges between beach boys and foreign women do not necessarily entail sex, or sexual acts, but rather the exchange of gifts and money for love, affection and intimacy. Following this, the beach boys’ own perception of this exchange as something other than prostitution or sex work, implies the need for other terms to describe this phenomenon. Beach boys themselves are of the opinion that their practices are coherent to “work”, shedding light on the entrepreneurial aspects of this phenomenon. The desire to stay in Malindi may be said to be an effect of their perception of this as a job, rather than a way of life, as well as the fear of leaving home. The aspect of power inherent in the relations beach boys have with their foreign ‘girlfriends’ is illustrated in the degree of dependency. The aversion to move to Europe with their ‘girlfriends’ is tied to the reluctance of giving the woman (more) power, or

control. As beach boys attempt to reduce their dependency upon the foreign women, the issue of whether or not this is possible, based on their position as Third World citizens, was presented here. Finally, as 'transnational love-tourism' connects the actors to globalization in general, it is fruitful to include transnational flows of people, ideas, goods and services in a study of the phenomenon on a local level.

EPILOGUE

About a year ago I was rounding up my fieldwork in Malindi; leaving the beach boys in the midst of low season. After leaving, I was told that Kavu had moved out of the house were he used to live (the house owned by his Italian ‘girlfriend’). The reason was unclear, but it was said that people in the settlement surrounding the house did not like Kavu; forcing him to move to another area outside Malindi. It was with a certain amount of joy that Lolani told me this as he added that “this is what happens when you lie”. As for Juma, he has just told me that he, along with ‘his’ *wazungu* (Flavia and Valentina I assume), are “doing good”. Considering that Lolani has been the most eager to update me, it is also through him that I have been able to follow the happenings in Malindi after having left. Martina bought a house in Malindi together with her husband; providing Lolani with a large sum of money in the form of commission. For that money he has bought “a large, silver car” and has explained that he now “feels like a king”. He is also planning to buy a house in Watamu, south of Malindi, and he has just become a father to a baby girl by his Giryama wife. For shorter or longer periods of time he is unreachable (while his Italian ‘girlfriends’ are visiting Malindi) and I have to wait until he contacts me for fear of jeopardizing one of the relationships with ‘his’ *wazungu*. As far as I have been told they are still unaware of each other, the jealousy has not decreased, and they continue to visit Lolani in Malindi every chance they get.

As a journalist in Daily Nation writes; Malindi has experienced five invasions by foreigners through seven centuries; the Arabs, the Portuguese, the British, the Germans, and now the Italians⁵⁶. As I have shown in this thesis, the Italians’ presence in Malindi is essential and relates directly to tourism in general and beach boys in particular. Kenyan officials seem to have little problems with their presence although issues like drugs and prostitution are blamed on the increasing tourism in the coastal areas; often connected to Italians in Malindi. Yet, they continue to buy or lease land in Malindi, and for now it looks like they are here to stay.

It is fruitful to take a look at the affiliation between the attempts made by the Kenyan government to impose restrictions on beach boys, and the future for beach boys like Lolani and Juma. In 2002, there was an article in The New York Times about how “local authorities” along the Kenyan coast have started to “clean up” the beaches; forcing out the

⁵⁶<http://www.nation.co.ke/Counties/Mama+mia+They+have+made+a+Little+Italy/-/1107872/1111396/-/mtb6xsz/-/index.html>

beach boys nearby Malindi and Watamu⁵⁷. Along the lines of this, yet another newspaper article in Daily Nation refers to two different, but equally unsuccessful, projects, or programmes, aimed at reducing beach boys or beach operators as “threats” to Kenya’s tourism industry⁵⁸. Many blame beach boys for harassing tourists and spoiling their vacation. The first project was started up over 15 years ago by the former Minister for Tourism; vetting the beach boys and issuing them with uniforms, badges and licences. The second programme, announced by the current Minister for Tourism, Najib Balala, involves relocating beach boys to beach access roads instead of the beaches⁵⁹. As stated in yet another article; the promises, made by the Tourism ministry, of relocating beach boys, has never come to pass and hotel chairmen and owners still point out that “the beach boys’ menace is the greatest drawback to the (tourism) industry”⁶⁰.

More recently, after I had left Malindi, it was written in the newspaper that Najib Balala was going to issue a new Tourism Bill that will be taken to Parliament for debate, where all safari dealers, boat operators and tour guides will have to register; streamlining their services and rooting out illegal operators⁶¹. Balala also states that many beach operators have wrongfully been called beach boys, something he says has a negative association to harassment, theft, drugs and prostitution, and that the new Tourist Bill will create a better environment while “the Tourist Police Unit (TPU) can work with a legally-recognized group”⁶². So, where does this leave beach boys like Lolani and Juma? They will, along with most of their peers, most probably be seen as illegal operators as they are not employed officially by any tour-company. On the other hand, both of them have managed to acquire an id-card unlike some of the other beach boys, and may be said to have a better starting point than others in meeting the new “Tourism Bill”. In the end, this programme may also end up like the previous ones; not being achieved. As the reasons for this might be various, and probably relates to corruption of both officials and police, it nevertheless leaves us to wonder what the future may bring for beach boys in Malindi if their platform for seducing foreign females is taken away.

⁵⁷<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/14/world/kenya-cracking-down-on-beach-boys-gigolos-serving-tourists.html>

⁵⁸ <http://www.nation.co.ke/Mombasa/-/519978/816378/-/oatjp4/-/index.html>

⁵⁹ <http://www.nation.co.ke/Mombasa/-/519978/816378/-/oatjp4/-/index.html>

⁶⁰ <http://www.nation.co.ke/business/news/Hotels+want+beach+boys+kicked+out/-/1006/1046066/-/4rjgurz/-/index.html>

⁶¹ <http://www.nation.co.ke/business/news/Beach+operators+to+be+licensed/-/1006/1135084/-/t6mdph/-/index.html>

⁶² <http://www.nation.co.ke/business/news/Beach+operators+to+be+licensed/-/1006/1135084/-/t6mdph/-/index.html>

While both Lolani and Juma are successful beach boys; having more than one foreign ‘girlfriend’ each (providing them with the financial support they need, or want), they seem to wish to continue with what they are doing. Lolani has several times asked if I can come and visit; he is enthusiastic about wanting to show me how his life has changed; he is now “rich”. In particular he told me about how he and Juma were displaying their “cash” and driving his car around town on New Year’s Eve; making everyone “jealous”. Hence, the display of status and wealth still seems to be public while the means are kept private. Despite having the economic assets, there has been no mention of starting a business, although only a smaller amount of time has passed. Yet, the aspiration of making money is still there; with both Lolani and Juma continuing the relationships with their Italian ‘girlfriends’.

In these concluding remarks it is again worth noting the beach boys’ ultimate goal of achieving money and wealth, and hence status, in their local surroundings, rather than wanting to migrate to Europe or other Western countries. Whether it is to start a business, or to provide for their families, beach boys work towards making a profit; aiming to acquire status as young Kenyan men in Malindi. And while the foreign women emphasize notions of love and romance in their relations with beach boys, it is hard to forget what I, in the outset of my fieldwork in Malindi, was told by a young man describing life in Malindi; “there’s no love here, get my point?” Looking towards the future, both Juma and Lolani are a few years from ‘retiring’, and their days as beach boys are soon over. However, their current success appeals to other young boys and men who are likely to take after them and hence keep alive romance tourism along the beaches of Malindi, at least for now.

SWAHILI GLOSSARY

<i>Asante sana</i>	=	Thank you very much
<i>Askari</i>	=	Security guard
<i>Akamba</i>	=	Ethnic group from the east province in Kenya
<i>Babu</i>	=	Village medicine man (normally called <i>mganga</i>), also the name for grandfather
<i>Bajaj</i>	=	Motorcycle or motorbike (referring to a specific brand)
<i>Bhangi</i>	=	A version of cannabis
<i>Duka</i>	=	A small shop, or kiosk
<i>Giryama</i>	=	One of the nine tribes making up the <i>Mijikenda</i> ethnic group
<i>Harambee</i>	=	“All pull together”; a self-help event similar to fundraising
<i>Habari ya asubuhi?</i>	=	How is your morning?
<i>Habari ya mchana?</i>	=	How is your afternoon?
<i>Hakuna wazungu</i>	=	There are no white people or Europeans
<i>Honda</i>	=	Motorcycle or motorbike (referring to a specific brand)
<i>Jamaa</i>	=	Guy or man
<i>Juju</i>	=	Witchcraft or Magic (the word is borrowed from West Africa)
<i>Khanga</i>	=	A printed cotton fabric
<i>Kikuyu</i>	=	Ethnic group from central Kenya
<i>Kisii</i>	=	Ethnic group from the south-western parts of Kenya
<i>Kiswahili</i>	=	The Swahili language
<i>Kitu kidogo</i>	=	A little something or a share/cut (normally referring to a bribe)
<i>Kuku na chipsi</i>	=	Chicken and chips or fries
<i>Luhya</i>	=	Ethnic group from the western area of Kenya
<i>Luo</i>	=	Ethnic group from the western area of Kenya
<i>Maasai</i>	=	Ethnic group from the southern arid areas of Kenya
<i>Makelele</i>	=	Trouble or Noise
<i>Malaya</i>	=	Prostitute
<i>Manzi</i>	=	Girl (slang)
<i>Matatu</i>	=	A minibus used as public transportation in Kenya
<i>Matumbo</i>	=	Intestines (referring to food)
<i>Mbuzi na kuku</i>	=	Goat and Chicken (referring to food)

<i>Mijikenda</i>	=	Ethnic group consisting of nine tribes along the coast of Kenya; <i>Chonyi, Digo, Duruma, Giryama, Kambe, Kauma, Jibana, Rabai</i> and <i>Ribe</i>
<i>Miraa</i>	=	Flowering plant, that is normally chewed, which contains an amphetamine-stimulant (also known as <i>khat</i>)
<i>Mnazi</i>	=	Homemade alcoholic drink based on the juice of coconuts
<i>Mzungu/Wazungu</i>	=	White person or European
<i>Nyama choma</i>	=	Grilled meat
<i>Nyanya</i>	=	Grandmother (also the name for tomatoes)
<i>Safari</i>	=	“Journey”; normally describes any long trip.
<i>Safari-blue</i>	=	Trip with boat to visit one of the islands outside Malindi.
<i>Shamba</i>	=	Food garden
<i>Sheng</i>	=	A mixture of English and Swahili language, combined in various ways often with local dialects and languages (although unusual in the coastal province)
<i>Sura yako ni</i>		
<i>mzuri sana</i>	=	Your face is very nice (meaning you have a beautiful face)
<i>Swahili</i>	=	Ethnic group inhabiting the coastal areas of Kenya
<i>Tuk-tuk</i>	=	Motor vehicle with three wheels (also known as <i>rickshaw</i>)
<i>Ugali</i>	=	Maize flour and boiling water cooked into a dough-like porridge
<i>We enda!</i>	=	You go or leave! (‘get lost’) Pronounced as an order.

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