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# NG'AMBO TUITAKAYO: RECONNECTING THE SWAHILI CITY

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The City Of Zanzibar is well known for the historical Stone Town which is a World Heritage Site since 2000. What is less known about the City is the fact that it consists of two parts, Stone Town and Ng'ambo, of which Ng'ambo is the one that has received far less attention. The two parts of the city have been developing alongside since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, becoming together the biggest Swahili City in the world by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the social and economic differences existing in the two parts of the city they retained, an intimate connection translated into the economic, social and cultural sphere.

It is only with the advent of the British dominance, that the two parts started to be perceived as separate entities. Through colonial policies and planning interventions they became segregated and Ng'ambo received a lasting stamp of being a slum in need of upgrading. From the time of the British Protectorate, through the revolution and post-independence modernization projects, Ng'ambo has been a subject to various, not always successful planning initiatives. Despite the turmoil and major upheavals it witnessed Ng'ambo has managed to retain its distinctly Swahili character which has been sustained by the resilience of its inhabitants.

This pejorative image of Ng'ambo has lingered over the area for a long time and it is only recently that Ng'ambo has received renewed attention by being designated as the new city centre of the Zanzibar City. The *Ng'ambo Tuitakayo* (Ng'ambo We Want) project was started in the wake of this renewed attention directed towards Ng'ambo with the aim of developing an inclusive redevelopment plan for the area guided by the principles of UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape recommendation. One of the underlying aims of the project was to revive the historic connection between the two parts of the city.

Through this paper it will be argued that the perceived distinction between Stone Town and Ng'ambo is not inherent to the place, but was created through foreign impositions. Through an in-depth study of the morphological development of the area and discussion of the layered urban history of Zanzibar City, the (dis)continuities between the two parts of town will be unravelled. The paper will also unfold the methods explored in the *Ng'ambo Tuitakayo* project from the beginning until the completion of the final draft of the redevelopment plan and policies.

## Keywords

resilience, reconnection, Swahili City, historic urban landscape

## How to Cite

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## INTRODUCTION

Zanzibar City was by far the largest and most important town in East Africa by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, well before the advent of European colonial presence and dominance. Since the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the city has been subjected to subsequent waves of social and spatial change, starting with the colonial policies, followed by neglect after the Independence in 1963 and a subsequent rediscovery of Zanzibar Stone Town by the conservationists, resulting in the inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000.

This story is fairly well known, but it is only half of the story. What has not been told over the years is the fact that the old city of Zanzibar consists of two halves, out of which the western half – Stone Town – has received by far more attention. The eastern half, Ng’ambo, far less known, was disconnected over the years from Stone Town through various policies and interventions. It was regarded as a temporary settlement, a slum, which eventually needed to be replaced by a permanent city. The rebuilding of Ng’ambo commenced in earnest after the Revolution in the middle 1960s through a large scale replacement of the ‘organic’ Swahili City by a monumental modernist New Town, but was grounded to a halt when the government coffers ran empty.

Sustained by the social resilience of its inhabitants, Ng’ambo passed right through all the turmoil, continuing its own life, mending its scars and redeveloping itself, slowly but surely into a modern African city. The inscription of Stone Town on the UNESCO List emphasized once more the perceived gap between the two parts of the city by declaring Ng’ambo a ‘Buffer Zone’ to the World Heritage Site, which gave the conservationist means to legitimize the discontinuity by adhering to the fossilized and colonial understanding of the concept of monuments and ‘authentic typologies’.

The discontinuity between Stone Town and Ng’ambo has received renewed attention as Ng’ambo has been designated as Zanzibar’s new city centre in the new Structural Plan for Zanzibar (ZanSPlan). Ng’ambo Tuitakayo (Ng’ambo We Want) is an ongoing project that aims at developing an inclusive redevelopment plan for the area guided by UNESCO’s Historic Urban Landscape approach. One of the major objectives is indeed to restore the connectivity between Stone Town and Ng’ambo, by demonstrating how Ng’ambo is an important and integral part of the historic Zanzibar City.

The findings of the project *Ng’ambo Tuitakayo* have contributed to a better understanding of the continuity between the two parts of town and in this paper it is argued that the perceived division between Stone Town and Ng’ambo is not a real physical nor cultural division. It is a division that has been imposed upon the city by external domination, in particular by the British colonial administration. This policy of segregation was followed by a radical redevelopment of Ng’ambo under the Revolutionary government after independence.

Zanzibar City has shown great resilience to these major upheavals and has managed to retain its distinct Swahili urban culture. By unveiling the layered morphological urban history of Zanzibar City, the (dis)continuities between the two parts of town will be unravelled. The paper will unfold the methods explored in the project from the beginning until the completion of the final draft of the redevelopment plan and policies.



FIGURE 1 The Swahili World as visualised on the Alkebu-Lan Map by Swedish Artist Nikolaj Cyon.



FIGURE 2 Matondoni from the air, Lamu island, Kenya, 1989. Typical Swahili historic urban landscape; the fabric based on the dense repetition of the single storied peaked Swahili house with some special flat roofed stone buildings strewn around.

## ZANZIBAR IS A SWAHILI CITY

Swahili is a distinct East African culture<sup>1</sup>, which emerged sometime in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century AD covering a vast region, from Mogadishu in the north to Sofala in the south, encompassing the Comores, the northern part of Madagascar, and the Zanzibar archipelago. The Swahili speak a common language, KiSwahili, and are active in mixed economy of farming, fishing and trading. Their culture developed over time, absorbing and adapting a wide range of foreign influences due to the intensive Indian Ocean trade between East Africa and India, Persia, Arabia and China. The Islamic religion became dominant as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Arts and handicrafts have developed into what is now widely understood as the 'Swahili Style', in architecture, woodwork, basketry, but also in literature and music.<sup>2</sup>

The Swahili region was never a single administrative unit nor empire, but rather a conglomerate of strongly related city states, strung along the coast. The most important city was Kilwa, world famous from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century until its demise due to Portuguese conquest around 1500. Many other cities emerged, grew, shrunk and expanded over time, some of them to continue their existence until today such as Lamu and Mombasa in Kenya.

Zanzibar City is a relatively young Swahili settlement, replacing older Swahili towns and settlements on the Zanzibar Archipelago, which consists of the three main island Unguja, Pemba and Tumbatu as well as a large number of smaller islands and islets. The central town of Unguja Ukuu on the south side of Unguja island fell into ruins sometime in the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup> and the centre of activity moved to other towns and settlements around the archipelago like Kisimkazi and Fukuchani on Unguja, Makutani on Tumbatu and Ras Mkumbuu and Chwaka on Pemba. One of the smaller settlements on Unguja, at Shangani, was chosen by the Portuguese to build their fort in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

This fort was beleaguered by the troops of the sultan of Oman in later years and extended to become the heart of the new city of Zanzibar in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Zanzibar slowly grew to become the most important city on the archipelago during the following century, a city coveted for its strategic position and wealth, which made the sultan of Oman decide in 1832 to transfer his throne from Muscat to Zanzibar. This event truly triggered the growth of the city.

By 1835 the city counted around 10,000 inhabitants, sixty years later some 60,000 people.<sup>4</sup>By the time that the British took over the rule of Zanzibar from the sultan, in 1891, it was by far the largest city in East Africa. By that time, Dar es Salaam counted perhaps some 5,000 inhabitants, Mombasa not quite 15,000 and Nairobi just stood at its own cradle.<sup>5</sup>

## WHAT MAKES A SWAHILI CITY?

The basic grain of the Swahili city is the single story Swahili house. The plan of the Swahili house is remarkably uniform in size and proportions, consisting of a main volume with a spine corridor with a number of rooms on both sides and a small annex with stores, washroom and kitchen separated from the main volume by a small, walled courtyard. The Swahili houses together form the main mass of the settlement, mostly in an organic configuration. However, there also other buildings than the single storey Swahili houses, that constitute Swahili settlements, of which mosques, *madrassa's* and *maskans* are most common.

Less common, but persistent over time, and present in most Swahili cities, are larger and double-storied houses of different floor layout than the Swahili house. These houses are sometimes also called 'Swahili houses', in particular in the older cities of Kilwa and Lamu<sup>6</sup> which can be confusing. Nonetheless, there is no sole claim for the name 'Swahili' and it may well be that this type of house co-existed together with the single-story Swahili houses.

Influence from abroad is another characteristic of the Swahili City. The Swahili world welcomed foreigners, who frequently settled in the East African cities, intermarried with the local population and brought in their customs, which would often be absorbed by the Swahili culture. Persian influx was important in the Middle Ages and is still remembered as *Shirazi* culture, visible in some of the older mosques. Omani influence was particularly strong on Zanzibar from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and many large town palaces in Zanzibar City are of Omani origin. Indian traders, who settled in Zanzibar City from the 1850s onwards brought in the custom of the two-storied town buildings with a *duka*, a shop on the ground floor and the family apartment on the first floor.

The single story Swahili house is traditionally built in coral rag and earth mixture packed in a frame of poles and sticks, plastered with a lime render and roofed with *makuti* on a steep hipped timber structure with a ceiling of mangrove poles, *mboriti*, and coral stone. Town palaces, mosques, caravanserais and other important buildings in town are built in coral rag masonry with flat roofs of *mboriti*, covered with coral stone and lime mortar finish. The consistent materials are thus coral stone and *mboriti*, in which the *mboriti* define the room sizes due to their limited length of a maximum of 4 metres.

The Swahili settlements tend to densify over time into a compact urban tissue with tortuous narrow streets and small plazas. In this densification process, the single story Swahili houses make room for multi story buildings, consisting predominantly, in the case of Zanzibar City, of town palaces and mixed-use retail-apartment buildings. Timber framed, *makuti* roofed structures are replaced by stone masonry buildings with flat roofs, which were later covered by low pitch hipped roofs covered with *mabati*, corrugated metal sheets. This is a logical development as the timber framed structures could not hold more than one floor and the *makuti* roofs causing a considerable fire hazard.



FIGURE 3 Map of Zanzibar City, drawn by Baumann, 1896, based on the 1892 survey.

## ZANZIBAR CITY AROUND 1900

In 1892, a detailed map of Zanzibar City was drawn by the Indian surveyor Imam Sherif, of which a copy was made by Oskar Baumann, the Austrian consul to Zanzibar.<sup>7</sup> This copy is the first coloured tourist-type map of Zanzibar made and shows the places of interest to the visitor of the city.

The Baumann map shows a city that is split into two by Pwani Ndogo, the small shore, translated by Baumann as a Lagune, bei Ebbe trocken, a creek that filled up at high tide and fell dry at low tide. The two halves are connected by a thin sliver of land at the south side, a few footpaths through the creek and a bridge on the northern side. On the earliest map known to us of Zanzibar City, drawn by the French sea captain Guillain in 1846, these two halves, connected by the bridge, do already exist, although the eastern half of the city is considerably smaller than in 1892.



FIGURE 4 A typical street in Ng'ambo, around 1900. Single storied Swahili houses with makuti roofs and a double storied flat roofed building in the background.

Guillain names the heart of the city the *Quartier du Commerce*, *maisons généralement en pierre*, commercial quarter with predominantly stone houses, which is surrounded by three residential quarters with huts of mud and straw, *cases en paille et en terre*. The residential quarters are to the north and south on the west side of the creek and the third one on the eastern side of the creek. The eastern quarter expanded over the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to cover a similar surface as the western part of the city.

The older parts of town densified during this period, and many single story Swahili houses were replaced by multi story town palaces, mixed-use commercial-residential buildings and other buildings, such as offices and government buildings. This densification was strongest in the western half of town, but took also place in the area just east of the bridge. In the 1897 *List of Properties*,<sup>8</sup> the stone houses and huts were counted in the city. Most stone buildings were located in the western half of town. Yet a considerable amount of 169 stone houses, commanding a rent of 6,954 Rupees, were to be found in the eastern half of town. As for the huts, about two-third of the total count of 9134, fetching 44,175 Rupees, was located in the eastern half and one third in the western half of the city.

The eastern half of town was called the *Barkoat Circle* by the surveyor, possibly referring to the word *barkat* in Hindi, meaning 'blessed' or 'prosperous',<sup>9</sup> which could refer to the strong presence of traders of Indian origin in area. Simultaneously, the eastern part of town was just *Ng'ambo*, the Other Side.

The name *Ng'ambo* appears on Baumann's map, which also distinctly marks the division between the darker shaded dense city centre and the hatched more suburban quarters to the south, north and east. *Ng'ambo* is predominantly a suburb, with low density residential areas, clubs, recreation grounds and parks, cemeteries, orchards and some large villas surrounded by lush gardens. 19<sup>th</sup> Century visitors to *Ng'ambo* described its green and orderly character, as opposed to the chaotic and messy density of the western part of town.<sup>10</sup>

## TWO MAJOR UPHEAVALS

Over the past two centuries, two moments caused morphological upheaval in the city of Zanzibar. Both moments were due to a shift in political power and the following changes were thus caused by humans through deliberate planning exercises.

The first dramatic moment was the takeover of power by the British from the Omani confirming Zanzibar in the 1891 declaration to be henceforth a British Protectorate. Planning became an important tool for the colonial administration in order to gain control over the Zanzibar City.<sup>11</sup> Planning exercises commenced with the creation of a Public Works Department and the production of the 1892 Zanzibar Survey Map by Imam.

Simultaneously, household surveys were carried out in Zanzibar City, condensed in the above mentioned List of Properties of 1897, in order to assess the population extend and capacity for land-rent and taxation. In this survey, a strict division between permanent, stone houses and semi-permanent, makuti huts was introduced, building on the distinction that was already apparent in Guillains' map. This division in huts and houses was maintained over the next decades and formed the basis of a racial segregation: the Natives lived in huts and the Europeans, Indians and Arabs lived in houses. The next step in this policy was to disentangle the city's population in segregated racial areas: the Europeans, Arabs and Indians in the western half of town and the Africans in the eastern half of town. This racial zoning was made part and policy in one of the earliest city master plans that were drawn by European planners for an East African city: the 1923 Lanchester Plan.<sup>12</sup>

The contours of the racial zoning followed the creek. The western half of town, henceforth named Stone Town, was reserved for the foreign elite of European, Arab or Asian descent and Ng'ambo for the natives. An exception was made for the area just east of the creek in Ng'ambo, which became part of the Khoja Indian zone. This zoning survived through colonial times and was re-affirmed in the declaration of Stone Town to be UNESCO World Heritage Site as late as 2000. The World Heritage Zone follows exactly Lanchester's racial division line between Arabs, Indians and Europeans on the west side and natives, or Africans, on the east side.

Abdul Sheriff points at the strangeness of the name of Stone Town as opposed to Ng'ambo. Is Ng'ambo a Mud Town? What was really the difference between the two halves of the city? Both halves were built in coral stone and lime and in both halves there were single storied Swahili houses next to multi storied buildings.<sup>13</sup> The western half was more urbanized whereas the eastern half still kept a more rural character, but that was due to its natural growth and not to any division in origin. Zanzibar was a typical Swahili City, or, rather Swahili Metropolis, notwithstanding its geo-morphological split into two halves.

A similar situation applies to another East African city: Ilha de Moçambique. In Ilha de Moçambique, the Portuguese colonial administration reconfirmed the split between Stone Town for the Portuguese and Macuti Town for the Africans, going as far as defining by law that the roofs of huts in Macuti Town should remain makuti roofs.<sup>14</sup>

The Revolution of 1964 marks the second spatial upheaval in the City of Zanzibar. Zanzibar gained independence from the British as a constitutional sultanate in December 1963, but a month later, the sultans was chased away and the Revolution was declared. The first president of Revolutionary Zanzibar, Abeid Karume, wished to start the postcolonial period on a clean slate by replacing Zanzibar City by a modern New Town. Zanzibar New Town was to replace the old city of Zanzibar, both Ng'ambo and Stone Town.

Karume advisers from the GDR advised him to concentrate the efforts first on the rebuilding of Ng'ambo. They assisted in producing a masterplan for the city that envisaged a radical replacement of the Swahili fabric of Ng'ambo by a modernist townscape of four-storied blocks loosely arranged in a park like surrounding. Ng'ambo was to be divided into four quadrants by two major boulevards, one east-west and one north-south.



FIGURE 5 Building Zanzibar New Town, early 1970s.





FIGURE 6 A typical example of recent postmodern multi-storied Swahili houses in Kisimamajongoo, Ng'ambo.

The first two residential neighbourhoods of Kikwajuni and Kilimani were built in Ng'ambo between 1965 and 1969 to the design of the GDR architects and engineers, prior to the construction of the heart of Zanzibar's New Town, the Michenzani project. However, in the construction of the Michenzani project, Karume ignored the advice of the GDR planners to continue with the loosely arranged walk-ups, and instead redesigned the boulevards to be aligned with 6- to 8 storied blocks of not less than 300 metres length.

A large part of the Swahili fabric had to make room for this development, cutting the two central boulevards in a due North-South and East-West cross through Ng'ambo. Sheriff even talks in this respect of the 'crucifixion of Ng'ambo'.<sup>15</sup> This megalomaniac intervention proved to be the swansong of Karume's New Town project. Although not less than 10 Michenzani blocks were eventually built, intermittently, in the period from 1970 to 2008, there were no further major government planned New Town interventions taking place in Ng'ambo after Karume's death in 1972.

## NG'AMBO'S RESILIENCE

The main consequence of the segregation between Stone Town and Ng'ambo in the early years of British colonialism was that most investments in planning and infrastructure went into Stone Town. Piped water, sewage, street lighting, electricity, telephone and paving of roads were brought to reasonable standard in Stone Town but only marginally available in Ng'ambo.

Eventually, Ng'ambo was to be sanitized and re-planned, as the area was seen as a temporary settlement with huts. Initiatives were taken to redevelop Ng'ambo, in particular during the 1940s through a considerable development program that included the building of schools, health services, low cost housing and a 'Civic Centre' at Raha Leo (Rejoice Today) which was to be the radiating heart of the modernization project.

Nonetheless, Ng'ambo was, by and large, left on its own and continued to fend for itself. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, notwithstanding the neglect by the authorities, modernity also made its entry into the area. Makuti slowly disappeared from the townscape, due to fire hazard and because palm leaves were getting rare. Flattened oil cans became common as replacement, later to be replaced in turn by low pitch roofs with corrugated metal sheets, the *mabati*. Simultaneously, coral stone and lime made place for cement blocks and cement mortar. The overall townscape of Ng'ambo did thus change, but the basic grain of the Swahili historic urban landscape, the single storied Swahili house was not modified.

Meanwhile, the urban tissue of Ng'ambo densified over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, creating a fabric of narrow streets and small plazas, not unlike Stone Town, but predominantly consisting of single storied houses.

The New Town project paralyzed development of the remaining Swahili urban tissue. Residents feared the demolition of their houses to make place for subsequent stages in the project and for a long time after Karume's death no investments were being made in Ng'ambo. Neither by the residents in private building or upkeep, nor by the government in infrastructure. This meant that from the later 1970s to the end of the century Ng'ambo generally fell into decay.

Yet, around the turn of the century, Ng'ambo revived. The New Town project had disappeared behind the horizon of time and residents no longer feared demolition of their houses. A new wave of modernization of Ng'ambo started with the replacement of the single storied Swahili houses with multi storied buildings. These buildings contain predominantly apartments, often with a commercial plinth, and they follow the footprint of the single storied Swahili house as well as the floor plan. The technology applied is modern, with a reinforced concrete frame, rendered and painted cement block walls, aluminium or pvc facade elements and a flat concrete or pitched metal sheet roof. Attention is given to detail and decoration, with a mix of bright colours, traditional Zanzibari elements and modern details. This new typology, remarkably consistent in application, can be named the postmodern multi storied Swahili house.

## NG'AMBO TUITAKAYO

In 2011, a new Department of Urban and Rural Planning was established within the Ministry of Lands, Housing, Water and Energy of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. The main reason for this was to be found in the arrears in planning and development control. The last master plan for Zanzibar was drawn in 1982, with a horizon of 20 years and the city had grown well beyond the borders of the master plan. City expansion and densification took place practically uncontrolled. Issues in terms of ecological degradation, mobility congestion, health and safety risks for the population were the consequence of this development, and were increasingly asking for intervention from the side of the government.

The Department of Urban and Rural Planning (DoURP) took matters in hand and, with help of others, made a good start with the production of a planning framework. The first documents produced to become part of a legal planning framework were the new structure plan for Zanzibar Metropolitan area (ZanPlan)<sup>16</sup>, the National Spatial Development Strategy (NSDS) and Regional Plans for Unguja and Pemba.<sup>17</sup> In this planning framework, a number of policies and strategies have been defined that are of consequence for the future of the historical part of Zanzibar City. Most importantly are policies defining priority for non-motorized transport, promoting mixed-use high density urban areas to preserve agricultural land and nature and promoting culture as major driver for development.

The new structure plan for Zanzibar Metropolitan Area, ZanPlan, defines a number of planning areas in the city and the historical part of Ng'ambo is defined as 'City Centre'. This takes up the idea of late president Karume, who wanted Ng'ambo to become the heart of his New Town, in which the Michenzani crossing was to be the crown.<sup>18</sup>

In 2013, by the joint initiative of DoURP, African Architecture Matters (AAMatters) and UNESCO, a pilot project called *Ng'ambo Tuitakayo* (the Ng'ambo that we want) started with the goal to regain grip on the spatial developments in Ng'ambo. This pilot focused on the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo-Michenzani Triangle and commenced with a historical desktop study followed by acupunctural field research, community events, an expert symposium and concrete planning models.

The pilot was based on the assumption that Ng'ambo is an important and integral part of the historic Zanzibar City and that this fact should be acknowledged. Following the NSDS policy on making cultural heritage directive for future development in historical areas, the UNESCO recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes<sup>19</sup> was adopted as overall guideline for the pilot research.

The pilot confirmed the richness of Ng'ambo's cultural heritage and uncovered the substantial archives on the historical mapping and planning of Zanzibar City. In the field, it was found that residents appreciate living in Ng'ambo, but are eager to modernize their dwellings and that in the process of private rebuilding, cultural heritage and identity are respected to only to a certain extent. Further it was found that the public realm is deteriorating due to failing infrastructure, private encroachment and loss of green cover.



FIGURE 7 Ng'ambo Tuitakayo, draft structure plan for the redevelopment of Ng'ambo, 2016.

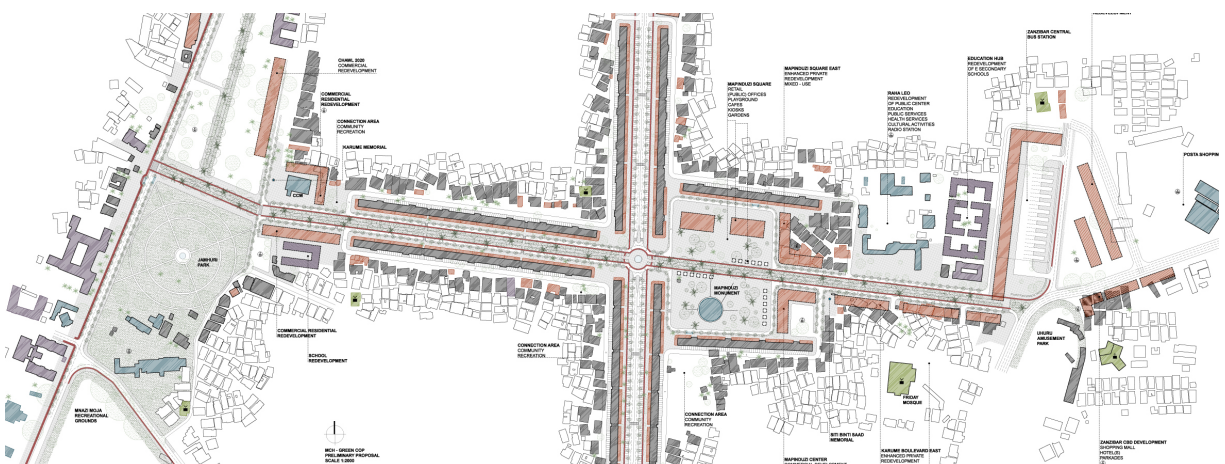


FIGURE 8 Michenzani Green Corridors Plan, 2016. Reconnection of Ng'ambo with the central, pedestrian Karume Boulevard and central public transport transfer station.

In September 2015, the preparation of a redevelopment structure plan for Zanzibar City Centre, the Ng'ambo Tuitakayo Local Area Plan (NGT) was taken into hands by a team consisting of DoURP, the Municipality of Amsterdam and AAMatters. The plan development was based on a parallel and iterative process of research and planning-design work. The research component consisted of desktop and archives study, as well as classic mapping in the field and intangibles cultural heritage mapping. Mapping results were published on Open Street Map, in order to share with a greatest possible community and to be able to further extend and deepen the knowledge of Ng'ambo's rich cultural past.

The Plan vision that was developed during the design-by-research-by-design process is to 'complete' Karume's New Town, by reconnecting the two halves of the city centre, whilst acknowledging the historical importance and the resilience of the Swahili Metropolis. In practical planning terms, this means policies, guidelines and urban detail designs on reinforcement of public open space, incubation of cultural activities, upgrading of infrastructure and green canopy, traffic calming, pedestrianisation and provisions for improved public transport, stimulating and regulating private redevelopment as already taking place and strengthening the existing and creating new nodes of commercial activity.

The heart Ng'ambo Tuitakayo is the Michenzani Corridor, Karume Boulevard, that is to become the main pedestrian connector between the new commercial hub and public transport station on the east side of Ng'ambo and Stone Town in the west. This plan is currently being assessed by the World Bank for potential execution.

## CONCLUSION

Ng'ambo was disconnected over the years from Stone Town through various policies and interventions. It was regarded as a temporary settlement, a slum, which eventually needed to be replaced by a permanent city. Rebuilding Ng'ambo commenced in earnest under the Revolution, through large scale replacement of the 'organic' Swahili City by a monumental modernist New Town, but grounded to a halt when the government coffers ran empty. Sustained by the social resilience of its inhabitants, Ng'ambo passed right through all the turmoil, continuing its own life, mending its scars and redeveloping itself, slowly but surely into a modern African city.

Ng'ambo and Stone Town together form the largest 19<sup>th</sup> century Swahili city in the world. Under colonial rule, Stone Town became the gentrified half and Ng'ambo the popular half. Under the Revolution, the most revolutionary African New Town of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was imprinted on top of the existing Swahili urban tissue of Ng'ambo.

Notwithstanding these traumatic events, Zanzibar City retained its distinct Swahili urban culture. The residents absorbed the impact of foreign domination, racial segregation and radical socialist planning policy, adopted imported modernity, and adapted their houses to transform the 19<sup>th</sup> century Swahili city into a 21<sup>st</sup> century Swahili city.

The great diversity in urban typologies, spaces and buildings of Zanzibar City, combined with the tremendous riches of historical mapping and planning documents preserved in the various archives on Zanzibar and in the United Kingdom, confirm the status of Zanzibar as the main city of East Africa until the 1930s, and its central place to make new discoveries that will change urbanist' and architectural paradigms on the Swahili world and Africa in general.

## Glossary on Swahili terms

duka	shop
KiSwahili	Swahili language
mabati	corrugated metal roof sheets
madrassa	Koran school, often related to a specific mosque
makuti	roof tiles made of coconut leaves (also: macuti)
maskan	gathering place for men
mboriti	mangrove poles
Shirazi	culture of mixed African-Persian descent

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## Image sources

- Figure 1: Nikolaj Cyon.
- Figure 2: Antoni Folkers, 1989.
- Figure 3: Baumann, O. *Der Sansibar Archipel*. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1896).
- Figure 4: Zanzibar National Archives, ca 1900.
- Figure 5: Zanzibar National Archives, ca 1971.
- Figure 6: Berend van der Lans, 2013.
- Figure 7: Department of Urban and Rural Planning, Zanzibar and African Architecture Matters, Amsterdam, 2015.
- Figure 8: Department of Urban and Rural Planning, Zanzibar and African Architecture Matters, Amsterdam, 2015.

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## Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Antoni Scholtens Folkers, is an architect, urban designer and academic. He commenced his professional career as researcher and designer in Ouagadougou and at the Institute for Tropical Building in Starnberg. He is founding director of FBW Architects with offices in Europe and Africa. In 2001, he was co-founder and first chair of ArchiAfrika, platform for research and news on African architecture. In 2010, he co-founded African Architecture Matters.

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## Endnotes

- 1 The name Swahili derived from the Arab Sahel, coast
- 2 Lavolette, A. *The Swahili World*.(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). 901.
- 3 Juma, A. *Unguja Ukuu on Zanzibar*. (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2004).
- 4 Folkers, A. *Modern Architecture in Africa*. (Amsterdam: SUN, 2010).
- 5 For further reading Zanzibar's role in the development of Swahili culture, refer to Pearce (2006) and Ingrams (2007) for the colonial historiography, to Sheriff (1987, 1995 and 2010) for the Swahili cultural context, to Fair (2001) for the 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural history of Ng'ambo, to Folkers (2010) for the urban morphological development and to Bissell (2011) and Myers (1993, as well as many more recent articles ) for the specific political context to the development of Ng'ambo.
- 6 Ghaidan, U. *Study of the Swahili Town*. (Nairobi : East African Literature Bureau, 1975).
- 7 Baumann, O. *Der Sansibar Archipel*. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1896).
- 8 Zanzibar National Archives (AC 16-22).
- 9 Possibly related to the Kiswahili 'baraka' which means luck.
- 10 Folkers, A. *Modern Architecture in Africa*. (Amsterdam: SUN, 2010).
- 11 Folkers, A. *Planning and Replanning Ng'ambo* (SAJAH, Volume 29, No.1, 2014), 40.
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- 13 Sheriff, A., discussion at 'The Other Side' conference held on Zanzibar in February 2014.
- 14 Sollien, *Transforming the other side of Ilha de Moçambique*. (Copenhagen: Royal Institute for the Arts, 2014).
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- 17 Juma, M. *Zanzibar Regional Plans & National Spatial Development Strategy*. (Zanzibar: Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, 2015).
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- 19 UNESCO recommendation 2011