CULTURAL IDEOLOGIES OF PEACE AND CONFLICT:

A SOCIO-COGNITIVE STUDY OF GIRYAMA DISCOURSE

(KENYA)
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CULTURAL IDEOLOGIES OF PEACE AND CONFLICT:
A SOCIO-COGNITIVE STUDY OF GIRYAMA DISCOURSE (KENYA)

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door

Froukje Krijtenburg

geboren te ’s-Gravenhage
promotor: prof.dr. G.J. Abbink
copromotor: dr. F.K. Ameke
In memory of

Japhet Kingi, who accompanied me on many field trips
and who welcomed me into his family

Simba Wanje wa Kagujo, wise man and independent thinker

Edga, dear little friend and Aids victim
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List of abbreviations and conventions

CDA  Critical Discourse Analysis
D.C.  District Commissioner
D.O.  District Officer
Kesh  Kenya shilling
Kig.  Kigirama (the Giryama language)
Kisw.  Kiswahili (the Swahili language)
LDCE  *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*
Van Dale  *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek van de Nederlandse Taal* (Van Dale Comprehensive Dictionary of the Dutch Language)

[ ]  used in the text as an orthographic convention, bracketing a reference number that refers to a quotation or the explication of an informant.

“land”  Instance of the particular use of scare quotes as a semantic indicator, implying that it is the nearest British approximation of the Giryama concept.
Orthography and Structure of the Language

The Giryama language or Kigiryama is a member of the Mijikenda group (E72, according to Guthrie’s numbering) belonging to the Central Bantu languages. It is a tone language with two level tones, high and low, although tones are not marked in the orthography. There are five oral vowel phonemes /i, u, e, o, a/, and 44 consonant sounds. There are three series of plosives, fricatives and affricates, namely, voiceless aspirated, voiceless unaspirated and voiceless unaspirated.

In the orthography the voiceless unaspirated sounds are represented by an apostrophe after them e.g., k’, as in k’ondo (conflict), ts’ as in ts’i (land).

An apostrophe is also used to distinguish between the voiced unaspirated interdental plosive d’, as in d’uka (shop) and the voiced unaspirated alveolar plosive d, as in dau (canoe), while the voiced interdental fricative is written dh as in dheri (peace).

An apostrophe is also used in the orthography to distinguish between a prenasalised voiced velar stop and the velar nasal. The former is written as ng, as in ngano (story) and the latter with an apostrophe after the same sequence of sounds: ng’ is phonetically η as in ng’ombe (cow). There is a contrast between a voiced labio-dental fricative and a voiced fortis labiodental fricative. They are both written with a v but distinguished by an underline for the fortis sound as in v as in vula (rain).

Giryama is an agglutinative language where several morphemes are put together to form words. It has nineteen noun classes. Noun class membership of nominal roots is indicated by prefixes and by a set of agreement morphemes on adjectives, demonstratives and verbs. The classes pair together in singular plural sets. Some examples of nominal prefixes are ki- as in Kigiryama (Giryama language), ki-longozi (leader) or mu- as in mut’u (person) or vi-as in vi-ha (pl. war).

Verbs occur in various tenses and have derivational suffixes such as –na- (reciprocal) in kugwirana (lit. hold each other: unite) or –w- (passive) as in kugwinwa (be held). Giryama is an SVO language. A verbword alone can carry all the information about who (subject) does what (verb) to whom. In that case the Subject Marker is followed by the Object Marker and then followed by the verb. Compare the following sentences:
Mu-t'u a-na-piga n-goma
Prefix-man-SM-TNS-hit prefix-drum

a-na-i-piga
SM-TNS-OM-hit

In the texts free translations and not interlinear glosses are provided. The information here it is hoped can guide readers through the structure of the examples and the texts. For further information on Giryama grammar, the reader is referred to *The verbal morphology of Kigiryama* by the Giryama Bible Translation and Literacy Project (1993) Kilifi.
Map I: Kenya (Giryamaland indicated)
Map II: Kilifi District, with the fieldwork locations indicated

Note: There has been a redenomination of districts in Kenya in January 2007. Kaloleni is now a district.
Map III: Bahari Division
Introduction

Russians use the word mir, in Japanese it is heiwa, the Swahili say amani and the Dutch vrede. All these words are equivalent to ‘peace’ in English. But do they really mean the same thing? Do these words not emerge from a specific cultural context and are they therefore not replete with cultural connotations? And if we assume that they have cultural connotations, how do they affect intercultural communication? An East Cree person for instance associates the word chiyaameyihan (s/he is at peace (lit. s/he calm thinks)) with a personal calmness of mind that can be compared with the quietness of lake water on a windless day. A Fufulde speaker on the other hand uses the word jam (peace) as a daily greeting, meaning ‘all is well’. Rather than describing a state of ‘wellness’, the speaker expresses the wish that all is well for all involved in the greeting (greeter, respondent, and all relatives whose circumstances are asked about in a greeting). Clearly these two ‘peace’ words reflect very different experiences, suggesting at the same time that they belong to different socio-cultural domains.

My great fascination with cultural experiences in the domains of peace and conflict started to gain more urgency in 1994, the year of the horrendous massacres of Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda. Those events brought home to the world that the previous ostensible peace at a national level had obscured the seriousness of the intercultural tensions between the Hutus and the Tutsis. Indeed, there was a growing awareness that peaceful co-existence among the Hutus and the Tutsis would only be possible if cultural aspects were given serious attention.

It seemed to me that ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ were a forgotten, yet important, area of consideration. A study of ‘cultural understandings’ in the domains of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ was taking shape in my mind. The book which has evolved, focuses on gaining insight into these understandings through verbal and non-verbal expressions of culture. It highlights cultural discourse as a window on the ideational framework in the

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1 The explanations of these East-Cree and the Fufulde words were given to me in personal communication by Marie-Odile Junker and Anke Breedveld respectively.
2 See also Ernst Damman (1992) and Christina Schäffner and Anita L. Wenden (1995:4-5) on different experiential aspects of ‘peace’ words.
3 A similar concern for including cultural elements in peace processes in Africa is expressed by Mary Spear and Jon Keller (1996).
Introduction

domains of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ of a particular social formation, in other words, on cultural ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’.

Viewing culture as instantiated through discourse, I implicitly depart from the proposition that culture is localised in concrete, publicly accessible signs. This proposition discourages a notion of culture as a monolithic system of abstract meanings that are shared by more or less all members of a community, while facilitating a conceptualisation of culture in terms of its instantiations. Greg Urban’s (1991:19) definition of culture as “…a collection or history of publicly accessible sign vehicles…” reflects the same. I agree with him, when he argues that the collection of instances forms the basis for members of a community for recognising interconnections, while the interconnections that are recognised vary from person to person. The dialectic which is implied in the definition of culture in terms of collection and instantiation, indicates the dynamic character of culture. This is taken as a fundamental characteristic of culture in this study, and is reflected in its focus on culture as practice.

In the first part of this study cultural practice is explored from a theoretical perspective. A central topic is the nature of ‘cultural understandings’, their salience among the people that enact them and how they can be studied. This argumentation is rounded off with the presentation of an analytical framework which is consistent with the theoretical propositions and includes the possibility of cross-cultural analysis. The second exploration is a case-study of Giryama discourse in the domains of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. It is an illustration of how the analytical framework works; at the same time it is a demonstration of its fruitfulness. It aims at understanding the key concepts that inspire Giryama discourse in the domains of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. Consequently, the analysis has a specific focus. It pays attention to relevant socio-cultural practices and socio-political practices of the Giryama.

In this introduction I present the considerations that were made before I arrived at the theoretical argumentation. In fact, they constitute the general ideational backdrop against which this study is set, and ultimately determine the organisation of the book. They are presented in the way that I developed my ideas, as a process in time. Looking back, I realise that I have been part of a much wider movement of scholars and practitioners, who are committed to improving on paradigms for the de-escalation of tension, and for the prevention and resolution of violent conflicts in the world. Therefore I think that the discussion of the general backdrop of this study benefits from mixing personal
Introduction

observations with a description of elements of the scholarly debate in the field of peace
and conflict studies. From this description emerges, I hope, a clear picture of the
considerations that have gone into shaping the present study the way it is. At the end of
the introduction there is a brief overview of the contents of the various chapters.

The context of scholarly discourse

In the late eighties of the previous century the scholarly literature in the field of
international relations highlights the theme of conflict resolution. In those days much
scholarly debate relating to conflicts in Africa is dominated by finding ways of successful
conflict resolution. Intra-state, interstate and regional conflicts are studied within the
context of institutionalised powers, such as the army, economic players and the
government (Deng and Zartman 1991; Zartman 1991). This framework starts to lose
impact after the international interventions in Rwanda and Somalia. The powerlessness of
the international community in the face of intra-state conflicts was tragically demonstrated.
This situation not only forced the UN to re-think the terms of their peace operations, but
also compelled scholars to focus more actively on the characteristic dimensions of intra-
state conflict and its management. These days the necessity for a change of policy is felt
all the more acutely because of the growing number of intra-state conflicts in which
international peace operations are carried out. Moreover, it is generally realised that intra-
state conflicts are not a temporary phenomenon but one of the hallmarks of a globalising
world (Langholtz and Leentjes 2001:179; Sanson and Bretherton 2001:208).

The (scholarly) debate changes in the nineties of the last century. It can be characterised
as having an ‘inclusive’ perspective on conflict management. This inclusive view,
highlighting the involvement of local players in peace processes, is a notable break from
the earlier ‘realist’ perspective on conflict resolution which, Avruch claims, considers
states as undifferentiated monolithic phenomena, and therefore “excludes the parties’
perception and belief as having any significant effects on the parties’ respective
calculations of scarcity, power or interests” (1998: 28). One distinct focus of attention
within this ‘inclusive’ approach in the context of intra-state conflict is ‘culture’ (Avruch

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4 A new kind of thinking on the UN peace-keeping role at an intra-state level is heralded by An Agenda for
Peace (1992) by the then UN Secretary General, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali (cf. Langholtz and Leentjes (2001)
on the evolution of UN peace-keeping since the end of the Cold War). Also these new ideas proved to be
unsuccessful.
Introduction

1998; Pedersen 2001; Spear 1996; Zartman 2000). Its importance is motivated by Pedersen (2001) as follows:

In order to intervene constructively in intercultural conflict, it is essential that a peacemaker understand[s] both the basic values of the cultures and behavioral expressions of these values. (...) A consistent weakness of many international peacemaking efforts derives from the cultural insularity of the practitioners, especially the insensitivity of Western peacemakers to the cultural context of non-Western groups in conflict (2001:183).

Describing a situation of international mediation, Pedersen emphasises knowledge of cultural values and their behavioural expression. Implicit in this description is the idea that the outsider-mediator should have knowledge of the values and their behavioural expressions of all the parties that are involved. Pedersen’s argument that conflict resolution can only be successful if the parties concerned have a deeper understanding of each other’s cultural background, leads him to propose a cross-cultural analytical framework. Pedersen’s argument largely coincides with my own conviction that research into conflict resolution has much to gain from investigating the cultural component from a cross-cultural perspective. We differ however, about assumptions relating the manifestation of cultural values and their relationship to behavioural expressions. This has led me to a different analytical framework.

One major trigger in articulating the analytical framework that was materialising in my mind, was Avruch’s (1998) proposition. It sets a new agenda for research, even if sketchy, into the ‘cultural’ in conflict resolution. Departing from the premise that only an emic approach can render profound insights into the cultural practice of people, Avruch argues, that this perspective “is amenable, if recast and analyzed further, to... metaphor, cognitive model or schema approaches...” (1998:62). Rather than explaining the different approaches that Avruch mentions here, I would like to highlight a basic assumption which is shared by these three approaches, which is that mental constructions are fundamentally embodied.

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5 A remarkable instance of a study of the use of metaphor in ‘war’ rhetoric is Lakoff (1992).
Introduction

This implies that our thinking is fundamentally shaped by our being in a world and interacting with it. Exploring cultural ideas at this experiential level can reveal cognitive structures that are salient among most members of a social formation. However, the structuralist nature of metaphor, cognitive model and schema approaches can lead to a functional ‘stereotyping’ approach to cultural data, Avruch warns the reader, and therefore should be used cautiously. He emphasises context sensitiveness in studying cultural mental constructions. This can be ensured, first of all, by focusing on those mental constructions that are key ideas in a social formation, or as he has it: “… we need to have some sense of the sociological distribution of … ideas in the relevant population, as well as their psychological salience for relevant individual actors” (1998:62). Additionally, these key ideas need to be studied “… close to their domain of relevance and rooted constantly in close dialectical examination of ongoing social practice, of texts of behaviour …” (1998:63).

Avruch’s concept of cultural key ideas is similar to my use of the term key words. Both are understood in terms of mental constructions that are fundamentally embodied and which reflect salient socio-cultural categories of a particular social formation. The one way in which they are essentially different is, that a key word reflects a cultural understanding rather than cultural knowledge.6

Additional considerations have contributed to shaping this study the way it is. One addresses the question, what or rather who should be the object of study. Probably due to the programmatic character of his proposition, Avruch does not explicitly discuss the issue. Introducing ‘culture’ as an essential aspect of conflict resolution, however, one must be clear on whose ‘culture’ to study, which again depends on the question for who the conflict resolution is intended. This may seem like looking into the obvious, but strangely enough, as soon as one starts articulating the answer another (consequential) issue presents itself.

The answer to this question is, undoubtedly, the powerful elite and by extension the people they represent. In many African countries this is already a problem-prone situation, as there is generally a tremendous ‘cultural’ gap between those in power and the grassroots, caused by a complex of reasons that relate among others to education, urban

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6 ‘Understanding’ is different from ‘knowledge’ in that it is an emergent phenomenon. In line with its nature it derives from different knowledge structures.
Introduction

versus rural, powerful versus powerless. In fact, the powerful and the powerless constitute two distinct communities of practice. As a result, the interests of both groups are different, and indeed may be so divergent that the peace contracts brokered by the powerful may not be attuned to the powerless. In such a case the conflict resolution process does not include the people, and in the shorter or longer run a peace contract fails to endure.

In view of the importance of the people on the ground for building lasting peace, I would argue that the grass-roots are the true “owners” of the conflict resolution process, and that therefore serious attention should be given to what ‘peace’ means to them. This claim comes with a consequence for the scope of the research. To make this clear, I suggest we rephrase the above observations in the form of research presuppositions. Supposing that ordinary people are a prime object of research in particularly the area of intercultural conflict resolution, and supposing that we can gain insight into salient ‘cultural understandings’ through ordinary people, this leads to the logical conclusion that studying salient ‘cultural understandings’ through ordinary people in the framework of conflict resolution is an appropriate research activity. However, I think this conclusion goes wrong on one essential point, which is that ‘cultural understandings’ are not mental phenomena that float around in the outside world, but are basically embodied. This implies that cultural ideas feature in people enacting them, or in other words they manifest themselves through cultural practices. Assuming that cultural practices generally and primarily emerge from social relationships over time, to explore cultural ideas within the framework of conflict and conflict resolution is setting the research in an artificial and restricting context. I therefore suggest that a more productive framework for the study of cultural ideas is the ‘normal’ context of social relations.7

This may seem like a formal change of perspective with few practical consequences. Yet, as I found in my own research practice, this change of perspective leads to a more integrated understanding of conflict. It not only enables the researcher to find out about the relationship between conflict and peace in the specific cultural context, but also provides a key for exploring the related important issue of cross-ideological structural violence, which is a major source for intrastate conflict.8

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7 The word ‘normal’ has been chosen rather than ‘peaceful’ because the latter word obscures the phenomenon of ‘structural violence’, which can be part of the ‘normal’ situation. The term ‘structural violence’ is explained in note 8.

8 Structural violence is described by Christie et al. (2001) as: “...endemic to economic systems that produce a concentration of wealth for some, while exploiting others, political systems that give access to some and
Introduction

Claiming that ‘cultural understandings’ manifest themselves through cultural practices, we enter a vast area of study. The title of the book announces already that this study focuses on one particular niche of cultural practices which is discourse. For its overriding practice of exploring salient socio-cultural mental categories of peace and conflict in the domain of cultural discourse, it is defined as a socio-cognitive study.

Cross-cultural comparison

A consideration which has been integrated in the set-up of this study is how to make cultural data productive in the wider context of the international scholarly discourse of peace and conflict. Some ground-breaking work in the context of intercultural communication has been done by the anthropologist Mary Douglas (1982) and the sociologist Geert Hofstede (2001). Although their approaches are different, they have a common argument, which is that all societies can be distinguished from one another according to a small number of general and salient characteristics. Douglas and her colleagues (Douglas 1982; Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky 1990) grade institutional organisations (and entire societies for that matter) according to two parameters, which are assessments of the institutional organisations on a scale of ‘low solidarity-high solidarity’ and on a scale of ‘high stratification-low stratification’. Hofstede views societies from a ‘value’ perspective. He describes and compares them according to five dimensions “along which dominant value systems in the more than 50 countries can be ordered and that affect human thinking, feeling and acting, as well as organizations and institutions, in predictable ways” (2001:xix). They are:

1. power distance
2. uncertainty avoidance
3. individualism versus collectivism
4. masculinity versus femininity
5. long-term versus short term orientation

oppress others, and hierarchical systems that are suffused with ethnocentrism and intolerance” (p.8). To this I would like to add the structural institutionalised negation of socio-cultural variety, as visible in education, administration and the judiciary.

9 Not surprisingly, (1 and 3) echo the analytical parameters of Douglas and colleagues.
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While Hofstede’s categorisation as well as that of Douglas are impressively consistent, they are mainly the result of a nomothetic study, as Hofstede qualifies his own work (Hofstede 2001: 26). This means that their categorisations are general law-like constructions; variation and processes of change are not reflected. Also pragmatism is not an operational aspect. I would therefore argue that the categorisations like those of Hofstede and Douglas are valuable for indicating salient sociological features of nations, organisations and institutions. When enactment is understood to be a constitutive part of cultural meaning construction, which is the case in the present study, their classifications are less suitable.

As I have implied in the discussion of Avruch’s proposition above, this study takes a view from the inside on everyday Giryama practices. The danger of such an approach is its suggestion of cultural relativism, highlighting cultural uniqueness to the detriment of cross-cultural comparability. As many of the violent conflicts today are of an inter-ethnic or religious character and involve international intervention forces, a lot can be gained from removing the semblance of cultural uniqueness in the context of conflict resolution, while not obscuring culture specific elements that constitute concepts of peace and conflict.

One way of avoiding the semblance of cultural uniqueness could have been a cross-cultural study. However, the present study explores quite un-trodden grounds of research in the field of peace and conflict studies. As has been pointed out before, it aims at demonstrating how the cultural ideological dimensions of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ can be profitably explored, and proposes a new framework for exploring them. This demands a careful examination of theoretical arguments and their analytical implications, as well as the presentation of a test case. The next phase can be a more applied form of cross-cultural research.

Although I have just argued that a cross-cultural comparison is not an integrated part of this study, there are some references to other cultures. This relates to the particular focus of the analysis on Giryama key words. As was indicated above in relation to Avruch’s proposition of key ideas, key words are mental constructions which are particularly culturally charged. I am looking at how the counterparts of the Giryama terms under study feature in the lexicon of the English and Dutch languages. In practice this implies that dictionary explications of the British and Dutch counterparts are compared with the

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10 The term ‘English’, unless indicated otherwise, refers to British English.
explanations that Giryama informants gave of the Giryama word. This is done in the initial phase of exploring the particular Giryama concept. In fact, comparing the meanings of the Giryama word and its English and Dutch counterparts, we can draw out features of the Giryama term that could easily be overlooked. Incidentally, using two languages instead of one for comparison, has an additional advantage. Dutch and English words do not mean the same things. As a result, they offer a varied set of potential resonances for exploration in the Giryama counterpart. The reason for choosing precisely the English and the Dutch vocabularies as comparative material, is because English has the great asset of being accessible to a large number of people, including many Giryama; the reason for including Dutch is, that it is my mother tongue.

As soon as more unconscious levels of Giryama articulation are tapped into, this cross-cultural comparison starts to lose impact. This is generally speaking due to a lack of shared experiences. However, the concepts of *kilongozi / leader / leider* (chapter four) seem to have more compatible components than the other terms. They are therefore discussed more elaborately.

The Giryama

All these general considerations are not exclusively the result of reading up on newspapers and relevant scholarly works. They are closely related to the experiences that I shared with the main actors of this book, the Giryama of Kenya. Why the Giryama? One answer is that it does not matter which social formation is studied in the context of a research, which intends to present an analytical framework that would be valid for the discussion of any social formation. After all, the case-study is a practical elaboration of the theoretical and analytical arguments advanced in chapter one. Another answer is that the Giryama experienced two remarkable violent disruptions of peace within their living memory in an otherwise long history of peaceful co-existence with the other inhabitants of the Kenyan coast. The conflicts of 1914 and 1997 started after explicit assertions of Giryama identity. The conflict of 1914 was a reaction of the British colonial administration to such an assertion, a Giryama massive oath-swearimg rally which was held at *kaya Giryama* (sacred centre of the Giryama). The one of 1997, the so-called Likoni clashes,\\footnote{More information on the Likoni clashes can be found in chapter two and in Alamin Mazrui (ca. 1997; 1998).} also started at a *kaya* (sacred centre), *kaya Bombo*, the sacred centre of a fellow-
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Mijikenda group, the Digo.\textsuperscript{12} Giryama youths, together with fellow Mijikenda youngsters, were involved in brutal rapes and killings of Western Kenyans living and working on the coast.

I was intrigued by the prominence of the role of \textit{kaya} (sacred centre) in these two conflicts, and wondered which role it played in the Giryama discourse on conflict. Furthermore, I was struck by the prevalence of Giryama oral historical accounts of successful “dodgings” of violent conflict, and the emphasis in traditional military training on defensive tactics rather than on offensive tactics.

In view of these cultural articulations in the domain of conflict, I considered it a challenge to find out if there were ‘universal’ elements – or rather elements that are found in different societies across the globe – in the Giryama understandings of conflict and its resolution. Fitted within the larger framework of this study, the case-study includes salient Giryama understandings of peace, conflict and conflict resolution.

Content and organisation

From the above elements a line of argument has been developed that divides into four major parts.

Part I is introductory. It includes a chapter that outlines the theoretical and analytical framework of the present study. In it matters are addressed that have been briefly raised in this introduction, such as the nature of the research, the question of which data can be qualified as cultural data, and the cross-cultural potential of an emic analysis. Practical information on the corpus of data and how these data were collected is given too. The second chapter is an introduction of the Giryama. It presents some geographical, historical, linguistic and socio-cultural details of the Giryama. Specific attention is given to topics that recur in the analysis, such as the ‘clash’ between the British colonial administration and the Giryama, and the Giryama institutions of \textit{kaya} (sacred centre) and \textit{athumia a magogo} (council of elders).

\textsuperscript{12} Mijikenda (lit. nine homesteads) is the collective term for nine coastal groups: Chonyi, Digo, Duruma, Giryama, Jibana, Kambe, Kauma, Rabai, Ribe.
Part II has been organised under the general heading of the Giryama ideology of peace. Chapter three presents the most general and the most comprehensive picture of the Giryama understanding of peace. In the two chapters that follow this picture is used as the broad background against which two peace related phenomena are highlighted. Chapter four presents the Giryama understanding of leadership, and discusses how Giryama understand kilongozi (leader) essentially as an agent of peace. Ts’i (land) is considered another essential ingredient of peace by the Giryama. As will be demonstrated in chapter six, ts’i (land) assumes existential importance in the context of peace and conflict when compounded with kayla (sacred centre), welding a conceptual link between peaceful living and continued existence (of the Giryama). Additionally, it is the only concept that articulates peace and conflict as an integrated understanding. This specific quality has determined its transitional place at the end of the ‘peace’ part.

Part III focuses on the Giryama ideology of conflict. In the Giryama context conflict manifests itself under three major headings, k’ondlo (conflict), fuyo (trouble) and viha (war). One major distinction between them is their impact on society. The one with greatest social impact is k’ondlo (conflict), which is discussed in chapter six. The other two manifestations of ‘conflict’ are discussed in chapter seven. Integrated in the Giryama ideology of conflict is conflict resolution. In fact, more specific and more appropriate in the Giryama context is the term reconciliation. Reconciliation processes will therefore be a prominent feature of the discussion. In the course of the discussion the terms ‘arbitration’ and ‘mediation’ will be used to refer to reconciliation processes that are guided by third parties. I have used the terms to reflect two different types of reconciliation. In the case of arbitration the primary reference is to an authority that is generally understood to be expert in assessing the instigator of a conflict and taking appropriate measures so that the victim is satisfied and the instigator will not cause a conflict again. The term mediation first and foremost refers to an authority that aims at removing the cause of conflict, thereby reconciling the antagonists.

At the end of the three parts there is a concluding fourth part. Among other things it reflects on the particular contribution of a study of ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ through everyday and public discourse to the field of peace and conflict studies.

Although this organisation looks quite straightforward, in practice there is quite some trafficking to and fro. Cross-referencing is inevitable of course, considering that the concepts of peace and conflict are two sides of the same coin. For instance, the leader as
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agent of peace does not just operate in the context of peaceful living, but assumes a specific presence in the context of conflict. The result is that the figure of the leader is not confined to chapter four, but recurs in Part III. I have tried to be as clear as possible in making connections between one and the other discussion, while trying not to disrupt the flow of the argument.

Coming to the end of this introduction, I would like to refer back briefly to its beginning. Starting out by saying that this study developed out of a profound concern with intercultural violence in Rwanda, I hope that it will make a valuable contribution to current ways of thinking in terms of practices of peace-making and peace-keeping in intercultural contexts. I also hope that the analytical framework that is proposed in this study arouses scholarly interest, inviting comparative work on established socio-cultural categories of different societies in the domains of peace and conflict as well as complementary analytical frameworks to add windows on the intricate complex of cultural ideologies of peace and conflict.
PART I

GENERAL OUTLINES
1 The analytical framework

Introduction

In the introduction the motivation for a study like this was explained, the present chapter discusses how it is undertaken. The study of Giryama *ideologies* of peace and conflict is carried out within the overall framework of anthropological linguistics. This sub-discipline is chosen for its focus on the exploration of language use as a doorway to ‘cultural understandings’¹. Its fundamental assumption that language is cultural practice has guided this study (cf. Foley1997:5).

What follows is a discussion of the key theoretical ideas that have shaped the analysis. A line of argument is developed that contextualises and frames the concept of (cultural) *ideology*, while at the same time it provides the principles that direct the practice of analysis.² The discussion focuses in particular on the concept of ‘cultural understandings’, which within the framework of anthropological linguistics are assumed to be emergent phenomena in the context of practice. As I hope to demonstrate in the analysis, ‘cultural understandings’ are a productive instrument for exploring Giryama *ideologies* of peace and conflict.

The interpretation of ‘cultural understandings’ that is presented here, is inspired by the cognitive sciences and discourse studies. In the first part of the chapter the theoretical dimensions of the concept will gradually become visible through a discussion of the relevant theoretical arguments from cognitive scientists and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) scholars. In the second part of the chapter the concept of ‘cultural understandings’ is discussed as the object of analysis. An analytical framework is presented that is geared to bringing out cultural, in this case, Giryama understandings in the domains of peace(-making) and conflict, and more specifically those understandings that reflect (strands of) Giryama *ideologies* of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict.

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¹ A very succinct and comprehensive introduction to anthropological linguistics is: William A. Foley *Anthropological Linguistics: An Introduction* (1997). The book has made an important contribution to defining the analytical boundaries of the present study. See also: A. Duranti (1997).
² Throughout the study the terms *ideology* and *cultural ideology* refer to the same concept, which can be loosely defined as a set of ideas that are experienced by a social formation as normal and normative, directing and framing their practices. A more detailed explanation of the concept of *(cultural)* ideology is given in section 1.3.
Chapter one

I Theoretical dimensions

I.1 Defining ‘cultural understandings’ in the context of the cognitive sciences

Insights gained in the field of the cognitive sciences relating to knowledge processes and knowledge distribution are central to the present study. The specific interpretation of the cognitive sciences of ‘knowledge’ is the basic premise from which the concept of ‘cultural understanding’ has been developed. In the following paragraphs I present the theoretical arguments of those cognitive scientists, that are most relevant to the definition of ‘cultural understanding’ as used in this study.

Within the field of the cognitive sciences Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991) break new ground, when they argue that the lived experience is the point of departure for theorising on cognition. They coin the term ‘enactionism’ “to emphasize the growing conviction that cognition is not the representation of a pre-given world by a pre-given mind, but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs” (1991:9). Although not explicit in this definition of ‘enactionism’, cognition is understood to be essentially ‘embodied’:

By using the term embodied we mean to highlight two points: first, that cognition depends upon the kinds of experience that come from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities, and second, that these individual sensorimotor capacities are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological, psychological and cultural context. (1991:172-73)

Summing up we could say that the authors characterise an individual cognitive process as ‘the enactment of an embodied mind and a world’. This world is both situated, i.e. created at the moment of interaction, and stable, as a ‘history of (inter)actions’ which is the ‘more encompassing biological, psychological and cultural context’. As much as this description focuses on the individual, it offers the perfect setting for a study which sets out to gain insight into the concept of ‘cultural understandings’. This may not seem very obvious at first sight. However, when we rephrase the definition in terms of the subject of this study, we find that its salience cannot be denied. Exploring ideologies of peace and conflict, we

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3 ‘Understanding’ is different from ‘knowledge’ in that it is an emergent phenomenon, drawing from different knowledge structures.
Analytical framework

assume in line with the theory of Varela, Thompson and Ross (1991) that there is not a fixed set of ‘cultural understandings’; these understandings emerge from the enactments of an embodied mind and a world over time. From this we may conclude that ‘cultural understandings’ are essentially constructed, adaptive, and at the same time continuous. This continuity is in fact what lends ‘cultural understandings’ their truth value.

Although continuity grants cognition a kind of stability, Varela, Thompson and Ross deny cognition a stable core: “…groundlessness is the very condition for the richly textured and interdependent world of human experience” (Varela 1991:144). By ‘groundlessness’ enactionism does not mean the non-existence of ground, but rather that there is a ground that is dynamic and shifting according to constellations of time, place and people. It is revealed in cognition as common sense, which is defined as “knowing how to negotiate our way through a world that is not fixed and pre-given but that is continually shaped by the types of experiences in which we engage” (Varela 1991:14).

As much as I agree with the observation of common sense as the ultimate stabilising factor, I think that the definition of Varela, Thompson and Ross is inadequate. The authors suggest basically that knowledge derived from survival experiences is common sense. They do not specify at which level common sense operates nor do they indicate its impact on human cognitive processes. Pierre Bourdieu does give an interpretation of common sense, or as he calls it more appropriately habitus, that gives insight into these aspects. He argues that it operates at a level of cognition which facilitates rather than determines. In other words habitus is a set of embodied dispositions (or generative schemas as he also calls them) which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. These inculcated dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are regular without being consciously coordinated or governed by any ‘rule’ (Bourdieu 1977:17). Significantly, habitus is ‘implicit’ in practice and representation or, to say it in Bourdieu’s own words, habitus is “the structuring structure” of practice and representation (1977:72). In one of his characteristic paragraph-long sentences, Bourdieu elaborates on this point:

The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative

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4 Bourdieu prefers the term ‘implicit’ to ‘unconscious’ to indicate that a disposition exists in a practical context in agents’ practice and not in their consciousness (c.f. 1977:27).
Chapter one

principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus. (1977: 78)

In fact, Bourdieu’s description of habitus indicates the domains in which ‘cultural understandings’ are played out. This may not seem too obvious at this point. I hope to shed some more light on the statement, by way of paraphrasing the comments on habitus advanced so far. Characteristically, habitus is a historically developed set of embodied dispositions that is acquired through cultural practices at a preconscious level of human understanding. Therefore, Bourdieu marks an individual’s early life experiences as shaping his/her set of dispositions. His argument is supported by medical research on brain functioning, which claims that three-quarters of the human brain develops outside the womb, in direct relationship with the external environment in the first five years of life (Shore 1999: 3ff). It means that many cognitive processes of an individual are framed and directed by the socio-cultural environment in which he/she finds him/herself. Thus the ‘set of dispositions’ is characteristically non-reflexive and strongly tainted by socialisation processes in an environment that has ways of doing things which have proved reliable over time.

Indeed, it is the articulation of the ‘customary’ and the ‘traditional’ in terms of a set of embodied mental dispositions that makes it possible to explore ‘cultural understandings’ of peace(-making) and conflict in a variety of socio-cultural domains. This is also indicated by Bourdieu, when he says that habitus is a set of dispositions, which transform into different ‘surface’ shapes, ranging from routine practices to perceptions and attitudes, which display a certain regularity, yet without being governed by a ‘rule’.

Thus a study of a variety of manifestations from different socio-cultural domains seems a good bet in trying to gain insight into ‘cultural understandings’. This is as true as it is impracticable. The sheer number of manifestations demands selectivity. In fact, some restrictions are imposed already by the object of study, which is cultural discourse. Not every socio-cultural manifestation in the range that Bourdieu describes as ‘practices, perceptions and attitudes’ can be used to study ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. As will become clear from the discussion of ‘cultural understandings’ in the context of discourse analysis (section I.2), it is typically those manifestations that have had a public history which started before the people who are ‘enacting’ them now. Secondly, in line with the characteristic inspiring rather than prescriptive nature of habitus, the
manifestations that are suitable for analysis are not codified or otherwise rule governed. The third condition they must meet on the strength of the particular focus of this study, is that they belong to the realm of everyday life.

Even with these restricting criteria, there is an overwhelming number of cultural data that qualify for analysis. It is therefore necessary to make some choices. Within the realm of everyday life three domains of cultural discourse have been selected that manifest within the Giryama experience two characteristics that are essential features of habitus: ‘historically rooted’ and ‘regular without being governed by rule’. Including a varied collection of manifestations, they are sites of collective memory\(^5\), public events, and everyday communication. I am aware that this is a rather unusual classification. Still, I think it can be justified, even if there is only one feature that lies at the basis of the classification. Not accidentally, this feature is closely linked to the definition of ‘cultural understandings’ as both situated and continuous; the three domains are distinguished by their different relations to time and place.\(^6\) This point, as well as their common aspect of containing verbal and non-verbal expressions, will be discussed more elaborately in the second part of this chapter.

Implicit in the previous discussion is the assumption that linguistic practice like any other cultural practice is embodied. Cognitive scientists emphasise the importance of physical experience as a medium for conveying meaning in language. Mark Johnson and George Lakoff in particular have studied the role of our bodily experience in cognitive processes (Johnson 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1999) and attribute to our bodies a profound structuring role. They argue that our bodies in their physical activity in the world are a categorising medium.

Assuming that language can reveal the way people acquire socially relevant understandings, cognitive scientists in the fields of linguistics and psychology studied cognitive processes in language. Rosch (1978) found that people do not only organise physical objects on the basis of the classical theory of category structure, based on

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\(^5\) The term is inspired by Pierre Nora’s set of three volumes, titled Les Lieux de Mémoire (1997).

\(^6\) I have found that a similar consideration can underlie genre classification. In Lexicon van Literaire Termen (Lexicon of Literary Terms) (1991) H.van Gorp notes that genre distinctions depend essentially on genre consciousness. As a result, genre studies have become a matter of norms and values, in addition to form (160). This is one more validation for the present unusual classification, which is ultimately based on Giryama values relating to ‘time’ and ‘place’.

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shared features (like all table-like structures belong to the mental category of table), but that people make categorisations which are motivated by physical and mental experiences. One such type of categorisation, she argues, is based on a taxonomy of superordinate, basic and subordinate levels.

Her experiments reveal that the basic level is the level at which most of our knowledge is organised. For instance, people use more readily the generic word ‘dog’ than the more general species ‘animal’, a superordinate category, or the subordinate ‘Irish setter’. This is because basic level categories display ‘basicness’: they have an overall perceived shape, there is a general motor programme (i.e. human motor interaction with its members is characteristically similar), and words denoting these categories are characteristically short, commonly used and first learned by children. This is what makes them the most generally shared category (Rosch and Lloyd 1978:31-35; Lakoff 1987:46-48).

Rosch’s contribution to the theoretical framework of this study is the assumption that cognitive processes are most generally shared at the level of the basic-level categories and that they are re-presented in language as common words. From these findings we may conclude that everyday life is pre-eminently the arena of basic-level categories. As a result, a study of ‘cultural understandings’ within the realm of everyday life makes sense within a cognitive context. Lakoff’s argument that Rosch’s categorisation is also applicable to event and more abstract categories underscores the pervasiveness of basic-level categories in meaning construction both in linguistic and other cultural practices (Lakoff 1987:47-48). What is more, it is the cognitive scientific support for a study of verbal and non-verbal expressions within a single framework, which is a characteristic feature of the analytical framework of this study.

In their pioneering study Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explore the idea of basic-level categories in human thinking, and in particular their characterising quality of ‘basicness’. They come to the conclusion that our everyday understanding is fundamentally based on the structuring properties of metaphor and – to a lesser degree – of metonymy. In fact they add an entirely new dimension to what were generally assumed to be strictly literary phenomena, as they point out in the following passage with respect to metaphor:

Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish – a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a
matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found on the contrary that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:3)

Like their more specialised counterparts everyday metaphors reflect the essence of a metaphor, which is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. More precisely, the conceptual metaphor is “...the principal tool of abstract reason, the means by which the inferential structures of concrete domains are employed in abstract domains” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:155).

Likewise, if less articulately, systematic use is made of metonyms to organise our thoughts, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:35ff) claim. In case of a metonym, one entity is used to refer to another. This can be done in different ways, for instance ‘the part for the whole’ (e.g. “We need brains on the team” (i.e. intelligent people)), ‘the whole for the part’ (e.g. “Kenya is leading!” (comment during an international running contest) and the producer for the produced (e.g. “Let’s have a Karlsberg” (i.e. a beer)). Typically, a conceptual metonym draws out an aspect that is most salient in a particular context. Although the conceptual metaphor and the conceptual metonym share the same basic grounding in experience, the grounding of a metonym is generally more obvious.

The examples of everyday metaphors and metonymy that Lakoff and Johnson (1980) discuss are at first sight convincing, yet their functional approach does not leave room for contextual interpretation. As a result, other aspects that are part of the understanding are relegated to the background. Moreover, while founding their categorisation on Western (i.e. American) metaphors and metonyms, they assume their approach to be universally applicable.

This study does not assume such an essentialist view. Here the structuring aspects of metaphors and metonyms are considered to be contributing to, rather than decisive of the content of ‘cultural understandings’. In this way we can not only give scope to other ways of meaning production in the analysis, but also allow for a variety of interpretations of ‘cultural understandings’ among the native speakers.

Two elements of the metaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson should still be mentioned here, as they recur specifically in the analysis. One is the concept of symbolic
metonymies, which they consider “...critical links between everyday experience and the coherent metaphorical systems that characterize religions and cultures” (1980: 40). They argue that these metonymies are grounded in our physical experience and therefore “provide an essential means of comprehending religious and cultural concepts” (1980:40).

In the context of the Giryama understanding of ‘land’, symbolic metonymy adds a new interpretative dimension to ts’i’ (land). A second element which is profitably used in the analysis of ts’i’ (land), is a type of metaphor which characteristically relies strongly on basic physical experiences. Lakoff and Johnson argue that since these experiences are deeply rooted in early life experiences this type of metaphor is most commonly shared and resilient to change or disposal (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Johnson 1987:12ff). This observation is consistent with Bourdieu’s description of *habitus*. Bourdieu emphasises that the pre-conscious nature of *habitus* makes common practices resilient to change.

Summing up the impact of the above discussion on the nature of ‘cultural understandings’, we can make the following observations. To start with a general observation: the discussion has made clear that a study of ‘cultural understandings’ has to take account of their constructed nature. Being constructed ‘cultural understandings’ adopt new features according to the demands of place, time and people. As a result, a description of ‘cultural understandings’ reflects the time context in which the research is carried out. In this sense this study is a record of its time. Paradoxically, this is also its enduring contribution. If it presents a detailed picture of present-day Giryama understandings, it enables future studies in the same area to point out differences and continuities of understandings.

Besides these general implications, the above discussion has also practical consequences. Assuming that ‘cultural understandings’ get expressed in a great variety of manifestations and different modes of expression, we find ourselves faced with a very broad area of investigation. A selection of manifestations has been made on the basis of three conditions that are in line with arguments advanced before. One is that the manifestations are within the realm of everyday life, where basic-level categories are most generally used; the second condition is that they have a ‘public history’ of before this time. The last condition is that the manifestation is not recorded in legal documents. On this score Giryama practices within the domains of *sites of collective memory*, *public events* and *everyday communication* have been selected for further examination. In the analytical process a close eye will be kept on metaphors that reflect bodily experiences, as they are considered indicators of deeply ingrained ‘cultural understandings’.
Analytical framework

I.2 Critical Discourse Analysis and ‘cultural understandings’

As was indicated above, the contribution of the cognitive sciences to this study lies in defining the cognitive outlines of the concept of ‘cultural understanding’. Within the broad framework of cognitive sciences there are various approaches. Some could be best qualified as closed, suppressing variety and failing to bring out degrees of salience. These have little explanatory force in a study like this, which allows for differences in understandings and seeks to bring out the most salient ‘cultural understandings’ of peace(-making) and conflict. Among the various approaches Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been selected for its comprehensive character and its particular interpretation of the concept of discourse.7

The outlines of this approach and the theoretical assumptions underlying it are the subject of the following paragraphs. As it is an approach that is ultimately determined by the ‘demands’ of the objective of the study and its data, it cannot be discussed outside that context. In the previous section it was claimed that the primary ‘demand’ on the cognitive approach is, that it has explanatory force in the context of Giryma everyday practice. In this section the ‘demands’ are further refined. Central to the discussion is language use as conceived within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

The great appeal of CDA is its disciplinary non-orthodoxy. Departing from the view of language use as essentially semiotic social practice, it takes the full analytical responsibility of it. The great diversity of social phenomena to which language use refers makes it to be inclusive of different analytical perspectives. And not only that, the CDA scholar selects those analytical perspectives that fit the specific analytical context. Thus one could say that the analytical framework CDA offers, is one that is characterised by ‘holistic’ pragmatism. Moreover, and this is an important quality for the present study, the frame of analysis is not only valid for linguistic practice but is equally relevant for other cultural practices.

The following discussion reviews some of the most distinctive features of CDA’s ‘holistic’ pragmatism, as presented in Blommaert’s excellent introduction, Discourse: A Critical

7 I am aware of different views on the concept of discourse. Since a discussion of these views does not contribute to the theoretical argument, I have restricted myself to presenting the particular approach that is adopted here. More information on these different views can be read in Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen and Heidi E. Hamilton (2003).
Chapter one

Introduction (2005). Obviously, CDA’s central object of study being discourse, linguistic practice is defined in terms of it:

Discourse … comprises all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use. (...) … [discourse] is traditionally understood …[as] language… [which is] but one manifestation of it; all kinds of semiotic ‘flagging’ performed by means of objects, attributes or activities can and should be included for they usually constitute the ‘action’ part of language-in-action. (Blommaert 2005:3)

Clearly, CDA assumes that discourse is language and at the same time more than language, it includes a whole gamut of social signs. This leads to the following analytical practice:

Using [an] eclectic apparatus [of theories, methodologies and technical-analytical instruments] enables him [i.e. the CDA scholar] to look at language in society in ways that allow simultaneously [Blommaert’s emphasis] to focus on linguistic form and on social environment, and to avoid a discontinuity between various levels of interpretation. (Blommaert 2005:16)

Besides indicating the ‘holistic’ character of the analytical practice, Blommaert highlights the pragmatic character of CDA scholarship. He suggests that the selection of analytical perspectives should be guided by the question: “Which types of meaning does this study want to expose?”. The result is probably a diverse set of analytical instruments that cross-cut disciplinary boundaries. Yet, how can the comprehensive character of the interpretation be guaranteed when widely different manifestations and different analytical instruments are used? Blommaert ensures the continuity of the various levels of interpretation, by focusing the analysis on (a specific manifestation of) ‘meaning’ in language use:

…referential or denotational, ‘pure’ meaning is only one part of the effects of language use. Apart from referential meaning, acts of communication produce indexical meaning; social meaning, interpretative leads between what is said and the social occasion in which it is produced. (2005:11)
Analytical framework

Here ‘meaning’ is presented essentially as a semiotic and communicative concept, constituting a complex of semiotic leads from different socio-cultural domains. To analyse this ‘meaning’ different tools are required. The major tools are presented in section two of this chapter. A tool required for a specific analytical problem, such as Stephen Covey’s paradigm of effective and productive decision-making, is discussed in chapter three.\(^8\) Used complementarily, all these different tools effect an interpretative continuity of the different analytical perspectives. This is one of the principles on which the analytical practice of this study is based. Indeed, the principle is not only considered valid for analysing meaning in the context of language use, but also in the context of other cultural practices.

Thus we may conclude that the approach is comprehensive, but also that different cultural articulations can be analysed within a single analytical framework if ‘meaning’, as defined by CDA, is the object of analysis. In fact, the term *discourse*, described by Blommaert as ‘language-in-action’, is a useful concept in the present context. Combined with the qualifying adjective ‘cultural’ it is a model of a concept that unifies the different domains of analysis. Indeed, it is a more adequate description of the area of study than the earlier used terminology ‘manifestations of different cultural practices’, which from now on it replaces. This may seem like a defection to the comprehensive perspective on linguistic and other cultural practices. Granting that the majority of the data of this study are of a linguistic nature, I would emphasise that *discourse* in Blommaert’s definition of ‘language-in-action’ means more than linguistic practice. Looking at the definition more closely, we could argue that it contains an ambiguity, and that this ambiguity highlights the nature of ‘discourse’ as semiotic practice. One explanation would be ‘action that includes language’, highlighting the action part of a cultural practice; the other would be ‘language as action’, which highlights language use as the principal practice. Since all of the Giryama practices that are analysed fall under these two headings, I have chosen to use the term ‘(cultural) discourse’ as a collective to refer to Giryama articulations in the context of peace and conflict.

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1.3 Ideology and ‘cultural understandings’

As was implicitly suggested in the introduction, the proposed dimensions of ‘cultural understandings’ ramify the concept of ideology as it is given shape in this study. This entails some conscious choices as to the study of ideology. Most importantly, it is researched in the context of the everyday lives of the Giryama. Moreover, the analysis focuses particularly on those manifestations that reveal pre-/unconscious understandings rather than presenting the conscious articulations of ideology. This is also reflected in the qualifying adjective ‘cultural’ before ideology, underlining this study’s particular perspective on ideology. Additionally it should be mentioned that, while this study appreciates the dynamic character of ideologies and the contestations of ideologies that are inherent to its dynamic character, it restricts itself to the limited time frame of the present-day. Therefore it does not take into account temporal manifestations of it such as change or contestation.

Blommaert (2005) is outspoken on the relevance of ideology as an object of research in CDA studies. His views on ideology, which are very similar to those of Bourdieu (1990) and the cultural anthropologist Roger Keesing (1994), are explored to make clear what the dimensions of ideology in the present context are. His division of the term ideology into two broad categories is helpful in delineating the boundaries of its meaning here. In the first definition it is conceived “…as a specific set of symbolic representations… serving a specific purpose, and operated by specific groups or actors, recognisable precisely by their usage of such ideologies” (2005:158). This characterisation refers to, for instance, political systems such as socialism, communism, or political factions such as conservative and progressive parties. It is not a productive definition in the context of ‘cultural understandings’ where ‘sharing’ rather than ‘differentiation’ is associated with its nature. The second definition, however, is relevant in the present context, marking ideology as “…a general phenomenon characterising the totality of a particular social and political system, and operated by every member or actor in that system” (2005:158).^9

Within these two broad categories a great variety of definitions manifest themselves, which makes Blommaert to conclude that “…it may be more productive to focus on the…[perspective] rather than on the term….” (2005:171). Indeed, this is the line of

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^9 Blommaert (2005) remarks that the two definitions of ideology are not essentially incompatible: “The difference between total and particular ideologies is a temporal-sequential difference, the different kinds of ideology represent different stages in the process of historical change” (166).
approach that is taken here too. Basically, the discussion focuses on what ideology does and how it does it in the context of ‘cultural understandings’.

Characterizing the impact of ideology on cultural practices, Blommaert claims:

Ideology...constitutes the historical layer in everyday conduct, while at the same time it provides immediate, on the spot social meaningfulness.

(2005:19)

Clearly, Blommaert’s definition of ideology echoes the historically developed preconscious generative schemas that constitute habitus (cf. section I.1). In fact, both concepts imply that cultural practices are ‘normal’ (in the sense of going unquestioned) as a result of their long-standing ‘truth’ (which is the result of its historical roots). Thus they may be argued to both manifest themselves in ‘cultural discourse’. What makes ideology different from habitus is that it grants social meaningfulness, as Blommaert claims, to ‘normal’ practice.

Blommaert’s description of ideology in the context of ‘capitalism’ is illustrative of its dimensions:

Ideology, or at least the overarching ideology [i.e. capitalism] which defines the others, is in the system itself, and precisely this all-encompassing ideological character of capitalism makes its ideological nature and characteristics invisible. They are ‘normal’ and ‘normative’: other ideologies are measured against the ideological zero-point, capitalism (2005:160)

Key words in the description are ‘all-encompassing’, ‘normal’ and ‘normative’. Together they constitute the basic elements of cultural ideology. Of the three key words, the element that gives impact to and pre-supposes the other elements is ideology’s ‘all-encompassing’ quality. This quality not only manifests itself in ‘normal’ practices but also in a more formalised environment, as Blommaert points out:

...ideology stands for the ‘cultural’ ideational aspects of a particular social and political system, “the grand narratives” characterising its existence, structure and historical development. (2005:159)
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Here Blommaert presents in a nut-shell, what ideology is about. The description is so dense (partly due to its use of scare quotes and quotation marks) that some further elucidation seems useful. One striking detail is the word ‘ideational’, suggesting that the term ideology refers to ideas. Indeed, ideology is basically a set of ideas, which get articulated in various domains of a social formation and which derive their status of ideology from being ‘all-encompassing’. As Blommaert (2005) summarises it:

Ideas operate alongside and inside material conditions and institutions; it is the conjunction of both dimensions which lifts particular sets of ideas to the level of ideology. (p.163)

This description underlines once more what is a primary requirement of a study of ‘cultural understandings’/ideology. As was argued in the context of ‘cultural understandings’, it is essential for a study of ‘cultural understandings’/ideology to include a wide range of cultural practices and other cultural phenomena in the domain of everyday practice.

Another important detail in Blommaert’s description above is the word ‘cultural’. Putting it between scare quotes, Blommaert suggests that the term refers to all that is generally assumed to define ‘culture’. He does not specify the term, but on the basis of his earlier description of ideology as ‘normative’ and because of the collocation of ‘cultural’ with ‘ideational’, it seems likely that he refers to the norms and values that are salient to a particular social formation. This is in fact what grants ideology its social meaningfulness on qualitative grounds. In fact, we could take this argument one step further by saying that the apparent salience of ‘cultural understandings’ derives first and foremost from these ‘normative’ aspects of ideology.

Besides being what it means the term salience is used in this study as an analytical concept. With its introduction we in fact find ourselves on the brink between theory and practice. Before immersing ourselves in the practice of analysis I think it is important to go over the main points of the present discussion of ideology and make clear its position in the analysis.

10 The present study appreciates the complicated nature of the concept of ‘culture’. In line with current views in the fields of anthropology and discourse studies it is given a nominal rather than an essentialist definition (see the description of ‘culture’ on p. 2; cf. Roger Keesing 1998; Robert A. Levine 1984).
Summing up, the present discussion has drawn particular attention to the dimensions of ‘social meaningfulness’, understood as an all-encompassing, normal and normative phenomenon in the contexts of ideology and ‘cultural understandings’. It also expresses the nature of the impact of ideology on ‘cultural understandings’, which is defined as ‘framing, directing and “normalising”’.11

A discussion of the concept of ideology at the end of the theoretical part, has the advantage of being ramified by the previously made claims on the concept of ‘cultural understandings’. This has consequences too for its position in the analysis. Conceived within the overall framework of anthropological linguistics, the study of ideology goes through several stages. These can be summed up as follows: cultural discourse is studied to bring out ‘cultural understandings’, which in their turn expose (features of) the ideologies that frame, direct and ‘normalise’ them. The great advantage of approaching the subject in this way is that the discussion does credit to the very nature of ideology as a dynamic underground force that permeates a large number of socio-cultural practices and phenomena. In fact, a study of ‘cultural understandings’ illustrates one feature of ideology in particular, it demonstrates the subtle webs that are spun by it across different socio-cultural domains.

II The analysis

The previous sections have brought out that one primary ‘demand’ on the analytical method is, that it has explanatory force within the context of everyday language use. Having discussed the cognitive and socio-cultural dimensions of this ‘demand’, we can now explore its practical dimensions and translate them into a practice of analysis. In the process two concepts are introduced that are the most characteristic features of the analysis. They are the concepts of salience and key word. The term salience is used in the analytical framework as a grading instrument, grading the socio-cultural importance of certain concepts within a social formation in the domains of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. The central focus of analysis is the key word, which could be provisionally defined as a highly salient socio-cultural concept. As the selection process of the data is closely linked to the way key word is conceived, the collection and selection processes of the data are described here too. After this, an outline is given of the three domains of cultural discourse

11 The word ‘normalise’ is a term that I have coined to refer to both the ‘normal’ and the ‘normative’ character of ideologies.
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that have been mentioned for further investigation: sites of collective memory, public events, and everyday communication. A reflection on the position of the researcher in the process of collecting and analysing data from the Giryama closes off the discussion.

II.1 Cultural Semantics and the practice of analysis

Obviously, we cannot introduce a conceptual framework of analysis if we are not explicit about its relation to the theoretical framework that has been presented here. I think this needs to be done first, as the conceptual framework hinges on a concept that was introduced in a quotation from Blommaert (2005) as ‘indexical meaning’ (section I.2). It was argued to be the pre-eminent object of analysis, as it includes references to the social context, and manifests itself in both verbal and non-verbal expressions. At this point questions like, what is the status of ‘indexical meaning’ in the analysis and what are its consequences for the analytical paradigm, present themselves. Blommaert argues that every utterance contains a whole complex of meanings (2005:41). Do we then need to unravel this ‘whole complex of meanings’ in order to find the ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’? As Blommaert himself demonstrates, it is really the research topic that determines which type of indexical aspects of meanings are studied. For the present study we may characterise these indexical aspects as referring to Giryama understandings of peace(-making) and conflict.

Of a more fundamental nature is the tacitly assumed analytical paradigm in the term ‘indexical meaning’, where the term ‘meaning’ implies that the research is a fundamentally semantic exploration. In the context of ‘cultural understandings’ I think the contribution of semantics cannot be underestimated. One area of semantics in particular, that of cultural semantics, has inspired this study. The adage of the (cultural) semanticist Anna Wierzbicka that the meanings of words “provide priceless clues to the understanding of culture [or rather ‘cultural understandings’]” (1997:4) is also the adage of this study. Wierzbicka substantiates the importance of a cultural semantic analysis, by emphasising that certain words can be qualified as key words, because they refer to central cultural concepts. Studying these key words, we gain insight into ‘cultural understandings’, or as she has it:

… a study of a culture’s “key words” need not be undertaken in an old-fashioned atomistic spirit. On the contrary, some words can be studied as focal points around which entire cultural domains are organized. By exploring these
focal points in depth we may be able to show the general organizing principles which lend structure and coherence to a cultural domain as a whole, and which often have an explanatory power extending across a number of domains. (1997:16-17)

This description of key words connects to the earlier discussion of habitus and ideology (section 1.3). After all, Wierzbicka argues that key words are doorways to “the general organising principles which lend structure and coherence to a cultural domain…” (italics added). If we recall the definition of habitus in terms of ‘generative schemas’ and ‘structuring structures’ of practices, thoughts and attitudes, we can conclude that a key word emerges from a context which is inspired ultimately by habitus. In this way a key word fits into the cognitive framework that has been described. Additionally, Wierzbicka introduces ideology in the context of a key word, when she says that key words ‘have an explanatory power extending across a number of domains’. As was argued before, ideology characteristically is both ‘all-encompassing’ i.e. including both immaterial and material manifestations within a social formation and adding meaningfulness to socio-cultural phenomena. If we project these qualities on Wierzbicka’s understanding of a key word, we could argue that a key word structure feeds into ideology construction. Since the concept of a key word is consistent too with the theoretical framework advanced before, it may be concluded that it is a perfect site for exploring ‘cultural understandings’.

Yet how can one identify words as key words? Wierzbicka gives some, albeit not very conclusive, suggestions. She introduces them with a note of warning, saying that there is “no objective discovery procedure” and that the ultimate test for marking a word as a key word is: “One has to make a case for it” (1997:16). Be that as it is, Wierzbicka argues that one can claim justification for a word to be a key word by making a set of progressive assessments. Counting the occurrences of the word is a first step. Frequent use may indicate a common word, but it is by no means the only determining factor; alternatively, infrequent use does not automatically indicate marginality. Another reason for qualifying as a key word, Wierzbicka claims, is the word’s frequent use in a particular semantic domain (e.g. in the domain of emotions or moral judgement). A key word may also be found at the centre of a phraseological cluster, such as “heart” in “at heart”, “by heart” “take something to heart” “my heart sinks” “with all my heart” among many other examples. If not the centre of a phraseological cluster it may occur frequently in words, phrases, common collocations, proverbs, grammatical constructions and so on. Being able to show its focal position through a rich set of observations, Wierzbicka argues, the
researcher makes a strong case for a *key word*. Yet, the ultimate test remains the researcher's ability to bring out its cultural *salience* by exhibiting through manifestations "...[its] general organising principles which lend structure and coherence..." (1997:16-17).

If we take a closer look at Wierzbicka's set of assessments for labelling words as cultural *key words*, we find that the selection process takes place within the domain of everyday language use, and for the greater part in areas of expression that qualify as *sites of collective memory* (such as phraseological clusters, common collocations, proverbs and grammatical constructions)\(^\text{12}\). Highlighting the role of verbal *sites of collective memory* in arguing for a cultural *key word*, she illustrates the pervasive influence of the historical collective experience, which Bourdieu (section I.1) and Blommaert (section I.2) claim to structure and give meaningfulness respectively to everyday conduct. Also implied, and this at once adds another cognitive parameter to assessing a word as a cultural *key word*, is the nature of a *key word*. In general Wierzbicka labels those words that are uttered in the context of everyday life as the most likely *key word* candidates. This is completely in line with Rosch's argument of basic-level categories (section I.1). She was noted to argue that common words generally include basic-level categories, and also that the basic level is characteristically the level at which most of our knowledge is organised.

The identification process of words as *key words* relating to peace(-making) and conflict in the context of Giryama everyday life has been similar to the process Wierzbicka indicates. Everyday (linguistic) practices guided my fieldwork, which ranged from learning the language, socialising with Giryama women, men, girls and boys, interviewing Giryama informants, doing participant observations at (semi-)public events, and setting people semantic tasks to listening to and recording texts.\(^\text{13}\) I was particularly interested in collecting narrative texts, because one of their indigenous attributes is that they teach Giryama values. This makes them a likely platform for *key words* to be played out.

A close scrutiny of the texts that I had collected during fieldwork, resulted in a list of thirty potential *key words*.\(^\text{14}\) They were assessed on frequency, their occurrence in idiomatic

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\(^\text{12}\) *Sites of collective memory* was indicated before as one of the three domains that are studied for gaining insight into Giryama understandings of peace(-making) and conflict. A more detailed description of the term is given in section II.2.

\(^\text{13}\) My fieldwork activities have partly been guided by Carol V. McKinney's practical guide: *Globe-Trotting in Sandals: A Field Guide to Cultural Research* (SIL International: 2000).

\(^\text{14}\) A description of the fieldwork area is given below.
Analytical framework

phrases, and their appearance in sayings. This provisional list of key words varied from words for ‘peace’ (dheri (peace), amani (peace)) and ‘conflict’ (k’ondo (conflict), fujo (trouble) and viha (war)) to words expressing emotions (such as raha (happiness) and utsungu (bitterness)) and values (such as umwenga (unity) and isthima (respect)) and socio-cultural and natural phenomena (such as kaya (sacred centre), elimu (education), vula (rain), and ndzala (famine)). This I considered the ‘long list’ of potential key words. I marked some of them out as highly potential, but no decision was taken. The next step was going back to the field and finding out about their salience in the context of peace and conflict among Giryama informants.

The geographical area that I had mapped out for the exercise coincides largely with the part of Tezo location which lies to the west of the Mombasa-Malindi road, 20 kms north of Kilifi town (Kilifi district, Coastal Region). Also included were Giryama informants in Kilifi town and in Mrima wa Ndege, one of the more remote areas of Giryamaland (maps II and III). The total number of people that were participating in the exercise is roughly one hundred.

The informants were given two tasks. The first one, and the one that was most readily entertained, was to give an explanation of the different words. Most of the responses are group responses, coming from groups varying from two to eight people. I noticed that, especially at first, people were more comfortable with me when they were with a few fellow Giryama. Their responses, which were arrived at through deliberating over it among each other, can be qualified as consensus responses. Twelve informants did the task on an individual basis. The aim of this task was to elicit the possible meanings of the word. If a word is found to mean different things, it may of course signify that there is no clear idea of what the word means, and this may be the result of its lack of meaningfulness in the particular cultural context. It may also mean that a word is polysemous or has unrelated meanings. Yet, what I was hoping for, was something else. Having a variety of meanings the word may be seen to operate across a variety of cultural domains and may refer to an understanding that includes these different meanings.

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15 The complete list of frequently used words is presented in Appendix I.
16 ‘Location’ is an administrative unit, headed by a chief.
17 The choice of the area is motivated in section II.2.
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The second task was a sort-pile task. It was intended to elicit Girya categories in the domains of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. This task could only be done by literate Girya, and was performed mostly on an individual basis. The total amount of participants was sixty. Informants were given thirty flashcards, each with a ‘long list’ word on it, and were asked to put them into groups that made sense to them. They were told that there were no restrictions on the number of cards to be placed in a group, but that a card could be used only once. Also, informants were asked to think ‘aloud’ while composing the groups.

The exercise proved in fact to be more than a semantic categorisation. When asked to sort the thirty words, 90% of the informants developed a sorting strategy of selecting four to five words as ‘category heads’, and justify the addition of other words on the connection they made to the leading concept. The connection for instance could be ‘oppositional pair’, ‘attribute’, ‘(less general) synonym’, and ‘showing a similar aspect’ or ‘showing a different degree’. An inventory of the category heads showed an overbearing selection of the words kilongozi (leader) (77%), dheri/amani (peace) (55%), viha (war) (44%) and ts’i (land) (33%).

This was a phenomenon which could not be ignored in assessing the ultimate list of key words, I realised. Indeed, the results from the first semantic task did not impede the emergence of the ‘category heads’ as a set of highly potential cultural key words. Yet, they did contribute to an adaptation and an extension of this set. Moreover, my personal observations as to the use of words – guided by the questions: who uses it, where is it used, how (often) and when? – in everyday interaction and in performances were included in the assessment process. The final list of key words reflects in fact the concerted effort of these different ways of assessing the cultural ‘weight’ of a word.

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18 McKinney (2000) argues that pile-sorts, as one of the methods for collecting cognitive data, is helpful among other things in eliciting emic categories (p.200).
19 Roy D’Andrade (1995) argues that a minimum of 50 respondents is required to validate the outcome of a sort-pile task (p.70)
20 At first I took heed of McKinney’s advice “to think of something else to do for a few minutes”, as “it is best not to hover over a person” (2000:199). The effect was that people were failing in their task as they felt left alone with it. I decided to change my position to a more participatory one, encouraging the informant to say what he was thinking. This worked and resulted in a collection of ‘semantic decisions’ that informants made while sorting and piling their 30 cards.
21 The word dheri is a common word among the older Girya, youngsters generally use the –originally Swahili – word amani for ‘peace’.
including kuelewana (understand each other), k’ondo (conflict), fujo (trouble), viha (war), kilongozi (leader) and ts’i (land).

The real key words, in terms of the features that I have outlined earlier, are kuelewana (understand each other), k’ondo (conflict), kilongozi (leader) and ts’i (land). The other words, fujo (trouble) and viha (war), have been included in the analysis because of their relationship to k’ondo (conflict). Fujo (trouble) is the most common ‘conflict’ and the most commonly used ‘conflict’ word among the Giryama, while paradoxically k’ondo (conflict) is not. Therefore, it seemed worthwhile to explore fujo (trouble) and its relationship to k’ondo (conflict) with an eye to the question of salience versus common use. Moreover, Giryama informants indicated that there was a specific relationship between the two by defining fujo (trouble) as the beginning of k’ondo (conflict).

I have included viha (war) in the analysis, because it was an illusive ‘conflict’ word at first. On the one hand, it seemed to be attributed some relevance by the Giryama. At least, it was selected as a ‘category head’, and viha (war) was described by Giryama informants as being the same thing as k’ondo (conflict). This seems to indicate that viha (war) is attributed some relevance by the Giryama. On the other hand, viha (war) hardly occurs in Giryama discourse. I thought that the unravelling of this puzzle could render some interesting insight into the connection between viha (war) and k’ondo (conflict), and in the process refine our interpretation of the Giryama understanding of ‘conflict’. In fact, the analysis of viha (war) is helpful in that it highlights what is so distinctive of k’ondo (conflict). The analysis turns out to be helpful in another way too. It is an illustration of why the assessment of the cultural salience of terms matters, and particularly so in intercultural communication relating to peace and conflict. The semantic description following the analysis of viha (war) graphically demonstrates that. If viha were to be taken as the equivalent of ‘war’, unwarranted meaning dimensions and cultural salience would be attributed to it.

Evidently, the list of key words contains (some of the) ‘category heads’. It may be surprising that, in spite of its high occurrence as a ‘category head’, the word dheri/amani (peace) does not appear in the short list, not even for reasons that were argued in the case of fujo (trouble) and viha (war). This has to do with the fact that dheri/amani (peace) belongs to the superordinate level, the most abstract level of knowledge organisation according to Rosch’s taxonomy. Dheri/ amani (peace)’s superordinate character not only comes out in its manifestation as a category head. Dheri (peace) also turned out to be an
unfamiliar word for many Giryama informants. The most related term in the short list is *kuelemana* (understand each other), which was also in the ‘long list’. As a matter of fact, *kuelemana* (understand each other) was placed by informants under the category head of *dheri/amanji* (peace). This suggests in terms of Rosch’s taxonomy of levels of knowledge organisation (section I.1) that *kuelemana* (understand each other) belongs to the basic level. This coincides with my earlier observations that Giryama people found it difficult to describe their understandings of *amanji/dheri* (peace) and would turn to *kuelemana/kusikizana* (understand each other)\(^\text{22}\) as more productive terms when they were talking about ‘peace’.

The cross-cultural component of this study does not only feature in the analyses of the key words, but has been taken seriously in their lexical description too. This is the second contribution of cultural semantics to the analysis. Besides offering an excellent opportunity for cross-cultural comparison through key words – which exceeds the boundaries of this study – it presents conceptual essentials of a certain ‘cultural understanding’ in phrases and a lay-out that are easy to grasp for a cross-cultural readership. First, the semantic description is characterised by indentations and white lines to indicate respectively subordinate and co-ordinate aspects of understanding. Secondly, the semantic description uses relatively simple language which, I would argue, lends itself more easily to cross-cultural comparison than other language registers. To this end Wierzbicka and Goddard have developed a universal vocabulary and mini grammar.\(^\text{23}\) It is called the Natural Semantic Meta-language (NSM) (Wierzbicka 1997; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002), and is based on empirical research in more than 27 languages.\(^\text{24}\) Still, NSM has not fully been embraced here. More than the principle of ‘universality’, conciseness has been valued as contributing to cross-cultural comparison. NSM descriptions tend to be long, as the vocabulary is restricted, and therefore take out the bite of the description, I would argue.\(^\text{25}\) The present study has therefore made a pragmatic

\(^{22}\) *Kuelemana* and *kusikizana* are very close synonyms. They can be used interchangeably in almost every social context. For a more detailed discussion see chapter three, section II.1.

\(^{23}\) See Appendix III for more information on NSM.

\(^{24}\) Goddard (2002: 12), Table 1.1 lists 27 languages other than English which have been studied within the NSM framework.

\(^{25}\) Anna Wierzbicka admits that the NSM vocabulary is not yet able to grasp lexical meanings fully: “It is not the case, however, that all lexical meanings can be resolved directly or immediately to the level of semantic primes. Some are best explicated in stages, using intermediate-level "semantic molecules", which themselves can be resolved into configurations of semantic primes” (Wierzbicka 2007: 20). An illustration of an NSM definition is given in Appendix III.
choice of including NSM vocabulary if possible, and including other ‘simple’ words according to need.

Thus it may be concluded that the analysis is a cultural semantic analysis, not only in essence by qualifying the search for ‘cultural understandings’ an essentially semantic operation; it also adopts analytical tools that have been developed within the field of cultural semantics. Still, the analytical process shows a marked difference from that of cultural semantics in exploring linguistic as well as non-linguistic practices and phenomena within a single analytical framework. This is facilitated by the overarching cognitive framework within which the analysis is performed. Focusing on concepts that occur in a diversity of socio-cultural practices and phenomena, we can distil salient pieces of information on Giryama ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. What remains is a presentation of the particular selection of domains for exploring ‘cultural understandings’.

II.2 Sites of collective memory, public events, everyday communication

During two-and-a-half years of fieldwork (1998-2000) a body of texts was collected that includes besides two notebooks full of notes, sayings (600), folk stories (34), life stories (8, totalling 5 hours) traditional song texts (10), interviews relating to peace(-making) and conflict (120 hours), conversations relating to peace(-making) and conflict (approx. 200 hours), descriptions of youth meetings, community meetings, and meetings of councils of elders (60 hours). Different types of texts obviously reflect different practices, and it appeared that the constructions of meanings that I was looking for, namely those relating to Giryama peace(-making) and conflict, are articulated to different degrees in the different types. As a result, the exploration of key words is carried out in changing textual environments. For instance, whereas sayings contributed to exploring the ‘cultural understanding’ of the key word of kuelewana (understand each other), they played a minor role in the context of kilongozi (leader).

While most of the fieldwork on establishing the corpus of key words was done in the middle part of Giryamaland, most of the data collection was carried out in the south-western part, in the locations of Kaloleni (including nearby Kinaranini and Mtsengo), Kayafungo and Tsangatsini (see map II). Also Mitsedzini (near Dulukiza) in Vitengeni

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26 Kaloleni has become a district since February 2007.
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location (mid-Girymaland (see map II) was included. The later shift of research area was made on purpose, as I wanted to find out whether cultural information was consistent between the two parts. As the south-west of Girymaland houses the sacred centre of the Giryama, and the Giryama from the West are considered to be the most authentic Giryama by the Giryama themselves, I considered it essential to have the *key words* evaluated at a place distant from this centre, and much closer to the Swahili coast. The shift turned out to be highly productive, for some *key words* adopted pronounced manifestations (maybe to mark distinction from the neighbouring coastal people, or because of the greater impact of formal authorities on everyday life), while other words appeared to be considered old-fashioned. I assumed that these findings entertained, at least to some extent, a dialectic relationship with the findings from the corpus of data collected before, and this was the premise on which the analysis set off. This resulted in some stunning discoveries. At once the *key words* were much more sharply delineated socio-culturally.

Before outlining the three domains of cultural discourse that have been labelled *sites of collective memory, public events and everyday communication*, I would like to briefly recall the criterion on which they have been distinguished. It is their different relationships to time and place that underlie the present classification. A graphic outline of their particularities is given in Table 1. In the following paragraphs details are given on their specific qualities and types of manifestation.

*Sites of collective memory* is a free translation of the title of Pierre Nora’s magnum opus, *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1997), which he wrote together with a team of French historians. His view of public phenomena that have a prominent historical dimension (such as ‘land’, ‘the national anthem’, ‘monuments’) as *sites of collective memory*, brings in both the importance and the pervasiveness of collective memory in everyday life. Here memory is not understood as the conscious act of recollecting, but rather as a residue of cumulative historical, social and bodily experience among people who consider

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27 This is confirmed by David Parkin (1991) in his excellent study of the Giryama: *Sacred Void: Spatial Images among the Giryama of Kenya*.

28 A striking example of the ‘adaptation’ of *sites of collective memory* to changing contexts is the war monument on the Dam in Amsterdam. The annual commemoration of the victims of the Second World War on May 4th pulls huge crowds of Dutch people. Most of those present do not belong to the ‘war generation’.
themselves a social formation. Traditions are the most conscious re-productions of this collective memory (Nora 1997:13-14).

The power of the body of texts and objects of description that qualify as sites of collective memory, lies in their instantiation of meaningfulness in the context of collective memory. The data that expose this feature most notably are: names, phrasal units, sayings, folk stories, life stories, oral histories, folk theories, traditional events and rituals (e.g. funeral, wedding, rain-making ritual, council of elders) and places. Among the Giryama these categories are experienced as explicit re-presentations of Giryama tradition. Or to say it more in terms of the framework of this study, enacting them Giryama place themselves within the wider historical context, thus making the collective memory an essential part of the meaning production of this type. As a result sites of collective memory are the clearest articulations of (aspects of) Giryama identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains of cultural discourse</th>
<th>types</th>
<th>topic perspective</th>
<th>place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sites of collective memory</td>
<td>Names, phrasal units, sayings, folk tales, life stories, folk theories, oral histories, councils of elders, traditional events and rituals&lt;sup&gt;29&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>historical</td>
<td>Communal/home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public events</td>
<td>Community meetings for health issues, economic and educational opportunities</td>
<td>Present-day concerns</td>
<td>communal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday communication</td>
<td>daily conversation, informal interviews</td>
<td>vague</td>
<td>home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

The main difference between sites of collective memory and the domains of cultural discourse that have been labelled public events and everyday communication is that the latter two are not experienced by Giryama people as enacted within a wider historical context (cf. table 1). The domain of public events includes different types of community meetings. Their themes relate strongly to the issues of everyday Giryama life, where

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<sup>29</sup> Traditional events and rituals could be argued to belong to the domain of public event, because of their (semi-)public character. Councils of elders add to their public character a focus on present-day issues. However, all three derive their salience in the first place from being instantiations of historically and existentially charged frameworks.
Chapter one

communities are involved for instance in creating their own programmes for sustainability, where youths discuss among themselves their position relating to Aids or unequal career opportunities to name but two current issues, and where women groups develop income generating projects. Present-day concerns determine the time frame, which can be described as actors placing themselves in the present and directing their view to the future. Within this domain notions relating to peace(-making) and conflict are enacted by the actors in interaction. Historical narratives, sayings or other references to traditions may be used to contribute to the persuasiveness of the utterance, but they are not essential parts of the meaning production of public events.

The third domain of cultural discourse, everyday communication, shares with public events that it strongly relates to current issues of everyday Giryama life or even daily Giryama life. It includes conversations and informal interviews. As was indicated before, historical context is not an essential part of the meaning production, yet it is often introduced by way of sayings, which crop up in conversations especially among older Giryama women and men. Everyday communication distinguishes itself from public events in being individual enactments of peace(-making) and conflict and personal responses to questions relating to them.

II.3 The researcher’s position

Obviously, everyday communication is the domain in which the researcher becomes most personally involved. The impact of this cannot be fully assessed. Moreover, the impact is bound to be affected by the different positions as passive listener, observer or active participant. Some of the interviews were carried out by myself, while most of them were done by field assistants, instructed by me, in my presence. Also in conversations I took different positions, and on top of that the degree of familiarity between me and the speakers affected the topics and the tone of the conversation. Lastly, there is the general Giryama inclination of being obliging. Knowing my field of interest and considering me as an outsider, the Giryama people whom I engaged with in conversation or informal interviews must have tried to please me with as much information as they could think of, to the extent of ‘helping me out’ on meanings that turned out to be products of the individual imagination.\(^{30}\)

\(^{30}\) The presence of the researcher is one of the three ‘distortions’ to the informant’s account, Jenkins (1994) claims. The other two are: the tendency of the informant to leave out the obvious and ‘the desire to explain’ (Jenkins 1994: 437-438).
Although most pronounced in the conversations and interviews, I realise that my presence is in all the data to varying degrees. I have been aware of this throughout my fieldwork period. However I don’t think that this constant self-consciousness, which at times makes one despair about being able to write anything sensible at all, is the ultimate guarantee for quality.\textsuperscript{31} As the anthropologist Timothy Jenkins rightly indicates, “it is the quality of the experience [of the fieldworker], rather than any self-consciousness in the writing, that in the end determines the quality of the monograph” (1994:445). Whether I have been successful, is up to the readers to decide. The clearest affirmation of quality is obtained, however, when the people about whom this book is written can identify with the following chapters. There is an indication that I have been successful in attaining this end, considering the following comment of one of the Giryama readers of my draft. He poses some (rhetorical) questions which revolve around the concept of kuelewana (understand each other) (chapter three):

Do you think the Mugirama (Giryama person) gets full satisfaction through the Court of Justice especially in such cases as require compensation and kuelewana (understand each other)? Is it possible that a Mugirama could go through the court process and even after the verdict he remains a bitter man? The Kenya Law system is based on the British Law system, which, in some way, pays no regard to kuelewana or does it? If the Giryama way of kuelewana gives more satisfaction, then let the Law makers learn of it. (Rev. Shadrack J. Thoya, January 2006)

Probably Rev. Thoya had never considered his unhappiness with the Kenyan law system as ideologically inspired. For him kuelewana (understand each other) is so ‘normal’ that it goes unnoticed. It has been the great challenge of my work to expose understandings that are ‘normal’ and pervasive at the same time. To this end a theoretical framework and analytical principles have been developed that facilitate an emic approach to cultural ideologies of peace and conflict, while at the same time offering the possibility of cross-cultural comparison. The ultimate measure of whether I have succeeded in doing this is the analysis of Giryama discourse; it should be testable and replicable. Its foundation has been laid here. The following chapters should prove its validity.

\textsuperscript{31} Discussions on the status of the fieldworker’s ‘knowledge’ are part of the tradition of self-reflection of anthropology (cf. Bourdieu (1977), Jenkins (1994), Kulick (1992)).
2 The Giryama and Giryamaland

Introduction

This is a first acquaintance with the Giryama, the main actors in the book. As with any first acquaintance, information is given that is considered helpful as a broad setting for facilitating a successful encounter. In this case, the information includes demographic, ethnographic, politico-historical, and linguistic features of the Giryama. Most of the information is taken from secondary sources. In the course of the discussion some details are highlighted. These are considered to be of particular relevance in the context of this study. Among them some will recur as an integrated part of the analysis. This applies in particular for the Giryama institutions of kaya (sacred centre) and agogo (council of elders). Additionally, some seemingly disproportionate attention is given to the so-called Likoni clashes of 1997, in which Giryama youngsters were involved. Although their impact on Kenyan, or for that matter Giryama society has been negligible, they are a poignant illustration of issues that have impact on the everyday experience of most Giryama.

I Giryama society

Demographic characteristics

The Giryama are one of the nine subgroups of the Mijikenda (Midzi chenda (nine communities)). However, this is not a generally known fact in Kenya. Most Kenyans who live outside the coastal area assume that the Giryama are an autonomous ethnic group. Probably, this is because they outnumber by far the other eight Mijikenda sub-groups. Still, the Giryama do not think of themselves as a distinct ethnic group. They generally describe their relationship to the other Mijikenda as close. In everyday practice, this popular understanding of Mijikenda inter-relationships helps to gloss over intercultural differences. Even though animosities between the Rabai and the Giryama over the killing of clansmen are part of Giryama oral history, the Giryama claim that they have co-existed peacefully with the neighbouring sub-groups over the centuries.

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1 The nine Mijikenda sub-groups are: Chonyi, Digo, Duruma, Giryama, Jibana, Kambe, Kauma, Rabai and Ribe.

2 A shared myth of origin strengthens this bond. This myth is discussed below, under the heading “History”.

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Politically, the Giryama live within Malindi (85% Giryama) and Kilifi districts (where six other Mijikenda sub-groups have their homes). With a population of 496,000 the Giryama constitute the largest sub-group of the Mijikenda, who are estimated at 623,000 (Gordon 2005). Giryamaland ranges roughly from the bustling trading centre of Kaloleni in the south to halfway between the Sabaki and Tana river in the north. On the west, Giryamaland borders the Taru desert of Tsavo East National Park; the eastern border is roughly 5 to 8 kms inland from the coastline. Additionally, there are some Giryama ‘promontories’ into the coastal urban areas of Kilifi and Malindi. This is not considered Giryamaland proper, although Giryama that live there consider it their home i.e. they are buried there.

Giryamaland is a largely agricultural area, with trading centres scattered over its surface at major cross-roads. More than 80% of the population depend on agricultural activities. In the fertile southern hilltop area people often have mixed farms. In the south, coconut palms serve as cash crops, while more to the north mango trees and to a lesser extent cashew nut trees generate income. In the dry interior, cattle is kept for a living. Another food generating practice, for which the Giryama are renowned, is the setting of traps. In fact, the Giryama are great experts in constructing catching devices, which range from traps for mice and birds to dikdiks, hyenas and cheetahs.

As the above already suggests, Giryamaland is not a commercially developed area. There is hardly any infrastructure for commercial activities. The majority of the roads are dirt roads. During the rainy season public transport into the interior is irregular or non-existent. Only along the provincial tarmac roads can lively commercial activity be observed.

Demographic figures published by the KDDP (Kilifi District Development Programme) on Kilifi district, confirm this underdeveloped state of affairs. Although Giryamaland is not geographically equivalent to Kilifi District, the percentages are probably a close rendering of the Giryama situation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absolutely poor people</th>
<th>about 400,000 (55%) &lt; KES 1,239 per month (&lt;US$15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average household income</td>
<td>about KES 4.200 per month (US $54)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from [www.nema.go.ke/districts/MALINDI.htm](http://www.nema.go.ke/districts/MALINDI.htm)
The level of literacy is estimated at between 15% and 25%. In 2003 the Kenyan government launched the UN Millennium goal ‘free primary schooling for all children’, which has shown a dramatic increase in primary school attendance. The result will be, no doubt, a rapid increase of the literacy rate among the Giryama. The literacy level in Kigiryama itself is estimated below 1%; with the great emphasis on Kiswahili and English in primary schools this situation is not likely to change.  

*Socio-political characteristics*

In view of the above description it may not come as a surprise that the Giryama – and this goes for the Mijikenda in general- live their lives in the socio-political margins of Kenya. The Giryama feel particularly disappointed about the central government, which has shown little interest in improving their situation. In fact, there is a general feeling of being disadvantaged compared to people from the central and western parts of Kenya. This feeling is nurtured by the prevalence of up-country employees (central and western Kenyans) in the ‘Giryama region’, the Kenyan coast (e.g. the tourist industry and the port of Mombasa). Outwardly, the Giryama are resigned to this situation. However, it is generally assumed that the Likoni clashes of 1997 happened because of a deep-seated frustration among the Giryama and their fellow- Mijikenda about being disadvantaged. Although they are a very extreme expression, the Likoni clashes contain elements that are quite exemplary for the Giryama present-day condition. Taking a closer look at them, I think, helps to gain a better idea about the challenges of everyday life for the Giryama.

In the year 1997 there was an unprecedented eruption of violence on the coast of Kenya.  
The so-called Likoni clashes came as a complete surprise to the coastal residents at large. It soon appeared that the rebels were aiming at the up-country Kenyans living in the Mombasa area. Cleansing the Kenyan coast of these economic immigrants was their ultimate goal. People were killed and raped, houses were set on fire and the Likoni police station was looted for fire arms. After three days, atrocities ended. The brutal attacks on innocent working-class people from other parts of Kenya was heavily criticised by everybody, including the Mijikenda peoples.

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4 These percentages are given in Gordon (2005).

5 Most of the details have been taken from Alamin Mazrui (ca. 1997: 1998).
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Before reflecting on the causes of the Likoni clashes, I would like to briefly consider the Giryama reaction of disapproval of the violence in which their own youths participated. Obviously, there is the universal human dislike of violence. However, in the Giryama context this dislike is articulated in a specific view on the use of (military) force. Characteristic for the Giryama perspective is the terms in which the traditional military training is defined. It comprises defensive tactics rather than offensive tactics. Oral histories illustrate this characteristic abhorrence of violence. They narrate cases of successful Giryama “dodging” of violent conflict with other ethnic groups, such as the Orma or the Maasai. As is explained below, *kaya* (sacred centre) plays a central role in facilitating this perspective.

In view of this characteristic aversion to violence it is quite surprising that Giryama youths participated in the Likoni clashes. Considering the fact that they were manipulated into believing that violence was the only way by which their political statement could be heard, it is not so surprising that they were involved. As is generally assumed, the clashes were masterminded by high-ranking politicians who, for their own political ends, aimed at destabilising the coastal electorate in the run-up to the general elections in December 1997 (Mazrui ca. 1997, 1998; McIntosh 2005). Young Mijikenda men were incited to take part in an armed revolt against up-country people in order to expel these people from the coast and re-claim ownership of their land. In view of the general feeling of being disadvantaged, the call for the expulsion of those who were painted as the cause of their disadvantaged situation struck a sensitive note. Thousands of young Giryama and fellow-Mijikenda men rallied secretly at *kaya Bombo* (sacred centre of the Digo (fellow-Mijikenda)). The rallies included ethnic propaganda and military training. The meeting-place, *kaya* (sacred centre), as well as the leadership of a Mijikenda medicine man, were persuasive instruments in making the youngsters believe it was their own cause they were fighting for. In reality they were pawns in a political game, in which high ranking politicians made use of deep-seated sentiments of the Giryama and fellow-Mijikenda peoples relating to ownership of land and access to the job market.

The above description suggests the importance of land for the Giryama. In the Giryama context it assumes a very specific articulation, as chapter five will bear out. Here I would like to note that the land issue is politically highly charged. This is the result of a complex set of reasons. On the one hand, land on the coast of Kenya is in high demand for tourist resorts. Since these are top locations, the rich and/or influential of Kenya buy these plots.
They are generally people from other parts of Kenya, and experienced by the coastal peoples as ‘grabbing’ prime plots of their land. Although these pieces of land are not, strictly speaking owned by Giryama or other locals, they are inhabited by them. Once the land is sold, the dwellers are evicted. The same applies to land owned by the off-spring of the citizens of the former Sultanate of Zanzibar. The Arab ownership dates back to the time when the Kenyan coast was still part of the Sultanate of Zanzibar. Since this ownership was incorporated in the Kenyan legislation, the Giryama experience includes the sudden appearance of an Arab person claiming a particular plot and evicting a Giryama family that may have lived there for several generations.

These experiences contribute to a general feeling of distrust among the Giryama toward outsiders and toward the Kenyan central government in particular, which fails to protect them. Exacerbating this distrust are the stalled government settlement schemes for the Giryama. Another complicating matter is the rapidly expanding Giryama population. Since most Giryama depend on agricultural activities for daily subsistence, food security is very fragile. Only a good local job market could assuage the situation, but then up-country Kenyans are generally better educated and therefore a first choice for the local employer. This depressing situation is what most Giryama experience on a daily basis.

While ‘land’ and jobs were the main causes of the Likoni clashes, they were given additional enforcement by being articulated in the context of *kaya* (sacred centre). Although *kaya Giryama* (Giryama sacred centre) is actually introduced below (in the section of *social history*), I would like to briefly note here its status in the Giryama military system. Different from what the rallies at *kaya Bombo* (Bombo sacred centre) suggest, *kaya* (sacred centre) is traditionally a place of refuge for the Giryama. Oral historical tales of enemy attacks focus on the magical powers of *kaya Giryama* (Giryama sacred centre). In them *kaya* (sacred centre) serves as a centre of refuge for people escaping aggression from non-Giryama forces. There are tales of the magical powers of *kaya* (sacred centre), making Giryama refugees invisible, while aggressors who stray inside *kaya* (sacred centre) fail to find their way out. In fact, these tales could be argued to be additional examples of the general Giryama aversion to violence. This idea is enhanced by the fact

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6 Further details of the relations between the Kenyan coast and the Sultanate of Zanzibar are given in the section: *political colonial history.*

7 In the aftermath of the Likoni clashes, the perpetrators were reputed to have sought refuge in *kaya Giryama.*
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that in general the Giryama enjoy stories in which Giryama manage to prevent violence by playing tricks or performing witchcraft on potentially inimical forces from outside.\(^8\)

II History\(^9\)

Economic history

The Giryama have not always lived in economic backwaters. The historian Brantley (1979) argues that at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century the Giryama were successful entrepreneurs. In the early days of their trading history they were middlemen between the inland Kamba and the coastal Swahili. Defying the dangers of the predator rich Taru Desert, they transported Kamba cattle to the Swahili. In later years, when the Kamba traded directly with the Swahili, the Giryama switched to trading local grain with the Swahili, with whom they established relations of blood-brotherhood.\(^10\) When increasing grain imports from India and the island of Pemba (south east of Mombasa) reduced the price of grain dramatically, the Giryama found a different way of surviving economically. They focused successfully on the local market, the main product being palm wine \((uchu)\). Unfortunately, it was to be the final period of economic flourishing. In the period between 1907 and 1939 the British colonial administration put restrictions on the selling of palm-wine, until it was finally banned.\(^11\) The consequences of this ban were disastrous for the Giryama economy.

In spite of this dramatic ending of a flourishing economic history, the general picture of Giryama trading history is one that shows that the Giryama were versatile businessmen. Indeed, this historical versatility at less advantageous circumstances comes out most dramatically in the Giryama ability to survive extreme and prolonged droughts.\(^12\) According to Willis (1993), the Mijikenda (among whom the Giryama) turned for help to the Swahili of Mombasa during major periods of famine in the 19th century. He describes these contacts as characteristically ones of patron-client, master-slave, husband-wife or

\(^8\) One of the stories is about the aborted attempt of colonial administrators to set up a station at Mwanamwanga (appendix 4.1: life story).

\(^9\) Sources that are used for the description are: Cynthia Brantley (1979), Justin Willis (1993), Thomas Spear (1981), Salim (1973).

\(^10\) Herlehy (1983) notes: “Trade and blood-brotherhood often were mutually reinforcing mechanisms creating social and economic cohesion among the many peoples of the coastal region” (p.17).


\(^12\) For a historical survey of famines on the Kenyan coast see: Herlehy (1984).
parent-child. Women and children were 'pawned' to Swahili people in times of severe famine in exchange for food (Brantley1981:31; Willis1993:30,51).

Social history
The close bonds between the Giryama and the Afro-Arabs of Mombasa date as far back as the 16th century, as Portuguese accounts of the time indicate. Indeed, the Mijikenda (Nyika as they were called then) are recorded to have allied with Mombasa against Malindi in 1593. They are also reported to have been instrumental in the final expulsion of the Portuguese from Mombasa in 1728 (Brantley 1981:12; Salim 1973:25). In the 19th century there are many instances of close contact between the Swahili speaking peoples of the coast and the Mijikenda, in particular the Giryama (Brantley 1981:18-32; Willis 1993). However, with the hold of the British colonial administration becoming stronger in the Kenyan coastal area, the bonds between the Swahili and the Giryama weakened. The fluidity between Swahili and Giryama identitities, which had been so characteristic for the relationship between the Swahili and the Giryama, disappeared. The articulation of ethnic identity, promoted by colonial policies of ethnic labelling and demographic segregation, finally caused the Giryama to identify themselves explicitly with the other Mijikenda sub-groups (Willis 1993). According to Willis (1993), the Mijikenda were by no means a well-defined ethnic group at first; over time membership changed until the Mijikenda came to constitute who they are now.

In the process of building a shared identity, the nine sub-groups gradually claimed a shared place of origin, Singwaya (see map I), along the southern Somali coast. Legend has it that the Mijikenda killed an Orma person during the initiation ritual of the first

13 Thomas Herlehy (1984) argues that in times of severe famine the Mijikenda became clients of Muslim (i.e. Arab and Swahili) landowners. He refers to this phenomenon as a tradition of interdependency, which had existed at least since 1836 and endured throughout the colonial period (p.5). See also Justin Willis (1993) 51-55.

14 The origin myth of the Mijikenda has been the topic of extensive scholarly debate. There are scholars who argue that some of the Mijikenda sub-groups originate from Singwaya (south Somalia), while others adopted the origin myth later (Thomas Spear 1981; Willis 1993). The historian Justin Willis (1993) contends a historical genesis from Singwaya. Using arguments from historical and linguistic evidence, he claims that Singwaya was adopted from the Swahili by the Mijikenda in the early 20th century because of their close bonds. It was only due to the preference of the colonial administration for Arabs in administrative tasks, that the Swahili came to consider the advocacy of their Arab roots more attractive and slowly turned their gaze towards the Gulf area as their region of origin. Thus the origin myth of Singwaya was gradually abandoned by the Swahili, and could therefore be adopted in the process of defining Mijikenda identity.
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Mijikenda age-set. The Orma clansmen were infuriated, and launched an attack on the Mijikenda, who fled southwards. This event marked the beginning of the great trek of the Mijikenda sub-groups. The migration is reputed to have taken place during the latter half of the 16th century. At the end of that century, all of the sub-groups had settled in the area where they are now. They built their homes on hill tops, surrounded by palisades to protect them from enemy attacks. These settlements are called kaya (originally ‘home’, nowadays ‘sacred centre’) (Spear; 1978).

Kayafungo, or as it is also called Kaya Giryama (map II; picture 6), has since that time been the physical and sacred ‘home’ of the Giryama. Situated in the south-western margins of Giryamaland, kaya (sacred centre) was obviously an effective protection against enemies. In the course of the nineteenth century the Giryama population increased so dramatically that kaya (sacred centre) became too small for all Giryama to stay inside. The younger Giryama started to set up their lives outside kaya (sacred centre). Their moving out was, in fact, the beginning of a process that resulted in the highly decentralised power system that characterises Giryama society.

During colonial times kaya (sacred centre) was destroyed by the British as a punishment for the Giryama lack of compliance with government rules. (Brantley 1981; Parkin 1991). Nowadays kaya (sacred centre) is a stretch of woodland, situated in an arid and thinly populated area. Although kaya (sacred centre) is a peripheral phenomenon in the everyday lives of most Giryama, it is still generally considered a sacred place. The Giryama from the interior parts of Giryamaland generally attribute social and spiritual authority to kaya (sacred centre). The Giryama who have been exposed to outside influence by way of education or proximity to the westernised Swahili coast no longer consider it that way. Still, for every Giryama kaya Giryama is the ‘home’ of the Giryama. Whatever the differences among the Giryama in their relationship to kaya (sacred place), it is a phenomenon that is very much alive. Its inhabitants, a changing number of two or three enye ts’i (lit. owners of the land> kaya elders), have attracted renewed public

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15 For different versions of the Orma animosity see Justin Willis (1993: 34-35); Thomas Spear (1981: 16).
16 On the basis of linguistic evidence Thomas Hinnebusch (1976) argues that “…it [i.e. the migration from Singwaya] never occurred and…Sabaki peoples gradually spread north over their present area from their homeland to the south” (25).
17 Justin Willis (1996) argues that the name Fungo is derived from a 19th-century person, who “…seems to have acquired a great deal of power in Giryama society” (p.86).
interest. This is mainly due to the blessing ceremonies which national politicians from Mijikenda origin underwent there.\textsuperscript{18}

The centre of \textit{kaya} (sacred centre) is an open space in an area of trees and shrubs. One part of it is the \textit{kaya} elders’ residence. There is a hut, built in the traditional Giryama oval style, and a tamarind, symbolising the presence of civilisation as opposed to wilderness. The other part of the central area is where elders meet. This part is shaded by a huge \textit{mukone} (local tree), in which the spirits of great ancestors are said to reside.\textsuperscript{19} They are the permanent observers and judges of the state of being of \textit{kaya} (sacred centre) and the state of Giryama life. Additionally, \textit{kaya} (sacred centre) is the burial place of \textit{fingo} (charm),\textsuperscript{20} also known as \textit{ngiyama} (that which witnesses).\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Fingo} (charm) is believed to be taken by the first Giryama settlers in the area from Singwaya, their place of origin. (Spear 1978, Parkin 1991).

\textit{Political colonial history}

During colonial rule the coastal strip of Kenya was in a different political position from the rest of Kenya. In the scramble for Africa the British had come to own Kenya as a British Protectorate, with the exception of the 10-mile wide coastal strip from Ruvuma River in Tanzania to the Tana River in Kenya (Ochieng 2001:46). This strip was ruled by the sultan of Zanzibar.\textsuperscript{22} In 1887 the British government managed to have the sultan agree to his nominal suzerainty, in exchange for an increase of Arab civil servants on the coast, while the British factually were in charge. Thus the coastal strip came to be part of the so-called British Protectorate in 1895. One of the restrictions that the sultan made, which was to affect the coastal situation until the present day, was that his subjects would keep their traditional right to land. This restriction was incorporated in Kenyan legislation, and has

\textsuperscript{18} The late Giryama Karissa Matlha, minister for local government, and the Kambe assistant-minister in the Office of the President at the time, Morris Ndoro, were blessed at \textit{kaya} Giryama, just after they came up for office in 2003.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Mukone} (no English translations) is one of the \textit{mhi ya p'ieho} (trees of coolness). Others are \textit{muyu} (baobab), \textit{muhowe} (no English translation), and \textit{mware} (no English translation). They are marked as medicinal trees.

\textsuperscript{20} The Giryama are not unique in this respect. Other Mijikenda sub-groups have \textit{kaya} and \textit{fingo} (Thomas Spear 1978: 16). Spear notes that \textit{kaya} Kwale (featuring as \textit{kaya} Bomba in the Likoni clashes of 1997) and \textit{kaya} Kinondo, built by the first Digo settlers, have \textit{fingo}, but that of the smaller \textit{kayas} that were built later “…none has a \textit{fingo} from Singwaya” (27). Thus the number of \textit{kayas} with \textit{fingo} is limited.

\textsuperscript{21} I have not been able to arrive at a conclusive description of the physical features of \textit{fingo}. Some said it was medicine, others said it was a pot, and still others argued it was a piece of rock. The lack of consensus is illustrated by David Parkin (1991) who claims it is a stone, while Justin Willis (1996) thinks it is an iron object.

\textsuperscript{22} Justin Willis claims that the 10-mile strip was never properly mapped. (1993: 118)
Chapter two

been since a serious complicating factor in the complex of land ownership at the coast (Kanyinga 2000: 56ff).

The withdrawal of the Sultanate of Zanzibar from the Kenyan coast heralded the gradual downfall of the Giryama.23 The British colonial administration was forced by the British government in London to supply manpower for the withering commercial plantations run by British settlers. Since the effective abolition of slavery at the coast, from 1876, labourers were hard to come by.24 One of the reasons was the adverse working circumstances along the hot and humid coast, where endemic diseases such as malaria were rampant. The Giryama had always managed to live off trading, so even under adverse economic conditions they held to their own.

The British administration, which was trying to lure the Giryama to work, got increasingly frustrated with the situation. They tried to break the Giryama anti-employment morale by taking measures that were unsympathetic to the Giryama economy, among which was the curbing of the selling of palm-wine, mentioned before. Mutual irritation erupted in an armed conflict in 1914, after a mass meeting of Giryama at kaya (sacred centre). The official reading of the colonial administration was, that there was a serious threat of violence from the Giryama, as they had come together in kaya (sacred centre) to prepare a rebellion. The colonial administration decided to take preventive measures.25 The King’s African Rifles, which were employed for the British first World War effort in neighbouring Tanzania, were marched in and ravaged the whole of Giryamaland. After that no consistent appeal was made on the Giryama workforce; the Giryama were left to themselves, destitute and demoralised.26

It was only with new and strong Giryama leadership in the person of Ronald Ngala in the 1950s that the Giryama were revived out of lethargy. Ngala’s leadership put the Giryama, and indeed the entire coastal area, on the political map. His call for Kenya as a

23 Most of the information on the colonial history of the Giryama has been taken from Brantley (1981).
24 Thomas J. Herlehy (1984) says relating the factual implementation of the abolition of slavery (1833) in a footnote (p.18) that on the Kenyan coast importation of slaves by sea was banned in 1873, the overland transport was prohibited in 1876.
25 Nowadays the correctness of the colonial assessment of the situation is heavily disputed. It is generally assumed, that the Giryama version of the situation is the correct one, which says that the Giryama came together to affirm their Giryama-ness, pledging that they would not use western products, like soap and cloth. (Brantley 1979:74-90)
26 For more details on the British-Giryama conflict see chapter six.
corporation of regional governments (*Mwambao*), the Coast being one of them, gave hope of an economically sound future to the coastal peoples. In the run-up to Kenya’s independence Ngala’s Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) joined the larger opposition party, Kenya African National Union (KANU), under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta. The ideal of an independent coastal state had to be given up in this merger, as KANU favoured a centralised government in Nairobi. During two governments Ronald Ngala was given important ministries. His tragic death in 1972 marks for most Giryama, the reversal of hopes of a better future. Indeed, the Giryama, and for that matter the inhabitants of the entire coastal region, have since been marginalised in national politics.

III Social structures and control mechanisms

*Social organisation*

The Giryama family is based on a patrilineal and virilocal system. In the past most Giryama men used to marry a number of wives. Nowadays polygamy has largely gone out of practice, but it can still be found among the less educated and the very old generation of Giryama. In case the parents of a daughter are asked by the prospective husband of their daughter if he can marry her, a bride-price is negotiated. This bride-price is, in fact, a compensation for the parents’ loss of their daughter. In the past the dowry used to consist of cattle, the number of them depending on the socio-economic status and the renown of the (family of the) bride-to-be. Nowadays, money has largely replaced cattle. Very rarely is the dowry fully paid before the wedding, as it is in any circumstance a considerable financial investment. In case the couple split up, the dowry has to be fully returned to the ex-husband.

According to Parkin (1991:242-46) Giryama society can be roughly divided into 22-23 exogamous units (*muryango*-clan), which are grouped into six sections (*mbari* (also used to refer to smaller kinship units)), of which three are popularly taken to be clans (*Kiza, Parwa* and to a lesser extent *Milulu*). The concept of clanship, i.e. the distinction between one clan and another, is useful in the context of marriage, and also provides a framework for claiming –albeit diminishing- (Trust) land (Parkin:1991).

*Nyumba* (house) is the smallest social unit. It is the nuclear family, headed by a household head. The household head can be male or, less frequently, female. The nuclear family generally lives in a *mudzi* (homestead). Characteristically, *mudzi* (homestead) consists of the grandparents, their sons and families. The homestead head is usually older than the
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household head, male or, less frequently, female. The tasks of the homestead head and the household head are quite similar. It is their joint responsibility to look after the well-being of the homestead and its good name in the area. This includes looking after the welfare of the homestead members, supervising the daily routine of cattle grazing and agricultural activities, solving problems that concern the well-being of the homestead, and hearing cases that can be solved at the homestead level.27

Obviously, the homestead head has the final responsibility and has therefore greater authority than the household head. Both are given the name (of respect), muthumia (elder). The head of the mudzi (homestead) is at the same time a member of the council of elders of the kidzidzi (village), a group of five to ten midzi (pl. of mudzi). In some parts of Giryamaland this system is integrated within the formal administrative organisation. In these areas members are selected for the council of elders of the sub-chief from among the elders of a group of vidzidzi (villages). This council (athumia a vidzidzi (elders of the villages)) operates as an advisory and judiciary body of the sub-chief, who is the head of the lowest formal administrative level, the "sub-location". From among the members of this council, a council of elders of the chief (athumia a lalo (the elders of the location)) is selected by the administrative head of the "location", the chief. He may also add to the council people, whom he thinks are of great societal standing. In the past few years a growing number of female elders can be observed at the level of "sub-location" and "location".28

The general name for these councils of elders, from the mudzi (homestead) to the council of elders of the chief, is (athumia a majagogo ((elders of the logs). In line with this, every elder, from the smallest family unit to mwenye ts’i (kaya elder) is considered a kilongozi (leader). The mwenye ts’i (kaya elder) is the only kilongozi (leader) with spiritual authority.29 Like the household and homestead heads, the elders of the larger social units are addressed, as athumia (elders).

27 The traditional judiciary system is discussed more extensively in chapter six.
28 I was pleasantly surprised during a field trip in 2004, to find that both in the far-away and less developed interior areas of Giryamaland as well as in the area close to the Westernised coast, females had been chosen athumia a vidzidzi (elders of the villages). This was a notable change from the situation which I observed in 2000.
29 Mwenye ts’i (owner of the land) is traditionally a male person.
Witchcraft and traditional belief

Clearly, indigenous social structures are based on the power of elders, who are traditionally in control of labour, land and ritual in their mudzi (homestead), kidzidzi (village), vidzidzi (sub-location), lalo (location) or ts’q (land). As a result of outside influences -to which especially the younger generations of Giryama are exposed- the power of the elders is crumbling away. This process was described to me by many older Giryama men in terms of Giryama youngsters being 'lost' (madzangamika) (i.e. being severed from their Giryama cultural roots).

Major instruments in social control are taboo-ing and witchcraft. The Giryama are renowned for their powerful concoctions and curses.\(^{30}\) Witchcraft (utsai) is really a factor in the life of every Giryama; people are always alert to the possibility of it happening. The impact that witchcraft has on people’s understanding of peaceful co-existence is illustrated in the analysis of a(n) (alleged) case of witchcraft (chapter six).\(^{31}\)

The Giryama attribute supernatural powers to a *mutsai* (sorcerer); they also believe in the powers of the spirits of ancestors (*k’oma*) and those of demons (*p’epo*). While the latter affect the personal life of the victim, the ancestors (varying from the recently deceased to those who died in the far-away past) can operate on a community scale, and are even thought to be able to affect Giryama society as a whole. The importance of the dead in everyday Giryama life is vividly illustrated by the central position of the burial sticks (*k’oma*) in a *mudzi* (homestead) (see picture 7: homestead elder and *k’oma* near Mitsedzini). Placed in the centre of a compound, libations and consultations with the dead are performed in front of them. I was surprised to find that *k’oma* (burial sticks) are addressed in highly ritualised as well as in very informal everyday contexts.\(^{32}\) However,

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\(^{30}\) Supernatural powers are also attributed to the language. See section IV below.

\(^{31}\) Serious lack of rain has in the oral history of the Giryama featured as a case of witchcraft. See Herlehy (1984) on other Mijikenda groups (p.4,12).

\(^{32}\) Among the burial posts those of the elders of the *gohu* society, a powerful secret fraternal society, have a special status. During their lives these men belonged to a highly select group, to which well-to-do members were elected. As a sign of honour to the *gohu* member, his burial post is decorated with an elaborate design. As a result of the artistic qualities of these burial posts (pl. *vigango*), in the past many were stolen and sold to collectors and museums in the Western world. Nowadays, activists, among whom the anthropologist Monica Udvardy, strive for their return to Giryamaland.
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due to Westernisation, Christianisation and, to a lesser extent, Islamisation, k’orna (burial sticks) are no longer a general feature.

Although Christianity and Islam have spread among the Giryama, the majority of the Giryama do not commit themselves to a particular faith. Most of the Giryama adhere to (shreds of) their traditional belief system. Characteristically, they assume that mulungu (god) cannot be addressed directly by human beings. As a result, their dead ancestors are the necessary intermediaries between them and god (mulungu). God-inspired and human-related, the ancestors guide the Giryama in their efforts to live in harmony with the expectations of mulungu (god). They watch the living Giryama continuously, and see whether they adhere to the appropriate Giryama lifestyle. If they don’t, the ancestors are believed to show their anger by natural disasters, such as a prolonged drought. Their anger can be assuaged, according to traditional belief, by a cleansing ritual, which gives the living Giryama the opportunity to start a new page in their attempts to live a ‘good life’, i.e. a life that is in agreement with Giryama culture. Traditionally this cleansing ritual was performed in kaya (sacred place), the abode of the most powerful Giryama ancestors. Nowadays, the homesteads of (self-appointed) rainmakers also serve this purpose.

Traditional judicial system

Traditional peace-making bodies are athumia a magogo (the councils of elders) of the government administrative units called “location” (athumia a laalo) and “sub-location” (athumia a vidzidzi). The agogo (council of elders) operates independently from the police and county courts, while cases are forwarded to it and vice versa. In fact, the agogo (council of elders) is pre-eminently a Giryama institution, hearing cases that involve Giryama parties or a Giryama party and a non-Giryama one. Generally, the councils deal with civil cases, like a dispute over land, an inheritance dispute, the breach of an employment contract, witchcraft, rape, or adultery. The decisions of the councils of elders are formally endorsed by the sub-chief (head of the “sub-location”) or the chief, as head of the “location”. One of them should always be present as the representative of the Kenyan administration, and it is his job too to ratify the decisions that are taken by the council of elders. Thus the legal status of the council’s decisions is ensured. At the sub-chief’s office

33 The formal administrative structure is from smallest unit to largest: village (headed by a village headman), sub-location (headed by sub-chief), location (headed by chief), division (headed by District Officer (D.O.)), district (headed by District Commissioner (D.C.)), province (headed by Provincial Commissioner (P.C.)), central administration.

34 This is a short form for athumia a magogo (council of elders).
minor cases are dealt with (among other things, small theft and inter-village disputes), at the chief’s office the more serious cases, like witchcraft, should be heard. Criminal acts can be heard too at these councils, but the police deals with the more serious cases.

Characteristically, the sessions of the councils of elders are public and held in the open air. Those who are present can take part in the discussion, following the hearing of the complainant and the defendant by the elders and the (sub-)chief. If either the complainant or (more usually) the defendant does not turn up at the council’s session, the case will be adjourned. These sessions are held on fixed days in the week (once or twice a week). It is the complainant’s responsibility to inform the defendant of his complaint, and request him to come to the council of elders at a certain date (i.e. after having informed the (sub-)chief about the complaint).

Although the rules of the game are generally known, the effectiveness of the councils of elders suffers from disinterest of some of the stakeholders. Meetings are cancelled time and again for lack of one or more of the parties. The most loyal attendants are the elders. This is not surprising considering the fact that they receive a remuneration of Kesh 250 (approximately €2.50) as thermo (allowance) from each party after hearing their case. The chief or sub-chief and the defendant tend to be unreliable in their attendance. The major reason is financial. The administrators are not given any bonus in addition to their meagre salaries for attending these sessions. Because of their poor salaries, they often have small jobs on the side. These tend to interfere with their work as a (sub-)chief. The defendants do not show up, because they fear losing money to the council. However, if a session of the council of elders is carried through, there is a great sense of commitment (see case-studies I and II, chapter six). Also, the decisions that are taken by the elders are generally accepted by both complainant and defendant (an exception to this rule is case-study I, chapter six).

IV Language and Identity

Language

“Kigiryama, the Giryama language, is considered an atavistic, non-literate tongue by Swahili and Arabs, upcountry folk, and representatives of the Kenyan state”, Janet

35 Apart from thermo (inducement) also kadzama (calabash filled with palmwine) is used to refer to the allowance of elders. In former days this allowance was measured in terms of numbers of kadzama in legal affairs.
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Mcintosh (2005b:1924) notes. In spite of the discriminatory tone towards Kigirama, the Swahili especially have had close bonds with the Giryama, as was pointed out above. Also, their languages show many similarities, as “Kiswahili has many Bantu elements, with syntactic parallels to and cognates in Kigirama….” (Mcintosh 2005b:1925). Kigirama, in its turn has borrowed words from Kiswahili to replace indigenous equivalents, or to describe new phenomena. In the context of this study I found for instance that the Kiswahili word amani (peace) has replaced the indigenous word dheri (peace) among youths.

Kiswahili, being the lingua franca of the whole of Kenya, and of a major part of eastern and central Africa for that matter, is taught and spoken as a first language at every Giryama primary school from Standard 4 onwards. It is the hegemonic medium of communication. Still, Kigirama is the language of everyday communication among the Giryama. It is considered by the Giryama an important manifestation of cultural identity and unity. As Janet McIntosh notes on the Giryama perspective on their language:

Although they [i.e. the Giryama] are quite aware that the broader linguistic marketplace is arrayed against their language, many Giryama themselves associate their tongue with ethnic pride, even ethnic revivalism. (2005b:1924)

The word Kigirama translates into English as “Giryama language” and “culture of the Giryama”. This close connection between language and culture could be considered an instance of ‘ethnolinguistic linking’, implying that the Giryama assume that there is an ontological connection between language and people. Mcintosh (2005b) suggests that this is the case among the Giryama. I would rather understand the connection slightly differently. Rather than identifying language as the natural corollary of ethnicity, the Giryama consider their language the one single phenomenon in Giryama society that passes on “Giryama-ness” from one generation to the next. The great power attached to the spoken word, a general African phenomenon, here extends to language being the repository of the way of Giryama living. Through Kigirama one generation transmits the teachings of Giryama culture to the next. But not only that, Kigirama is the single medium between the living and the supernatural. On this score Mcintosh notes that the Giryama language is considered by its users to have special powers in the arena of the supernatural, which Kiswahili and English do not have (2005b:1933).
Identity

While in other African communities descent from one common ancestor is the basis of ethnic identity, among the Giryama the story of Muyeye (the founding father of all Mijikenda) is fading into oblivion. Indeed, the major defining aspect of common identity is membership of a lineage, which in its turn defines membership of a sub-clan, and this defines membership of a clan. Willis (1994) notes that this was the case among the 19th century Giryama, and I found it still is. Indeed the unity of the Giryama, the Giryama argue themselves, is guaranteed by intricate layers of real or fictive blood relations. This sense of unity is different from ethnic identity. As was argued above in the context of language, the Giryama consider ethnicity a contingent rather than an ontological construct. This is very vividly illustrated in the popular Giryama saying: Kigiryama ni kimwenga uvoru ela kila mudzi una chakwe (Kigiryama is one in greeting, but every homestead has its own customs).

After all that has been said about the Giryama so far, who of these Giryama are the main actors in this study? It was pointed out before that fieldwork has been done among the Giryama who live in Kilifi District (map II). On the basis of the above description, a more specific picture crops up. As the map shows, there are roughly three areas in which research was carried out. One is the south-western part of Kilifi district, comprising the “locations” (administrative unit) of Kaloleni, Kayafungo and Tsangats’ini. This is a relatively fertile area where farmers depend on growing crops or mixed farms, largely for subsistence. The second area is situated close to Kilifi town, along and inside from the Mombasa-Malindi road. Tezo “location” and the “location” of Kilifi township are an area of commercial activity. The third area of research is Vitengeni and Mrima wa Ndege, which are in the remote parts of Giryamaland. Here people depend on cattle, if they can afford to have them, and very poor crops due to irregular rainfall (if at all). It is the poorest area of the three.

36 I was witness to an instance of it, when my 68-year-old field assistant and I visited his parental home, Dulukiza, in the interior of Giryamaland. He had not been there for 35 years, and did not know anybody anymore. The first thing he did was asking people the name of their lineage, and if that did not render a connection, the lineage of their wife/wives in order to establish a bond with them. At the end of his exploration, he commented to me happily that he had managed to be one with some of them.

37 Since February 2007 Kaloleni has become a district.
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Conclusion

A bird’s eye view of the Giryama and their society has been presented. I am aware that some consequential matters have been raised, while they have not been seriously addressed. As I started out by saying in the introduction to this chapter, the discussion has been in the style of a first acquaintance. The issues raised have been selected on the basis of their relevance to the research question: Giryama understandings of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. A major concern was to present sufficient background information for situating the collective memory that is articulated in Giryama discourse.
PART II

GIRYAMA IDEOLOGY OF PEACE
3 Kuelewana – Reciprocity of Peace

Introduction

In the first paragraph of this study a set of questions were presented, which centred on the equivalence of ‘peace’ words in different cultures. Equipped with the necessary analytical instruments, we now arrive at a spot where we have the opportunity to find an answer to this question in the context of the Giryama word for ‘peace’. Still, the primary focus is not on finding differences and similarities between for instance English ‘peace’ and Giryama dheri/amani (peace). The central objective of the discussion is to find and describe the word that reflects the most salient – i.e. most ideologically charged – Giryama understanding of ‘peace’. This is a different point of departure. It means that amani/dheri (peace) is not by definition the most salient conceptualisation of ‘peace’ and therefore the object of analysis. In fact, in the presentation of the analytical framework it was already mentioned that it is not. If it is not, which other term would be the most relevant object of analysis in the exploration of the Giryama understanding of ‘peace’? First, I address the word dheri (peace) and the explanations that were given of it. From this discussion kuelewana (understand each other) emerges as a key word, which is generally used to talk about ‘peace’.

Dheri (peace) was selected as a category head by 55% of the respondents from among the 30 words. I explained this high figure as the result of it being a superordinate level word, the most abstract category of knowledge organisation according to Rosch’s taxonomy (chapter two, section II.1). Kuelewana (‘agree’) was claimed to be a much more salient reflection of the Giryama ideology of ‘peace’. This claim was supported by two simple observations. One was that the word kuelewana (‘agree’)¹ was frequently used in settings where ‘conflict’, ‘peace’ or ‘peace-making’ was involved, while the word dheri (peace) was hardly used at all. Secondly, people found it easy to explain the word kuelewana (‘agree’) to me, and dheri (peace) was clearly not so familiar to them. Having said that, I have to admit that the list of explications below demonstrates a striking consensus among the group of informants on the meaning of

¹ ‘Agree’ is generally accepted among the Giryama as the correct translation of kuelewana. However, in the course of the analysis it appears to lack some salient meaning dimensions that are contained in its Giryama counterpart, and therefore will be replaced by the more adequate translation of ‘understand each other’. To indicate its temporary character as a translation of kuelewana ‘agree’ has been put between scare quotes.
Chapter three

dheri (peace). However, a careful analysis of the list of explications brings out not so much the salience of dheri (peace) as well as the clear understanding that the Giryama informants have of ‘peace’.

I Analytical outlines

We can only begin to find an answer to this riddle by starting from a particular assumption. Let’s therefore assume that since dheri/amani is the Giryama counterpart for English ‘peace’, it is the appropriate object for analysis in the present context. Obviously, this is an assumption that is fundamentally contested in this study, and for that reason, I would say, a good start of the discussion. Let us see what happens, when as a first step we explore the semantic dimensions of dheri/amani (peace), with an eye to dheri/amani’s role in the Giryama understanding of ‘peace’.

The next step is exploring kuelewana (‘agree’). Section two presents a semantic comparative analysis of Giryama ‘agree’ verbs, as well as a cross-cultural analysis with English and Dutch ‘agree’ words. As was mentioned in the introduction of this book, the cross-cultural comparison is made to draw out certain features that would otherwise remain obscure. The comparison has an additional function in the present context, it hopes to solve the riddle of the striking uniformity among the Giryama in their translation of kuelewana (understand each other) into English as ‘agree’, and the ostensible discontinuity between ‘agree’ and their use of kuelewana (‘agree’) in everyday language.

In section three the discussion moves on to the socio-cultural contexts in which kuelewana (‘agree’) operates. After all, if kuelewana (‘agree’) can be demonstrated to be socially widely distributed, we have a strong case for its salience in the Giryama understanding of ‘peace’. In the course of section three different meaning aspects of kuelewana (‘agree’) gradually present themselves. Every time a new meaning aspect is found, it is reflected as a semantic component. At the end all these meaning components are brought together in a full semantic description of kuelewana (‘agree’).

While the social distribution of kuelewana (‘agree’) in the domain of ‘peace’ is the focus of section three, in section four the question of its salience is reiterated more specifically for its ideological dimensions. Characteristic features of an ideology like framing, directing and
“normalising” our thoughts and actions, are explored in the context of two domains of cultural discourse.\(^2\) The first object of analysis is a set of fifty-three sayings that refer to *kuelewana* (‘agree’) in different ways. The second is a case-study of a grass-roots meeting, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Muungano Water Project in Dera (map III). For the analysis of the meeting I have made use of Stephen Covey’s paradigm of effective decision-making. Including socio-emotional aspects of decision-making, Covey’s paradigm highlights interdependence as fundamental to a successful decision-making process.\(^3\) Projecting his paradigm on the AGM in Dera renders some relevant information on the ideological features of *kuelewana* (‘agree’). A description of this paradigm is given in the introduction to the case-study.

II *Dheri* (peace)

The real Kigirya word for ‘peace’ is *dheri*, Giryama will say, but the Kiswahili word *amani* is often used too. When I asked people whether there is a difference between these words, they replied that *amani* is taken from Kiswahili, and that it is a more modern word. Indeed, it is my impression that the word *amani* is replacing *dheri* among adults between 20 and 40,\(^4\) and seems to have been completely lost in the speech of people under 20.\(^5\) This could be

\(^2\) The phrase between scare quotes is explained in chapter one, section III.1.

\(^3\) Stephen R. Covey (2004; first published 1989).

\(^4\) This idea was confirmed by three instances of collocations with *dheri* (peace). The first one is the idiom *kudzarya dheri* (lit. to have eaten peace (= to have made peace)). When I heard it for the first time, I was excited about the potential metaphoric cognitive dimensions of the Giryama understanding of ‘peace’. Asking my research assistant about its meaning, I felt some justification for this excitement. He said that the idiom indicates the slow and gradual process that peace-making is, just like digesting food. Another informant argued that the idiom refers to the ‘sharing’ aspect, similar to sharing food. However, most younger Giryama that I asked about *kudzarya dheri* (to have made peace) were not familiar with the idiom. Similarly I found that generally only the older generations were familiar with three sayings in which *dheri* (peace) features. *Pengu ya viha, illumwa dherini* (the spear of war is made in peace), expressing the need to plan ahead, and the truisms *kithundhu cha athumia kina dheri* (a gathering of elders has peace) are not generally known. The third saying *Henyeye dheri k’ondo ihaho* (When there is peace, there is conflict) was generally contested as a saying.

\(^5\) There were two notable exceptions to this general understanding during my fieldwork. One young man explained the difference by saying that *dheri* has the additional feeling of *raha* (happiness). Another young man was not sure about the correct pronunciation of *amani*, he got confused between the Kiswahili words *imani* (faith) and *amani* and was advised by his friends what term to use.
interpreted as dheri (peace) not having a very firm socio-cognitive status. The interpretation is supported by the observation that people found it difficult to explain dheri (peace). On the other hand, it was selected by 55% of the respondents as a category head among the 30 words. This seeming contradiction is in fact the key to understanding the nature of dheri (peace). Its high incidence in the selection process of category heads indicates that the Giryama consider it an appropriate collective for peace terms. Yet, being a collective term it belongs at a level of knowledge organisation that lacks the experiential character of the basic level. Therefore, it is less easy to define and hence includes less generally shared knowledge. However, if we go one level below dheri (peace), which is that of dheri (peace) domain words, we find they belong with the experientially constituted knowledge level. Yet which are these dheri (peace) domain words? They are simply the explications that Giryama informants gave of dheri (peace). Thus, our exploration of the Giryama key word for ‘peace’ starts off with this list.

II.1 Explications of dheri (peace)

The explications of dheri (peace) were collected from the group of roughly one hundred respondents introduced in the discussion on the analytical framework (chapter one, section II.1). Apart from the straightforward question: Dheri manaye ni noni? (What is the meaning of dheri?), people were asked to fill in the second part of the sentences Kala hana dheri, hana… (When there is peace, there is….) and Kala hana dheri, k’ahana… (When there is peace, there is no…). The answers to the question “When there is peace, there is…” overlap to a great extent with the definitions of dheri (peace), as the meanings that people gave were often like responses to a mental picture they had made of “when there is peace….”. They are therefore not listed separately. The oppositions however do contain some distinct pieces of information on the socio-cultural dimensions of dheri (peace).

Starting with dheri (peace) as part of an oppositional pair, we are presented with situations that are associated with lack of peace:

- **Kala hana dheri, k’ahana k’ondo.** When there is peace, there is no conflict.
- **Hariho na dheri, k’ahana fujo.** Where there is peace there is no quarrelling.

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*6 This opposition clearly puts into question the saying Henye dheri k’ondo itaha (When there is peace, there is conflict), quoted in note 4.
[Kala hana dheri.] k’akuna sengenya. [When there is peace,] there is no backbiting.

Explicit reference to the lack of physical animosity in time of peace is made in the oppositions:

Kuna dheri, k’akuna kuhefwɔ. There is peace, there is no fighting.
Kala hana dheri, k’ahana viha. When there is peace, there is no war.

The last opposition refers to a dimension of peace that relates to food security:

Kala ndzala ya ts’i yosi, k’akuna dheri. 7 When there is famine in the (entire) land, there is no peace.

The ‘non-peace’ words obviously refer to very different situations. In the chapters on the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’, their different socio-cognitive dimensions will be discussed. Here it is sufficient to note that the above oppositions indicate that dheri (peace) is ‘the absence of any kind of harm’, be it physical (kuhefwɔ (fight), viha (war) ndzala (famine)) or verbal (fujo (trouble), sengenya (be backbiting)). 8

The picture that is painted of dheri (peace) as ‘the absence of any kind of harm’ is very similar to a basic Western understanding of ‘peace’ as lacking (armed) conflict. Dheri’s culture-specific understandings are brought out more expressly in the answers that Giryama informants gave to the question: Dheri manaye ni noni? (What is the meaning of dheri?) One striking characteristic of the explanations is their belonging to one or the other of the two categories of ‘agree’ or ‘feel good’. The following list adheres to this categorisation. Within each category the related words are cited in descending order of frequency. The list deviates in another way from the normal routine. It does not include only those responses that were given by five people or more. To help underscore the consistency of the understanding of dheri (peace) as ‘feel good’ (1.g-n) and ‘agree’ (1.a-f) all the responses are cited:

7 Here ts’i yosi refers to Giryamaland as a whole.
8 K’ondo is not included here, because it can be physical or verbal harm, or a mixture of the two. In chapter six the concept of k’ondo (conflict) is analysed in detail.
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1. 
   a) kuelewana  ‘agree’; understand each other  
   b)kusikizana  ‘agree’; understand each other  
   c) kupatana (also Kisw.)  ‘agree’; get along  
   d) kugwirana  ‘agree’; unite  
   e) kushirkiana (also Kisw.)  co-operate  
   f) keresi hamwenga  sit /come together  
   g) funa raha  we have happiness  
   h) dheri i raha  peace is happiness  
   i) funasikira t’ot’o’t’o  we are feeling well  
   j) manasikira t’ot’o’t’o, kila mut’u  they are feeling well, every person  
   k) kuna t’ot’o’t’o  there is ‘wellness’  
   l) kuna mbidzo  there is ‘goodness’  
   m) ut’u udzo fuhendzao  something good, which we like.  
   n) munaishi karakara  you (pl.) live OK  

The definition of dheri (peace) that was cited most frequently is kuelewana (‘agree’), second comes raha (happiness). Thus they may be provisionally characterised as the focal points around which the other words are grouped. Starting with the ‘feel good’ category, we find that the descriptions [1.g-1.k] refer to people’s feelings (cf. note 5), while descriptions [1.i-1.n] refer to the presence of appreciated norms and values. Referring to dheri (peace) as an object that is ‘good’ [1.m] and hence desirable implies that dheri (peace), containing proper norms and values, makes people feel good. In description [1.n] this ‘feeling good’ aspect is least pronounced.

Descriptions [1.a-1.d] are all translated by the same English word ‘agree’, and will be differentiated in the discussion of kuelewana (‘agree’). The ‘feeling good’ aspect is not obvious from kuelewana’s translation as ‘agree’ (see the explications of ‘agree’ in II.2). Description [1.e] is very similar to [1.a-1.d] in that it refers to different parties, only now a specific activity is thought of (working together). Here too, no clear reference is made to ‘feeling good’. Explication [1.f] refers to the physical manifestation of dheri (peace), which is represented by people, more
particularly men, sitting or coming together for the purpose of finding a solution to a problem that affects the community.

From this description we may conclude that kulewana (‘agree’), together with other ‘agree’ words, is a component of ‘peace’ and that another is raha (happiness) with other ‘feel good’ terms. The question which arises of course is whether they are the same thing or different parts of the same thing. Their relationship will become clearer in the discussion below.

III A semantic exploration of ‘agree’ verbs

This section explores two kinds of semantic contexts of kulewana (understand each other). One is a comparative analysis of kulewana (understand each other) with the other Giryaama ‘agree’ verbs that were cited as explanations of dheri (peace). The second semantic context is cross-cultural, including a comparative analysis of kulewana (understand each other) and English and Dutch ‘agree’ verbs.

III.1 Kulewana and other ‘agree’ verbs

Among the ‘agree’ verbs five have the suffix -na. This suffix indicates reciprocity and therefore implies a distinct interaction between actors. In this respect these five verbs are essentially different from the last verb of the ‘agree’ group keresi hamwenga (sit/come together), which suggests a joint activity. It is the ‘-na’ verbs which are the subject of this discussion.

Among the Giryaama kulewana (‘agree’) and kusikizana (‘agree’) are generally understood as interchangeable. They are used in the same social contexts. Moreover they show semantic resemblance. Kusikizana (‘agree’) is related to the Giryaama verb sikira, which means ‘hear’ or ‘understand’, while kulewana (‘agree’) is derived from kulewa, which means ‘understand’. The only difference that I found between the two words is the connotations they have in the context of friendship. In general, kusikizana (‘agree’) and kulewana (‘agree’) refer to friendship understood in terms of ‘good friends’. Yet, different from kusikizana (‘agree’), kulewana (‘agree’) can additionally relate to a more intense friendship. Used with the appropriate

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9 Different form kulewana (‘agree’) kusikizana (‘agree’) occurs in Kigiryama and Kiswahili.
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qualifying phrases, it can express a relationship of close friends. This latter point will be further elaborated in the discussion of the social contexts of kuelewana (‘agree’).

The following recorded discussion is an illustration of the interrelationship of these two ‘agree’ verbs with another member of the ‘agree’ group, kupatana (‘agree’). The discussion was organised by the sub-chief of Gotani sub-location (map II). He convened a meeting with seven homestead elders and two older women. The discussion leader is Anthony Kazungu, who is in his late fifties. The subject of this part of the discussion is the different types of k’ondo ya mudzini (homestead conflict). The following passage features two village elders and the discussion leader (AK).

2.

1 CM: Kuna kosa ra ho mudzini vizho acheo ni airi haha.
   AK: Eeh.
   CM: Gonya makale k’amaelewana aa ahe.
   AK: K’amaapatana.

5 CM: Eeh.
   AK: Kutsopatana kwa ahe.
   KKG: Ache.
   CM: Ache o uwe ni airi gonya k’amasikizana.
   AK: Madzahalwa ni mu’u mumwenga.

10 KKG: Eeh.
   CM: Riro naro pia ni kosa.
   AK: Kutsopatana kwa ahe.

1 CM: There is something awry in the family like when there are two wives here.
   AK: Yes.
   CM: Then these women do not ‘agree’.
   AK: They don’t get along.

5 CM: Yes.
   AK: ‘The not getting along of women’.
   KKG: Women.
   CM: Your wives are two and then they don’t ‘agree’.
   AK: They are married to one man.

10 KKG: Yes.
   CM: There is indeed something wanting.
   AK: ‘The not getting along of women’.
What happens in the discussion is that CM uses the verb *kuelewana* (‘agree’) (line 3). AK corrects him and replaces it with another verb *kupatana* (‘agree’) (lines 4 and 6). However CM does not take up this correction and uses *kusikizana* (‘agree’) (line 8) instead. Then AK finally reiterates his correction (line 12) in his statement of the subject of the discussion.

If we paraphrase the text from the point of view of the discussion leader, AK, we hear CM (line 1) opening the discussion by saying that a situation of a man having two wives is prone to problems. Kazungu agrees and decides that *kuelewana* (‘agree’) does not fit the context. He therefore insists on using the verb *kupatana* (‘agree’) as a more appropriate verb. CM on the other hand sticks to *kuelewana* (‘agree’) or rather its synonym *kusikizana* (‘agree’).

What we may conclude from this paraphrase, is that the two men agree on evaluating the situation of co-wives as problematic. At the same time, they are aware that it is a Giryama institution – if a fading one – which is part of their cultural experience. Kazungu experiences this probably as an ideological incompatibility. On the one hand there is the Giryama *ideology* of peaceful living in which a polygamous marriage is part of the cultural experience, on the other there is the problem prone practical situation. He resolves this tension by using another word that has a similar meaning yet does not have the same ideological charging. This is the word *kupatana*, indicating that the interaction is OK, if not without obstacles. The English ‘getting along’ seems to be the closest approximation of the sense conveyed by the verb.

Using the word *kupatana* (get along), Kazungu indirectly sheds some light on the meaning of *kuelewana* (‘agree’). Besides being the more general and comprehensive reflection of the Giryama *ideology* of peace, he implies that *kuelewana* (‘agree’) refers to an interaction that is experienced as ‘good’. Thus we could argue that the interaction between husband and wife is ideologically ‘good’, and that the interaction between co-wives is ideally ‘good’, but in practice often waters down to *kupatana* (get along). A salient entailment of the use of *kupatana* (get along) in the situation of co-wives underscores its appropriateness in the present context. As

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10 Kazungu’s acute awareness of the use of the right word in the right context may have to do with his long term of office in the department of Education.
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Kazungu indicates if there were a fight between co-wives it would be qualified as *kutsopatana* (‘not’ get along). In this way no harm can be done to peaceful living at large.

The other verbs that were quoted by Girayama as explaining the concept of *dheri* (peace) in terms of ‘agreeing’, exhibit the same property of being situation related ‘agree’ verbs. *Kugwirana* (‘agree’) is derived from the verb *kugwira*, which means ‘hold’. In the phrase *Magwirana mikono* (they hold each other’s hands) which is quoted in [3], the literal and the figurative senses come together. Holding each other’s hands is the confirmation of a relationship that is qualified as *kugwirana* and which is rendered most closely in English by ‘unite’ (intransitive verb).

In the following text, recorded in Mtsengo (map II), the old lady Dama Kahindi narrates what she does when she hears that there is a fight going on. She urges her friend to *kugwirana* (unite) with her and together put an end to the fighting. Her friend, who is of the same age as her, is afraid that she will receive a blow from one of the fighting men, and refuses to come along. Implied in the following passage, Dama Kahindi has managed to persuade her friend in the end by suggesting that the victim might be a relative. Having been successful at ending the fight, the speaker argues that you confirm this *kugwirana* (unite) by shaking hands and giving each other friendship names.

3.


We unite until we reach there, maybe there is the child of the elder sister of your mother.
I say: “Now you refused to go, look! If we had not come....” You hold her hand and shake it.

“Now let us call each other [friends] of the funeral.”...that one. “Let’s say to each other: ‘Hey friend of the funeral.’”11 Friend of the funeral, it is her. Yes. We have come to stop that fighting now. That’s why we call each other [friend] of the equilibrium.12

11 A ‘friend of the funeral’ means that two people have pledged that they will take care of each other until and including the burial of one of them.

12 *Usena wa madheri* is a phrase that qualifies the friendship as one of equals.
Clearly, *kugwirana* (unite) is an additional aspect to a relationship that is already characterised by friendship. It starts with sharing an activity that is valued by all actors as good, and causes all actors to ‘feel good’. This ‘feel good’ is expressed in the friendship names the ladies give each other afterwards. Although the ‘good’ component was already noted in the *kuelewana* – *kupatana* comparison, its connotation was not clear. In the context of *kugwirana* (‘agree’) we find ‘good’ is defined as ‘feeling good’ which is the result of a kind of agreement about doing things together, which are experienced as ‘good’. Whether this is a general element of all ‘agree’ verbs and therefore characteristic for *kuelewana* (‘agree’) is still a question. At this point we may conclude that a distinctive feature of *kugwirana* (unite) is that it ‘happens’ when two or more actors value their joint action as having a positive influence on their togetherness. This makes it a more complex concept than *kupatana* (get along). At the same time it lacks a certain comprehensiveness, as *kugwirana* (unite) pre-supposes an existing togetherness. This would argue against it being the most salient reflection of the Giryama *ideology* of ‘peace’.

The verb *kushirikiana* (co-operate) has been grouped with the ‘agree’ verbs because it presupposes a certain ‘agreeing’ between the actors. Different from *kugwirana* (unite) it is used only in a situation of working together. Additionally it includes the sense of two parties remaining distinct parties in the sharing of the workload. More than the other verbs *kushirikiana* (co-operate) implies the sharing of a burden. Co-operation is understood in terms of alleviating one’s own and the other’s task. This makes both parties ‘feel good’. In view of the looser interpretation of ‘being one’ as compared to the previous ‘agree’ verbs, I asked my field assistant if *kushirikiana* (co-operate) was generally considered to express a sense of ‘unity’. His comment was in the form of a question: *Vidze munashirikiana na k’amuelewana?* (how can you co-operate and you don’t ‘agree’?). His answer is clear: *kushirikiana* (co-operate) belongs in the group of ‘agree’ verbs. What is more, it suggests that the verb *kuelewana* (‘agree’) is the broad moral framework in which *kushirikiana* (co-operate) takes place.

From the discussion of the three ‘agree’ verbs I think we can distil some areas of special attention for the following discussion of *kuelewana* (‘agree’). The discussion of *kupatana* (get along) indicates that *kuelewana* (‘agree’) is a general term for peaceful living and is associated with ‘goodness’. The analysis of *kugwirana* (unite) suggests that ‘feeling good’ is an emergent property of ‘doing good things together’ as a result of ‘agreeing’. Lastly, the description of *kushirikiana* (co-operate) brings out that *kuelewana* (‘agree’) is the broad moral context within which the other ‘agree’ verbs operate.
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III.2 Kuelewana (‘agree’) from a cross-cultural semantic perspective

*Kuelewana* (‘agree’) was unanimously translated as ‘agree’. Sometimes ‘compromise’ was added as a second translation, which in fact is a specific type of agreeing. As was mentioned before, the present discussion seeks underlying socio-cognitive motivations for this general agreement on translating *kuelewana* as ‘agree’, assuming that they can reveal salient meaning aspects of *kuelewana* (‘agree’). To this end the dictionary definitions of English ‘agree’ are used. Additionally the Dutch *eensgezind zijn* (be of one mind) is compared with *kuelewana* (‘agree’) to highlight some characteristic features of the Giryama concept.\(^\text{13}\)

When asked to explain the meaning of *kuelewana*, informants cited explications that do not specifically refer to ‘agree’. One could argue at most that some sort of ‘agreement’ is a prerequisite for them. Their definitions reflect *kuelewana* (‘agree’) as a (‘good’) way of life, in which people:

4.  
   a. Manasaidhiana  
   b. Manahurumiana  
   c. Manaonerana mbazi
      
      ... help each other
      ... sympathise with each other
      ...show compassion to each other

The following quotation additionally illustrates the inadequacy of the translation of *kuelewana* as ‘agree’:

5.  
   *Funa thabu, ela ni kazi ya kwehu yanongeka kwa aho ho. Kafuelewana ka heri.*  
   *Aho ho a kwehu madzauya madzagwira kidhyemo chanzu.*  
   
   We have problems, but our work is destroyed as a result of our children.
   We don’t agree anymore.
   Our children have come to embrace the way of talking and behaving from outside.

A comparison with the definition of ‘agree’ in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2003) does not seem to bring out points of contact either:

\(^{13}\) I must admit that *eensgezind zijn* (be of one mind) has a different meaning from ‘agree’. Interestingly, in the LDCE edition of 1978 a similar sense is conveyed in one definition of ‘agree’: (TOGETHER) to be happy together; get on well together.
SAME OPINION, to have or express the same opinion about something as someone else.

SAY YES, to say yes to an idea, plan, suggestion, etc.

DECIDE TOGETHER, to make a decision with someone after a discussion with them.

BE THE SAME, if two pieces of information agree with each other, they match or are the same.

None of the definitions reflects the above explications of *kuelewana* (‘agree’) nor the meaning of the above quotation [5]. The only similarity that can be found – and that might explain its use as a translation of *kuelewana* (‘agree’) – is the general characteristic of these definitions as ‘two parties sharing something’, but even there the aspect of reciprocity included in the above explications [4] of *kuelewana* (‘agree’) is missing. In English, the sharing refers specifically to mental constructs, such as ideas, plans, opinions and decisions.

Dutch *eensgezind zijn* (be of one mind), or rather its absence, is a much more adequate rendering of the relationship between parents and children that is described in [5]. In the *Van Dale* dictionary (2005) the adjective *eensgezind* is explained as:

\[
\text{tot hetzelfde gezind (of the same mind),}
\]

\[
\text{hetzelfde voorhebbend (going for the same end)}
\]

Indeed, if Giryama parents and children would go for the same goal, the speaker of [5] implies, Giryamaland would not fall apart. This observation is consistent too with the final remark in [5], which blames the lack of *kuelewana* (‘agree’) on influences from outside. While the explications of *eensgezind* (of one mind) reflect a sharing of ideas, and opinions, very much like the LDCE explications of ‘agree’, they additionally include reference to a sharing that is embedded in a broad moral framework. In this respect it seems to be very similar to *kuelewana* (‘agree’).

*Eensgezind* is different from *kuelewana* (understand each other) in another – more fundamental – respect, lacking the inherent ‘goodness’ that is entailed in *kuelewana* (‘agree’). This can be illustrated from a common Dutch expression:

\[
\text{Eensgezind in het kwaad (of one mind in evil practices)}
\]
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Another striking dissimilarity between the Dutch counterpart and *kuelewana* (‘agree’) is the Dutch focus on being together in having or wanting the same thing, while *kuelewana* (‘agree’) emphasises a reciprocal activity as articulating sharing.

From this dictionary comparison of *kuelewana* (‘agree’) and its English and Dutch counterparts, I think we can conclude that *kuelewana* (‘agree’) differs fundamentally in one respect. It is a concept that highlights sharing as a reciprocal process, which is inherently good. Additionally, in view of the demonstrated present-day discontinuity between the British understandings of ‘agree’ and *kuelewana* (‘agree’), I would argue for its replacement by a more adequate equivalent. In the following discussion contextual information helps to bring out the core sense of *kuelewana* (‘agree’). This results in proposing ‘understand each other’ as a more appropriate translation of *kuelewana*.

IV *Kuelewana* (‘agree’) in the Giryama social context

The discussion consists of a description of the various social categories in which *kuelewana* (‘agree’) operates. At the same time it explores the meaning aspects of *kuelewana* (‘agree’) across these categories. Thus an analytical continuum is created between the exploration of meaning and its social distribution. After all, the extent of *kuelewana*’s social distribution is one indication of socio-cultural salience. At each stage of the analysis a semantic description is given of (a) newly-found meaning component(s) of *kuelewana* (‘agree’). At the end of the discussion emerges a comprehensive description of the meaning of *kuelewana* (‘agree’).

IV.1 The analysis

Although few Giryama informants explicitly argued that *kuelewana* (‘agree’) is taught to children as an integral part of *elimu ya mudzini* (homestead education),¹⁴ most informants cited norms and values that go along with *kuelewana* (‘agree’) as part of their children’s education. From the homestead *kuelewana* (‘agree’) spreads in ever widening circles throughout Giryama society, and ideally beyond. The extent of its distribution can best be illustrated with a list of social categories, in which *kuelewana* (‘agree’) manifests itself:

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¹⁴ Only very few Giryama, one informant noted, have *ikili ya kuelewana* (an inborn intelligence of *kuelewana*).
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A Mudzi (homestead):
   (i) Azhazi na aho ho (between parents and children)
   (ii) Kilongozi na famili (between head of the family and the family)
   (iii) Mut’u na ndugu (between a person and his/her relative)
   (iv) Nyumba na nyumba (one house of the homestead and another)
   (v) Musena na musena (between a friend and friend) (a fictive blood relationship)
   (vi) Kilongozi na mudzi (between leader and homestead members)

B Kidzidzi (village):
   (i) Mudzi na mudzi (between homesteads)
   (ii) Kilongozi na midzi (between leader and homesteads (i.e. village))

C Giryama (Giryama society):
   (i) Mut’u na mut’u (between a person and another person)
   (ii) Kilongozi na at’u (between leader and people)

Starting with the first circle of kuelewana (‘agree’), the already cited lines from a life story (see [5]) — and repeated here for convenience — are a vivid illustration of how Giryama understand the parent-child relationship.

5.

Funa thabu, ela ni kazi ya kwehu
yanongeka kwa aho ho.
K’a kuelewana kaheri.
Ahoho a kwehu madzauya madzagwira
kidhyomo chanze.

We have problems, but our work is destroyed as a result of our children.
We don’t agree anymore.
Our children have come to embrace the way of talking and behaving from outside.

These words were spoken by the homestead elder Simba Wanje at a gathering of approximately 30 clansmen. 15 Expressed within the domain of sites of collective memory, his ideas are situated within a historical/traditional framework. As a result of this mode of expression, the speaker’s words appeal to assumed shared values.

15 A description of the occasion is given in chapter four, section III.
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Simba expresses his unhappiness about the deteriorated relationship between parents and children. He argues that the reason for the bad relationship is the behaviour of today’s youth. The children have adopted a way of life that is different from the Giryama way of life and its accompanying norms and values. As a result parent and child do not ‘agree’ or rather do not ‘understand each other’ anymore.\textsuperscript{16}

Although the speaker refers to the particular situation of parent and child, his qualification of the \textit{kuelewana} (‘agree’) relationship is of a more general nature. Indeed, his statement implies that people understand each other because of a shared system of norms and values. His description of the parent-child relationship is therefore just an instance of people not understanding each other because of lack of a shared system of norms and values, I would argue. The speaker’s unhappiness with the present situation suggests that he would ‘feel good’ if there were \textit{kuelewana} (understand each other). Thus there is a clear indication of the interconnection of ‘understand each other’ and ‘feel good’.

Recalling the discussion of \textit{kugwirana} (unite) in which ‘feeling good’ was claimed to be an emergent property, we could argue the same in the parent-child relationship of \textit{kuelewana} (understand each other). It therefore seems likely that ‘feel good’ is a general and basic component of the Giryama understanding of \textit{kuelewana} (understand each other). Additionally, it could be argued that it emerges from ‘understand each other because of a shared system of norms and values’. I would therefore tentatively suggest the following semantic description:

1. It is good to be part of the same thing as someone else
2. because of this people feel good.\textsuperscript{17}

These are the general meaning components of \textit{kuelewana} (understand each other). Yet, what about their particular manifestation in the parent-child relationship? As was said before, the suffix –\textit{na} indicates reciprocity. This does not imply equality between parent and child. Indeed, obedience to the parent is a distinct characteristic of the Giryama child’s relationship with

\textsuperscript{16} Replacing ‘agree’ by ‘understand each other’ we not only come closer to its meaning, but we also connect to its root verb \textit{kuelewa} (understand).

\textsuperscript{17} One informant explicitly linked the two elements up in: \textit{Mukielewana, mukala t’ot’ot’o} (When you understand each other, you stay well).
his/her parent. In the context of parent-child *kuelewana* (understand each other) therefore assumes the particular notion of the appreciation of norms that govern the interaction between parent and child, and of trusting each other to abide by them. According to the elder Simba, this is how families can prosper, and by extension the larger community.

Like the power inequality in the parent-child relationship, authority versus obedience is accepted as the social norm in the leader-family/homestead relationship; *kuelewana* (understand each other) emphasises the bonding between the two. The relationship between leader and the family/homestead members is based on blood bonds, a shared understanding of the governing norms in the home is presupposed. Indeed, this shared understanding is a pervasive aspect of every leader-people relationship [A.ii;vi; B.ii; C.ii]. A detailed analysis of this relationship is presented in the discussion of *kilongozi* (leader) (chapter four).

The assumption of a shared understanding of norms and values, characteristic for the relationships of parent-child and leader-family/homestead members, is also fundamental to two other relationships based on natural and figurative blood-bonding. These are relationships between relatives, in-laws and (intimate) friends. The main difference with the previous two is their horizontal quality. This translates into specific expectations on both sides. Relatives, in-laws and intimate friends do things together and expect help from the other in case of need. This may vary from financial assistance to moral support.

The expectation of support stems from a value that is incorporated in *kuelewana* (understand each other) which is ‘showing each other sympathy and compassion’. They are the same characteristics that Giryama informants cited of *kuelewana* (understand each other) [4.a,4b, 4.c]. The importance of these elements in the relationship between relatives is illustrated in the explanation that one Giryama elder gave of the origin of the expression *ndugu si mut’u* (the brother is not a person).18

*Ndugu si mut’u* (the brother is not a person) is the name that the neighbouring Chonyi, another sub-group of the Mijikenda, gave to the prolonged period of famine between 1948 and 1954. Although this famine is known in the Giryama oral chronicle under a different name, *kabushu ts’i* (mouth down), many older Giryama people know the phrase.

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18 The Giryama word *ndugu* refers to a relative at the horizontal level, to whom you feel close. This may be a brother, sister or cousin.
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The interpretation of *ndugu si mu'tu* (the brother is not a person) by the village headman Kea Karisa Ngala is not original, similar interpretations were expressed by other Giryama. I would therefore qualify Karisa's words as a folk theory. Consequently, his interpretation operates within the domain of *sites of collective memory*. Like Simba's words earlier, Karisa appeals to an assumed shared set of values. That he does this is underscored by the affirmative responses of Edward Chome (EC), to whom Karisa (KK) addresses himself specifically.

One day I was travelling in the Kaloleni area with Edward Chome and Alfred Mtawali, two Giryama men in their thirties and translators at the Giryama Bible project. When we stopped for lunch at a lunch house, we found Karisa having his lunch there. As Edward Chome hails from the same village as Karisa, a lively conversation ensued. At one point we started discussing situations of conflict. During the conversation Karisa gradually assumed the role of a teacher of Giryama culture. As an illustration of *kutsoelewana* (not understand each other) among relatives he described the following situation:

6.


EC: Eeh.

KK: Akipata iye anyerereke na kwakwe nyumbani. Uwe umanye ndugu yangu adzire.

EC: Eeh.

KK: Ni kwa noni tha k'adzirebisha. Unasikira.

EC: Eeh.

KK: Hatha ungasikira kuna mana ya 'ndugu si mut'u'. Unasikira yo hadisi yo? He!

EC: Mhu.

KK: Mana ya 'ndugu si…

EC: ...si mut'u…

KK:...si mut'u'. Haya ye mut'u ni hiye. Eh ni nduguyo gonya ko si mut'u.

KK: Suppose there is a time of food shortage. If you have a packet of maize for a week. That time you know: When my brother has (some food), we are going to eat together, but he also got his maize last week!

EC: Hmm.

KK: When he gets some, he goes quietly into his house. You know, 'my brother has come'.

EC: Hmm.
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KK: Why did he not welcome me. You understand?
EC: Yes.
KK: Now you have understood the meaning of 'the brother is not a person'. You understand this story? Well. (…this is what it tells you).
EC: Hmm.
KK: the meaning of 'the brother…
EC: ….is not a person’.
KK: …is not a person’. Now who is the person? He may be your brother, but then he is not a person.

From the tale it is clear that the one brother who has not got anything to eat is confident that he will share his brother’s food. His brother’s stealthy behaviour, however, exposes him as unwilling to share the food, and therefore as lacking one basic component of **kuelewana** (understand each other) which is compassion.\(^\text{19}\) The identification of the brother as a non-person illustrates the serious impact of not abiding by the value of ‘showing each other compassion’.

The sharing of food may be a sign of compassion in times of famine, but in the introductory lines to this story Karisa sketches a different interpretation for ‘normal’ circumstances.

*Kwa mfano ni dza vizho: uwe na nduguyo **mumwelele** ha ho mudzini kurya na kuusa. … Munarya meza mwenga kabisa.*

For instance, it is like this: you and your brother you understand each other very well (lit. eating and removing (excrements)) in the homestead. You eat completely (without exception) at one table.

In a normal situation of **kuelewana** (understand each other) between relatives the sharing of food basically reflects the component of ‘doing things together’ which was mentioned before as a distinctive aspect of horizontal relationships. However, sharing of food is more than that, as Karisa makes clear, it is the result of the participants ‘feeling good’. The ‘feel good’ component is strongly suggested by the idiomatic phrase **kurya na kuusa**, qualifying the relationship between the brothers in a literal translation as ‘eating and removing the excrements of each

\(^{19}\) The word ‘compassion’ is used here in the sense in which it is described in the **LPCE**: “A strong feeling of sympathy for someone who is suffering and a desire to help him”.

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other’. In the Giryama understanding the actors would only do this, if they feel good because of the good things they feel towards each other.  

It may seem that ‘doing things together’ as a desired result of ‘feeling good’ is restricted to horizontal relationships. These seem to be, after all, the best frameworks for strong experiences of ‘feeling good because of the good things actors feel towards each other’. However, as will be demonstrated in the discussion of kilongozi (leader) in chapter four, it is also a salient feature of unequal relations.

We could therefore propose a new semantic component of kulelwana (understand each other), which brings out ‘doing things together’ as a concomitant of ‘feeling good’. In the same vein, mutual compassion and sympathy feature as concomitants of ‘feeling good’. I would therefore propose the following semantic description:

1. It is good to be part of the same thing as someone else
2. because of this people feel good
3. and because of this they do things together
4. they say good things to each other
5. they do things for each other.

In the context of friends kulelwana (understand each other) is used as a qualifying term, denoting the quality of the relationship of the two. As I argued before, in this respect it exhibits an additional emotional charging compared to its synonym kusikizana (understand each other). The student Harrison Charo explained to me that friends who have kulelwana (understand each other) will do anything for each other. Between them there is a strong relationship of doing things together and taking care of each other. To qualify this enhanced quality of kulelwana (understand each other) he used the same descriptive phrase as Karisa above: ‘ni asena a kurya na kuusa’ (lit. they are friends of eating and removing (excrements)). The unconditional

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20 This phrase echoes with a well-known Giryama saying which says: Mapiriyama azola maomu ga luvara k’azola (A Giryama removes the excrements, but he cannot remove diarrhoea). Here the Giryama is the unrelated person, the implied other person is someone related to you.
kind of friendship that is expressed here, puts the relationship in the context of blood bonds and its accompanying norms of behaviour.

In the case of *kuelewana* (understand each other) between two households of the same homestead [A.iv] relations are defined by age, very much along the lines of parent-child and relatives. Like the other homestead relations, both families ideally adhere to the same norms and values. Yet in practice the situation can be very different, as the households may include in-laws of various backgrounds, or second wives (or more). Both are considered by the Giryama potential factors for *kutsoelelwana* (‘not understand each other’) in the homestead (see also for an example [2]). It requires a good leader of the homestead to maintain *kuelewana* (understand each other) among all the members of the *mudzi* (homestead).

*Kuelewana* (understand each other) among the different households is expressed in helping each other, doing things together (especially women, fetching water or firewood together, and working on the land together), and sitting and talking together (especially men). The appeal on the moral enforcement of showing compassion is less pronounced in the relationship between households, although compassion is a characteristic of horizontal relationships between individual members of different households.

The discussion of the second and the third circle of social units exhibits a growing element of potentiality in the observance of key-qualities of *kuelewana* (understand each other). The relationship between families of different homesteads, the second circle, is based on a tacit assumption of shared norms and values. Different from *kuelewana* (understand each other) that characterises blood bonds, there is not an accompanying standard of behaviour, failing which people fall out with each other. Characteristic of this relationship of reciprocity (esp. between neighbours) is the norm to help each other (*kusaidhiana*) in time of need. This help can be of a material or non-material nature.

In everyday practice families tend to have different interpretations of this reciprocity. This is allowed for in the Giryama understanding of *kuelewana* (understand each other) in the context of families. An essential aspect of *kuelewana* (understand each other) between families is respect (*ishima*). It is understood that every family has its own family way of doing and saying things (*kidhymo*), which should be respected as an alternative way, rather than a wrong way of doing and saying things. In the discussion of *kilongozi* (leader) *ishima* (respect) features prominently, and is analysed in its various manifestations. In the present context of
neighbouring homesteads its meaning can be captured by one of the semantic components cited before:

4. They say good things to each other.

That *ishima* (respect) is really the ‘bottom-line’ of *kuelwana* (understand each other) is illustrated by an instance that my field assistant cited to highlight the essential role of respect in the relationship of *kuelwana* (understand each other) between neighbours. He mentioned a case of two neighbouring homesteads. One family has the habit of getting drunk every night from the locally tapped palm wine. Their neighbours are Muslims and therefore abstain from alcoholic drinks. *Kuelwana* (understand each other) need not be at stake here because of *ishima* (respect). Still, ‘respect’ shading into ‘tolerance’ (on the part of one family) has its limits. One reason for *kutelelelelelana* (not understand each other) among different homesteads is the provocative behaviour of (drunken) neighbours.

In view of this looser interpretation of *kuelwana* (understand each other) in the contexts of different homesteads, I think the earlier cited semantic description needs to be slightly adapted. Clearly people of different *midzi* (homesteads) are expected to not say bad things to each other. Yet, the component of ‘helping each other’ is not an essential feature of *kuelwana* (understand each other) between *midzi* (homesteads). Also the component of ‘feeling good together’ is much less distinct and therefore less of an impetus to doing things together. Indeed, ‘doing things together’ is not a characteristic component of this relationship. These semantic rectifications on the description that was presented so far, can be included as follows:

1. It is good to be part of the same thing as someone else
2. Because of this people feel good
3. And because of this they *can feel they want* to do things together
4. They say good things to each other
5. They *can* do things for each other.

Like in the smaller social units *kuelwana* (understand each other) at the level of society is based on the assumed shared understanding of a common set of values and norms, and characterised by the same understanding of mutual help that *midzi* (homesteads) characteristically have. Personal variation is allowed for, as in the case of *kuelwana*
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(understand each other) between midzi (homesteads). Clearly, relationships at the level of society which are based on kulewana (understand each other) do not exhibit the same normative standards of behaviour as the relationships within the mudzi (homestead) are expected to display. Yet, reciprocity of respect (ishima) and an assumed shared understanding of norms and values are still essential aspects of it.

So far kulewana (understand each other) has been analysed in the context of inter-Giryama relations. This might suggest that living in Giryamaland and speaking Kigiryama are essential pre-conditions for it. One young Giryama lady strongly denied this. She said that Giryama should learn outside Giryamaland and that they must have a relationship of kulewana (understand each other) with people from outside in order to get on in life. Her words suggest that one has to learn and respect different norms and values, so as to have a relationship with people from outside Giryamaland. Another clear illustration of ishima (respect) as the basis of kulewana (understand each other) between a Giryama and a non-Giryama is given in the discussion of kilongozi (leader) (chapter four, section III.3).

V Cultural semantic description of kulewana

With the introduction of a relationship between a Giryama and a non-Giryama we have reached the outermost circle of the operational power of kulewana (understand each other). The semantic description that has been developed has stood the test of near and distant relationships, blood bonds and neighbours, vertical and horizontal connections. I would therefore propose it as the definitive semantic explication of the Giryama understanding of kulewana (understand each other):

Kulewana

People think like this:
It is good to be part of the same thing as someone else
because of this people feel good
and because of this they can feel that they want to do things together
they say good things to each other
they can do things for each other.
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Permeating the very texture of Giryama society and reaching beyond its boundaries, this understanding clearly reflects a pervasive impact on Giryama everyday life.

VI Kuelewana (understand each other) and its ideological impact

Although the discussion of the socio-cultural context has given some evidence of kuelewana’s ideological status on the strength of its social distribution, this section intends to demonstrate kuelewana’s ideological charging more explicitly. I have used the elements that were presented in chapter one as basic characteristics of ideology, for a reference. As a result, two areas from the generally shared domains under study have been selected, to explore the ‘directing, framing and “normalising”’ power included in kuelewana (understand each other). The first one is a group of sayings that illustrate the framing and directing power behind lessons in good behaviour and assertions on ‘togetherness’ as the guarantee for a good life. The second object of analysis is located within the domain of public event. It is a case-study of a grass-roots meeting, which is a pre-eminent example of the ‘normalising’ capacity of kuelewana (understand each other) in decision-making.

VI.1. Kuelewana (understand each other) in sayings

Being part of the domain of sites of collective memory, sayings are, Parker (1974:8) notes, “…coded by tradition and transmitted in order to evaluate and/or affect human behaviour”. This makes them perfect vehicles for propagating ideologies. Among the collection of six hundred sayings, I found that fifty-three are directed and framed by the ideological content of kuelewana (understand each other).\(^{21}\) Its ideological salience manifests itself in different shapes, varying from the open acclaim of (dimensions of) kuelewana (understand each other) to it tacitly being assumed. Additionally I found that the fifty-three sayings demonstrate striking thematic similarities. While one set propagates norms of behaviour, the other can be generally characterised as affirming ‘the blessings of togetherness’. These two themes are expressed in a rich variety of sayings which include moral teachings, critical comments, and practical wisdom.

\(^{21}\) The list of 53 sayings is presented in Appendix II.
The following description classifies the sayings under the values they represent. As a result of focusing on this aspect of the sayings, their explications have been reduced to a minimum. Only in case the meaning of a saying is ambiguous and could cause a problem of interpretation, an explication is added in brackets.

Sayings that teach good behaviour

- Encouraging reciprocity
  
  * Akuthuwaye, nawe muthuwe.*  
  * Henza akuhenzaye.*  
  * Ukitya k’uku kwa mwandzio,*  
  * marondo galola kwako.*  
  
  He who follows you, follow him.  
  Love him who loves you.  
  When you eat chicken at your friend’s place, the legs look towards your place (i.e. a return favour is expected).

- Encouraging deeds of compassion
  
  * Mbeyu k’ailashwa mut’u.*  
  * “Baha” k’arithoza mukongo.*  
  
  Seeds cannot be refused to anybody.  
  “Sorry” does not cure a sick person.

- Encouraging respect
  
  * Bwana, bwana si utumwa,*  
  * bora ku shimiana.*  
  * Mukia wa rero ni mushaha wa machero.*  
  
  Sir, sir is not slavery, respecting each other is the most important thing.  
  The one who is poor today is the rich one of tomorrow.

The values that these sayings express have been discussed before as salient meaning dimensions of *kuelewana* (understand each other). The didactic character of the sayings suggests that *kuelewana* (understand each other) does not come naturally to everybody. Some other sayings are more explicit about the lack of intuitive knowledge of *kuelewana* (understand each other):

- *Dzakusinga mogoni, ela lagani marigiza mweny’e.*  
  I have rubbed your back, but on the chest do it yourself. (i.e. I can help you, but you need to take your own responsibility too)

- *Handa mwenga k’aridzaza k’adzama.*  
  One bunch of coconuts (for making palm-wine) cannot fill the gourd (i.e.}

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everybody must contribute to a project).

Sayings on the blessings of togetherness

- Highlighting strength as an aspect of togetherness
  *Umwenga ni nguva.*  
  Unity is strength.
  
  *Umwenga ni hiha ra fiho.*  
  Unity is a bundle of sticks (implying a single stick can be broken, but a bundle of sticks can’t).

The first is probably the best known saying across Gir Yamaland. It emphasises unity as a force that strengthens society. The second saying suggests an important corollary of this power of unity. It implies that unity is composed of parts, and therefore can effectively oppose external threats. As the discussion of the meaning aspects of *kuelewana* (understand each other) brought out, unity is based on the assumption that people understand each other because of an assumed shared system of norms and values.

- Highlighting interdependence as a dynamic aspect of togetherness
  *Chala kimwenga k’akibanda isaha.*  
  One finger does not kill a louse.
  
  *Figia mwenga k’arisinyanya nyungu.*  
  One stone cannot support the cooking pot.
  
  *Tembe na tembe ni mukahe.*  
  A grain and a grain make a bread.
  
  *Mulachu k’adzinyola.*  
  The clever one does not shave himself (i.e. he may be clever, but he needs others to shave the back of his head).
  
  *Nguluwe ari mana mizungu.*  
  Two pigs have plans (i.e. two know more than one).

All these sayings emphasise the necessity of ‘doing things together’ to achieve something in life. The promotion of co-operation as a standard of behaviour is fully in line with the ideational aspect of ‘doing things together’ of *kuelewana* (understand each other). That this interdependence is not always a blissful condition is generally acknowledged. The following saying urges people to accept its minor inconveniences:
Garigo hamwenga k’agaricha kudundana. The ones that are together cannot help knocking one another.

- Highlighting different degrees of togetherness
  
  Kigiryama ni kimwenga uyoro. Giryama culture is one in greeting.
  (ela kila mudzi una chakwe). (but every homestead has its own way of doing things).
  
  Mugiryama azola maomu, A Giryama (a non-clan person)
  ga luyaro k’azola. removes excrements, but he cannot
  remove the diarrhoea.(cf. note 18)
  
  Ase ndugu k’ahendza. The one who does not have a
  brother/sister, does not like it.
  
  Gogo ra mudzini k’arinyerwa. The log of the homestead is not denecated upon. (i.e. one should respect the leaders of the homestead)

As was clear from the discussion of the various social units in which kuelewana (understand each other) operates, the degree of ‘feeling good’ determines the extent to which people do things together and do things for each other. All four sayings are expressive statements of this understanding. Ase ndugu k’ahendza (The one who does not have a brother/sister, does not like it) indicates the grave consequences of an unnatural ‘not feeling good together’ between brothers and/or sisters.

- Highlighting social security as an aspect of togetherness

  Ugwao ni kuremera mwandzwe. The tree which falls leans on its companion.
  
  Mwana wa mwandzio ni wako. The child of a companion is yours.
  
  Muyu uvumbwa ni mitsatsa. The baobab tree is backed by bush.

All three sayings express support as a result of a social network that is in place. The first saying emphasises the strength of horizontal relations, the second plays on the communal responsibility for the education of a child, and the third saying argues that a leader is always supported by his/her people. More specific utterances on the kind of social security kuelewana (understand each other) entails are:
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Mut’u na nduguye magazha tserere.  A person and his brother/sister divide the tserere (a very small fruit).

Kirji kuriwa, kichache kuriwa.  Much to be eaten, little to be eaten (i.e. as long as there is food it is shared).

In these sayings the unconditional quality of the commitment to the norm of sharing of food is highlighted. Other sayings emphasise the absence of violence as a concomitant feature of kuelewana (understand each other), thus arguing that it promotes safety:

Fisi ra kwenu k’arikubanda musoza.  The hyena of your place cannot break your bones.

Kulungu wa kaya k’abandirwa uha.  The gazelle of the home, a bow cannot be broken for it.

Harho athumia k’ahagwa kimba.  Where there are elders, a carcass cannot fall.

The first saying grants that there are people in society that do not commit themselves to kuelewana (understand each other) and the second admits that the temptations can stand in the way of kuelewana (understand each other). Yet, both argue that no harm, mental or physical, can be done, because you are both from the same place (which can, depending on the context, vary from the homestead to Giryamaland). In these two sayings the place, as a symbol for togetherness, stands for the same shared basis of norms and values that are included in kuelewana (understand each other). The third saying refers to the specific role of elders in guaranteeing togetherness and therefore the absence of harm. The councils of elders advise, mediate, and arbitrate in the limited context of the homestead, as well as in the larger contexts of the village, “sub-location” and “location”. Thus, it is their task to restore kuelewana (understand each other) among the members of the community when people have fallen out with each other.22

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22 The institution of elders is introduced in chapter two. For more details on the position and the role of elders in Giryama society see chapter six.
Conclusion

From the selection of sayings I think we can derive two general observations. One is that they all reflect directly or indirectly the social ideal of *kulelwana* (understand each other). Another observation that can be made is that they not only set norms of behaviour, but also advocate *kulelwana* (understand each other) as social security. In this respect they make a profound psychological appeal on people's commitment to *kulelwana* (understand each other). The sayings' general acceptance as folk knowledge from times past adds to the psychological impact. We may therefore conclude that the above sayings are powerful psychological instruments in promoting the Giryama *ideology* of 'peace'.

VI.2 *Kulelwana* as a decision-making process

As was mentioned earlier the discussion focuses on the 'normalising' power of *kulelwana* (understand each other) in decision-making. Until now *kulelwana* (understand each other) has been discussed as a foundational building block of Giryama social structures and interpersonal relationships. However, it is also a form of decision-making, manifesting itself in the context of discussions and meetings. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Muungano Water Project, which is discussed below, vividly illustrates this applied form of *kulelwana* (understand each other). The following passage, which is taken from the same discussion among homestead elders that was cited before ([2]), gives a first impression of *kulelwana* (understand each other) in the context of meetings and discussions. The discussion leader, Anthony Kazungu (AK), asks the elders what happened in former days when the elders found someone guilty of murder:

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AK: Na ut'umu ngine namala niuze.  
Hahî no...ha k'o're vizho.  
AK: And something I want to ask.  
Here is this fine now.

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23 In the decision-making process *kulelwana* and *kusikizana* have the same interpretation. I have chosen to focus on *kulelwana* as the object of study for consistency of the argument, and because my corpus of texts show a prevalence of *Kulelwana* occurrences.

24 Probably it is this applied form of *kulelwana* (understand each other) that has given rise to the general consent on its translation by ‘agree’ in English. Interestingly in Dutch the word *poldermodel* is a much closer equivalent of *kulelwana* (understand each other) as a decision-making process. Similar to *kulelwana* (understand each other) the *polder-model* implies an ideational focus on the equality of the discussion partners and on consensus.
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Yuya andekala adzalaga... He who supposedly has killed...
SW: Mhu. Y: Hmmm
AK: ...adzakubali. Adzalazha k’ore, AK: ...he has agreed. He has
vidzagoma. paid the fine, it is finished.
SW: Mhu. Y: Hmm.
AK: Ndo mwisho kare zho? AK: Is this the end already?
Hedu were hana u’u ungine? Or is there anything else?
X: Haya be hana vingine, vinadza rini? X: Well if there are any other
things, when do they come?
Z: Mudzagonya kuelewana25. Z: You have finished to kuelewana.

The last sentence clearly presents kuelewana (understand each other) as a decision-making process. In view of this specific and salient dimension of kuelewana (understand each other) in the context of decision-making, I have focused in the analysis of the case study below on its interactive particularities and their underlying motivations.

VI.2.a Analytical outlines

As an instrument for the analysis I have used elements from Stephen Covey’s paradigm for effective and productive decision-making in professional and non-professional contexts. His model is built on the assumption that only paradigms that are based on interdependence can result in personal and professional effectiveness and productivity. This strong emphasis on interdependence as a productive dynamic in decision-making is in stark contrast with the governing Western perspective on the primacy of the individual as the basis of decision-making. More importantly in the present context, his un-Western view of effective decision-making processes demonstrates a striking similarity with the Giryama view on the role of kuelewana (understand each other) in decision-making.

This similarity makes Covey’s paradigm interesting in the present context, even if not all elements of his model are compatible. His view on personal development for instance, which he characterises as a development from dependence through independence to interdependence, does not correspond with the Giryama ideological primacy of togetherness (2004:186, 206

25 This phrasing is not common among younger people who prefer: “munzatelewana” (You have come to an agreement).
among others). The following is a selection of the elements that are relevant in the present context. They are formulated in a set of key arguments:

I Interdependence is based on trust. Trust is derived from a set of positive emotions with respect to the other person, and can increase or decrease with the other’s behaviour. One essential condition for trust is belief in the integrity of the other person (2004:188 – 203, 220-21; on integrity see: 217).

II Ways to make interdependence productive in decision-making:

- think in terms of win/win, instead of the traditionally pre-dominant Western paradigms of win/lose or lose/win. (2004:207-234) Thinking in terms of win/win demands some personal qualities and a specific mentality: integrity, responsibility, commitment, courage, and a mentality of abundance (i.e. instead of thinking in terms of shortage “if you have it, I can’t”, but thinking in terms of “there is enough for everybody” (2004:217-20)). Essential to win/win agreements is the awareness of interdependence. If there is a lack of trust, however, compromise is the best one can get.
- present your ideas in a clear and concrete way, and particularly within the right context. Showing an understanding of the paradigms of the other players, you enhance the credibility of your own ideas (2004:255-57).
- work synergistically. This means valuing the differences between people and making them productive in the relationship. (2004:263; 277-79) The realisation that working together is not $1 + 1 = 2$ but $1 + 1 = 3$ is synergism at work. This is only possible if you think in terms of win/win and have the personal qualities that are its pre-conditions. The result is a highly effective and creative communication or decision-making process. Synergistic co-operation is the “third way”; it rises above the parties and does away with Western dichotomous thinking in terms of either/or. (2004:262-84)

This set of statements is basically the analytical toolkit for the following case study. Their usefulness in the present context lies in clarifying the interactive processes that took place during the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Muungano Water Project (MWP). However, prior to the analysis, the events preceding the meeting, the key players of the meeting and the proceedings at the meeting are introduced.
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VI.2.b A description of the annual meeting of the Muungano Water Project

On 30th January 2004 the Muungano Water Project held its first AGM (Annual General Meeting) at Dera (Bahari Division, Kilifi District). The project is community driven, and involves the communities of the two “sub-locations”, Kibarani and Mtondia (maps II and III). On the agenda were the annual reports of the chairman and the treasurer, and the re-election of the present board of four people (including my field assistant, Mr. Kingi, who was vice-chairman).

Weeks before the meeting, it had been rumoured that Kesh 500,000 (approx. €5000) was missing from the project account. The treasurer and the chairman were generally suspected of having used the money for their own benefit. My field assistant, Mr. Kingi, who was aware of the situation, decided to take action before the AGM, as he feared the Water board would cut the water supply if they found out about the loss of Kesh 500,000. As chairman of VAP (Village Action Plan) of his village, he called a meeting of the members of the VAP at his house. After two hours of secretive and serious talks with three other men (at which I was not invited), he told me that they had set out their line of action. They were all four convinced of the mismanagement of the money by the chairman and the treasurer, and agreed that these two had to step down from their positions. Their plan of action was, one, to incite as many people as possible to come to the meeting; two, to wait for the right moment of attack. Then they would move circumspectly, but clear enough for everybody, including the attendant District Officer (D.O.) – a non-Giryama – , to know that there was something fishy about the annual financial report. They hoped the result would be a massive support of the audience for ousting the chairman and treasurer from their positions, and intervention by the D.O. They reckoned the water supply would be cut off temporarily, but that as soon as the money was returned by the chairman and the treasurer, the taps would be running again.

The day before the meeting Mr. Kingi’s brother-in-law showed up at his house. He is a retired accountant from high Government office, and presently a member of the Kilifi Land Control Board. As an agnate and an expert in financial matters, he is a good person to advise Mr. Kingi on the problem. The brother-in-law had heard that some people were making plans to get rid of Mr. Kingi from the MWP board, and he wanted to warn him to be careful. In addition, he promised to help him expose the culprits at the meeting. Mr. Kingi said he did not fear any trouble, as he would be acting very circumspectly.
An official guest at the AGM, besides the D.O., was the project leader of the Water board. The entire MWP board was there, one chief and an assistant-chief and some 30 people in the audience, who in different capacities were involved in the water project. The attendance was disappointing, people agreed. The meeting started with the chairman reading the annual report followed by the treasurer reading the financial annual report. Few comments were made. Then Mr. Kingi’s brother-in-law stood up and argued that on the basis of the figures, Kesh 500,000 was still payable to the Water board. He closed off by moving a vote of no-confidence against the MWP financial report. The audience was silent, no support was given to the proposal.

After some discussion on details, an old lady stood up (see picture 8: “Speaker at the Annual General Meeting of the Muungano Water Project”). She was a member of a community council, without formal education, and by the looks of it, poor. She spoke of the ten years that she had worked to motivate her community to collect money for the water taps for the benefit of her community, to help them forward and be sure of a water tap close to her place, when she got old. Her speech, emphasizing the communal effort, the impending reversal of the community’s development, the community’s great disenchantment if the water were cut, really affected the audience. She argued that if the water was taken away from them, the community would no longer believe in the project, and she would lose respect and trust among her community members.

The atmosphere of the meeting changed. Instead of attacking each other in a subtle or more open way, people started discussing the problem as a social disaster. Within a very short time measures were decided upon to prevent future money squandering, an interim board was appointed and the Water board decided to continue the water supply, while payment settlement would be discussed by the interim board. At the end of the meeting everybody was enjoying their half loaf of bread and squash, distributed by the MWP board. People left with a great sense of relief. The only person who felt bad, and started backbiting about Mr Kingi, was the treasurer. Unfortunately for him, Mr. Kingi overheard what he said and straightened out things there and then.

VI.2.c An analysis of the AGM of the Muungano Water Project

Looking at the events with the help of Covey’s paradigm of successful decision-making, we see that the interaction starts on the win/lose paradigm and that, after the old lady speaks out there is a paradigm shift to win/win.
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From the start Mr. Kingi and his company are convinced of a double win/lose situation: the communities either get back the money, or they lose the water; either Mr. Kingi, in his capacity as vice-chairman, wins, or the chairman and the treasurer win (the secretary, a lady, was also considered to be in the camp of treasurer and chairman, but was thought to be ignorant of their actions). Thinking along the lines of win/lose defines their attitude. Mr. Kingi’s brother-in-law confirms the correctness of Mr. Kingi’s win/lose thinking by saying that Mr. Kingi’s position is in danger, and that Mr. Kingi will get his full assistance at the meeting. Mr. Kingi’s brother-in-law, conversant with western/formal paradigms, feels he has the upper hand, when it comes to a confrontation with the treasurer of the MWP. Mr. Kingi himself, also conversant with western paradigms, is more inhibited and chooses a line of action accordingly, one of indirectness. Both confer decisive power on the D.O., who even though he has only been invited as a guest is considered the person of authority on the basis of his position. (Their idea is confirmed by the D.O., who after walking out on the meeting, comes back to preside over the meeting). It was the first time for Mr. Kingi and his company to meet the D.O., there was no relationship between them. At the first sight of him they were even disappointed by his young age (approx 35 years). It means that Mr. Kingi and his friends rely on formal relations. The basic fallacy of Mr. Kingi and his company, according to the model that Covey describes, is the lack of awareness of interdependence which is the result of a lack of trust in the other players. Indeed, they do not interact in a spirit of kuelwana (understand each other), and therefore fail to be persuasive at this meeting of communities.

In choosing this line of action Mr. Kingi and company estranged themselves from the community members, for trust and consideration are also key elements in the social context of kuelwana (on ‘consideration’ cf. 4.a-4.c; on ‘trust’ cf. IV.1). Thus, they breached one rule that Covey argues is essential for productive decision-making: argue clearly within the right (rational and affective) context, so as to ensure one’s credibility.

As a result of speaking in a very de-contextualised register, the vote of no confidence fell flat, and Mr. Kingi, feeling the lack of support, did not say a word during the meeting, in spite of his well-defined intentions beforehand.

While the strategies of Mr. Kingi and his friends basically failed because of a win/lose mentality, which prevents the awareness of interdependence, the old lady was persuasive because of her win/win argument in a familiar affective and rational context. Working together on the basis of
personal commitment, she argued, the community had managed to get this far, and it was only if they adhered to this strategy, that they could solve the present issue. She appealed to their consideration, when she said that she had hoped to have the water pipe near her hut when she got old, she spoke of trust among community members and its present endangerment. Her argument did not touch the question of ‘guilt’ and ‘reparations’.

Thus she appeals to a common Giryama value, as one of the Giryama informants explained to me, which is ‘forsaking what belongs to you for the sake of peace’. Moreover, focusing on the social disaster that would follow – the lack of water – her speech reflects Covey’s ‘third way’, with the difference that the lady considered her audience to be thinking along the same lines rather than different lines (a characteristic of synergism, Covey argues). Her speech proclaims the primacy of kuelewana (understand each other) as the basis of the success of the water project, and pronounces its present endangerment. This argument was recognisable for the audience at large and affected them. As a result people started to identify with the issue at hand, and discussed openly and efficiently the matters that needed to be dealt with.

A great help in the decision-making process was the D.O’s attitude. Instead of using his authority, he kept asking people for their ideas of possible solutions and helped formalising plans. Indeed, by showing trust in the people’s capacity at decision-making he also scored positively. In Covey’s terms he is the perfect manager, not controlling but trying to understand his people and coming to a productive co-operation. (The D.O’s background of business studies may have contributed to his success).

The end of the meeting shows madzagona kuelewana (they have finished to ‘agree’). People have finished their joint process of decision-making and they feel good. They can sit and eat and drink together. Also the spirit of openness, that is inherent in kuelewana (understand each other) and used as a weapon against kutsoelewana (not understand each other) is there. This is dramatically illustrated by Mr. Kingi, who confronts the backbiter directly.

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26 The saying Zhendzho na madzi ni vini (the things that go with river flooding are many) expresses this common Giryama view. As the informant explained, when a river floods it carries away banana plants, coconut palms and any other farm crop. The owner cannot put in a claim with anyone, because it is a natural calamity. In the same vein the old lady considers the loss of Kesh 500,000.
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What makes the event so interesting is that people of influence, like Mr. Kingi and his brother-in-law, failed to be persuasive in their approach. Highly educated, they had adopted a ‘non-Giryama’ way of solving a ‘hot’ issue. Their approach lacked persuasiveness because it missed the ‘normalising’ power of a familiar ideology. Therefore, ordinary people could not identify themselves with it. The old lady, on the other hand, appealed to the shared understanding of kuelewana (understand each other). This caused a redirection of the decision-making process, which now included everybody. It transcended the level of opposing parties and was aiming at a general consensus. Her argument reflects very strikingly the process of decision-making that kuelewana (understand each other) includes.

VI.2.d Conclusion

From the analysis we may conclude that kuelewana (understand each other) has a dual status in the AGM of the Muungano Water Project meeting. It is both the foundational framework of interpersonal relationships in which the old lady’s speech is enacted, and it is the kind of decision-making process that is initiated by her, which includes some particular values. We could summarise these in a Giryama script for decision-making behaviour:

When people have to talk about something, people think it is good if all people come to think about it in the same way (after some time).

This description focuses on decision-making as largely defined by certain behaviour. The semantic description of the concept of kuelewana (understand each other) as a decision-making process, highlights the connection between the general and the applied senses of kuelewana (understand each other). Indeed, it is the ‘normalising’ capacity of kuelewana (understand each other) that determines the general Giryama understanding of it as an effective way of decision-making.

The description of kuelewana (understand each other), given at the end of section three, was like this:

People think like this:
It is good to be part of the same thing as someone else
because of this people feel good
and because of this they can feel that they want to do things together
they say good things to each other
they can do things for each other.

Including the decision-making aspect we need to narrow this general description down to the particular event, in which ‘thinking along the same lines’ and ‘feeling good at the end of the process’ are salient elements This results in the following description:

Kuelewana

People think like this:
It is good to be part of the same thing as someone else
because of this people feel good
and because of this they can feel that they want to do things together
they say good things to each other
they can do things for each other
when they come together
they want all people to think the same good things
all people like this
because they all think the same good things they feel good.

Thus we have found in the case study of the AGM of the Muungano Water Project another instance of the ‘normalising’ and all-encompassing impact that kuelewana (understand each other) has on Giryama everyday life.

VII General Conclusion

Exploring the Giryama ideology of peace we have found that kuelewana (understand each other) is a major constituting element of it. Basically, kuelewana (understand each other) entails a set of values and norms of behaviour that govern the Giryama social system. Its power lies in its omnipresence. The analysis of a variety of cultural practices has demonstrated, that it permeates social structures and different modes of verbal expression, and furthermore characterises the Giryama understanding of decision-making processes. Characteristic of its ideological charging too, it includes mechanisms that discourage alternative ideological principles. This was most obvious in the discussion of the sayings. Some sayings were found to
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present the unpleasant corollaries of *kuelewana* (understand each other) as ‘natural’ or ‘preferential’ (to worse scenarios). Key aspects of *kuelewana* (understand each other) are ‘reciprocity’ (of doing/saying good things), ‘co-operation’, ‘interdependence’ and ‘togetherness’. As was demonstrated in the table of social units, the basis for these values is laid in the Giryama understanding of blood relations.

In view of this specific articulation of social relations, we may wonder whether similarities can be found in a Western social context. In the course of the discussion a picture has emerged of *kuelewana* (understand each other) which shows very little resemblance with English ‘agree’. Although Dutch *eensgezind zijn* (be of one mind) seems to be more compatible in referring to a shared moral framework, reciprocity is specific for the Giryama context. Moreover, I doubt if *eensgezind zijn* or ‘agree’ are key words in the Dutch and British domains of ‘peace’ respectively. In spite of these differences, we could argue that values such as ‘reciprocity’, ‘interdependence’, ‘co-operation’ and ‘togetherness’ are not unfamiliar in Western social systems. Christian and Jewish ideological statements like “Do to others as you would have them do unto you.” (Luke 6:31; Matthew 7:12) and “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Torah, Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27) are salient elements of many Western people’s understandings of social relationships. One colourful example of the (temporary) salience of ‘togetherness’ in Dutch society is the massive orange transformation of people and their homes when the Dutch national football team plays the European or World Championship.²⁷

Other examples could be given to underscore cross-cultural similarities. Still, we should be careful not to confuse similarity with sameness. Anna Wierzbicka’s description of the expression of ‘co-operation’ in British/Australian everyday discourse nicely illustrates the precariousness of cross-cultural similarities. Analysing the meaning of ‘right’ as a new conversational routine to express ‘co-operation’ in discourse contexts, she describes what co-operation means to an Australian/British person:

The term “co-operation”...points to new types of social relations in a democratic society: the use of “Right.” in response to a request, suggestion, direction or instruction signals a willingness to comply with

²⁷ The colour orange is associated with the royal Dutch family whose founding father was William of Orange. Indeed, in the context of international sports events the presence of members of the younger generation of the Dutch royal family is generally appreciated as enhancing this ‘togetherness’.
another’s person will while remaining on an equal footing, (…) I see your request is rational …(…) I accept your request as reasonable (And so I will comply with it). (Wierzbicka 2002a:242-243)

Wierzbicka highlights pre-conditions such as ‘equal footing’ ‘rational’ and ‘reasonable’ to co-operation, thus foregrounding the integrity of the individual mind as a salient aspect of Australian/British understanding of co-operation. As could be seen in the analysis of kuelewana (understand each other), none of these elements are salient in Giryama ‘co-operation’. We could explain these differences as arising from the different ideological contexts in which they emerge, the Australian/British essentially defined by a democratic ideology, while the Giryama is defined by a communal ideology. On the other hand, the previous discussion of kuelewana (understand each other) has demonstrated that even if the values that are entailed in it are context co-defined, they echo values that are salient entailments of ideologies of ‘peace’ in other cultures.

With this brief cross-cultural excursion the exploration of kuelewana (understand each other) comes to an end, but its influence can be felt in each of the following chapters. The analysis of kuelewana (understand each other) is in fact the groundwork for the following discussions. Each of the other key words relates in one way or the other to its ideological framework. As much as they are distinct elements feeding into the Giryama ideologies of ‘peace’ or ‘conflict’, their meanings will be seen to incorporate or refer to elements of kuelewana (understand each other).
4 Kilongozi (leader) as a mediator of peace

Introduction

Among the 30 words that were selected as potential key-words kilongozi (leader) was cited as a category head in the sort-pile task among 77% of the respondents (cf. chapter one, section II.1). This high incidence could be a sign of its importance in the context of peace(-making) and conflict, but is it supported by other sources of information? Another indication of the salience of kilongozi (leader) in this context could be that kilongozi (leader) is the subject of three Giryama sayings that highlight the peace-keeping role of a kilongozi (leader).¹ The following discussion explores the role and person of the kilongozi (leader), and in doing so hopes to demonstrate the salience of kilongozi (leader) in the Giryama context of peace(-making) and conflict. Additionally, it aims at finding out how the understanding of kilongozi (leader) feeds into the Giryama ideology of peace.

I Analytical outlines

In the Giryama context two members of the cultural domain that was labelled sites of collective memory (cf. chapter one, section II.2), folk tales and life stories, are the pre-eminent narrative platforms for staging vilongozi (leaders) characters. Comparing the folk tales and the life stories in my corpus of texts, I found that the life stories present the richest images of vilongozi (leaders). The analysis features one life story in particular. It has been selected for closer examination, because it is the only life story in my collection that parades four vilongozi (leaders) from very different backgrounds and in different social and political positions within a single narrative framework. As a result it offers a rich source for exploring the socio-cultural dimensions of kilongozi (leader). Additional material is examined to see how these findings relate to the wider socio-cultural context of the Giryama.

The discussion is structured on the same principles as the discussions of the other key terms. Assumptions about degrees of consciousness in cultural meaning production lie at

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¹ There are three popular sayings: Muthumia ni ingu, ridzaiya dzuwa (an elder is a cloud, it blocks the sun); muthumia ni dzala (an elder is a dustbin); Hanho athumia k’ahagwe kimba (where there are old men a carcass can not fall). The word muthumia (elder) is a term of respect for a kilongozi (leader).
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its basis. The responses that Giryama gave to my question: Kilongozi ni mut’u ariyedze? (What kind of a person is a leader?) qualify as conscious mental constructions. They are used in the analysis as a body of reference as well as being a quantitative indication of the salience of specific qualities of the concept – a high incidence of a descriptive term is considered a likely indication of salience. Consequently, informants’ responses are a first step in exploring the Giryama understanding of kilongozi (leader). The next step is an analysis of less conscious constructions of meaning, in this case the life story of Simba Wanjie. The life story is characteristically a non-reflective performative text and hence assumed to contain largely unconscious mental constructions.²

The discussion has been divided into three parts. The first part introduces the subject by way of informant responses to the question: Kilongozi ni mut’u ariyedze? (What kind of a person is a leader?). As these explanations lack information on the social position of a kilongozi (leader) – which is probably assumed knowledge – the explanations are followed by a brief description of the socio-cultural positions that a kilongozi (leader) can have. The second part is the heart of the discussion, and is divided into three sections: an analysis of the relevant passages of the life story of Simba Wanjie, a comparison of the data from the life story and the list of explications, and rounding off the discussion is a comprehensive semantic description of the Giryama understanding of kilongozi (leader). Throughout section three cross-references are made to the informants’ responses in section two. Furthermore, each stage of the analysis is concluded by a semantic summary i.e. a description of a newly found salient meaning aspect of kilongozi (leader). The third and last part of this chapter reflects on the image of the kilongozi (leader) that has been developed in the course of the analysis from a cross-cultural perspective.

II Explanations of kilongozi (leader)

II.1 The term

As was indicated before, a group of roughly 100 Giryama contributed to the following list of explications. They appear in descending order of frequency:

a. ana ishima he shows respect

² The characteristics of ‘life story’ are based on Plummer’s (2001) description of the type of life story he labels “researched life stories”.

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b. ana elewana na at'u he has a mutual understanding with people
c. ana elimu ya sikuli he has had formal education
d. ana elimu ya mudzini he has had the education of the homestead
e. mut'u lwazu an open (honest) person
f. ana kidhymo kidzo he has a good way of speaking (i.e. stimulating)
g. anareha kulewana he brings ‘understanding each other’
h. anasirikiza-to he listens well

Two additional observations can be made to this list. With 16% out of all the responses ishma (respect) ranks higher than any other kilongozi quality.\(^3\) It is followed by kulewana na at'u (have a mutual understanding with people) which accounts for 12% of the responses. However, the same verb kulewana (understand each other) recurs lower on the list in (g) anareha kulewana (he brings ‘understanding each other’). Assuming that (b) and (g) reflect two different levels of operation of kulewana (understand each other), we may consider them to be complementary meaning aspects in kilongozi (leader), rather than separate meanings. As a result (b) and (g) have been brought together under the heading of kulewana (understand each other). This results in 20% of the responses indicating a relationship between kilongozi (leader) and kulewana (understand each other). This is more than any of the other responses, and therefore a likely indication of the relevance of kulewana (understand each other) in the Giryama conceptualisation of kilongozi (leader). We could add to this that kulewana (understand each other) was demonstrated to be a comprehensive reflection of the core of the Giryama ideology of peace (cf. chapter three). Taken together, these facts suggest that there is a nexus of cognitive relationships between the understanding of kilongozi (leader) and the ideology of peace.

II.2 The socio-cultural context

The term kilongozi (leader) applies to a great variety of people of different ranks and professions, it includes indigenous and government office bearers, as well as foreign political leaders and church leaders. In the local context the term can be used to refer to the heads of the different socio-cultural units that constitute Giryama society (see also pp.53-54). Ranging from mwenye nyumba (the head of the house), mwenye mudzi (the

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\(^3\) The percentages are calculated from the total number of responses. This means that also responses which do not occur in this list have been included, i.e. those that were given by less than five people.
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head of the homestead), to muthumia wa kidzidzi (village elder) muthumia wa lalo (elder of the location) and mwenye ts’i (‘owner of the land’), all are considered vilongozi (leaders), and are addressed as athumia (elders), a term of respect. Each unit of social organisation has its own rather strict boundaries of authority, and a Giryama without one of these positions does not come in for the title of kilongozi (leader). 4

While informants were unanimous in qualifying the above positions as being ones of a kilongozi (leader), when they were asked about formal government posts they were less unanimous. In the lower regions of assistant-chief and chief, people agreed that these were vilongozi (leaders). The higher positions of D.O. (District Officer) D.C. (District Commissioner), P.C. (Provincial Commissioner), of the M.P.s (Member of Parliament), of ministers and the president came in for discussion. Here the selection criterion was pronounced clearly. Giryama, who objected to calling one, some or all of them, vilongozi (pl.) did it on grounds of their lack of personal leadership qualities.

III The life-story of Simba Wanje

Before introducing the narrator and his narrative, I would like to draw out some general features of the narrative frame of a life story. After all, telling a life story the narrator unconsciously refers to them. This also implies that they should be part of the interpretative process. As was said before, a life story belongs in the domain of sites of collective memory. Therefore it characteristically includes a historical/traditional perspective on the figure of kilongozi (leader). Additionally, it implies that kilongozi (leader) is embedded in the discourse of Giryama identity for, as was claimed in chapter one, sites of collective memory are the clearest articulation of Giryama identity. Life stories characteristically express Giryama identity through explicit or implicit statements on Giryama norms and values. It is therefore likely that the moral dimensions of kilongozi (leader) are prominent features of the narrative presentation of kilongozi (leader).

4 One famous exception is Mikatilili, a Giryama widow, who rallied the Giryama against British influence in 1913. She did not have a formal position, tradition has it, yet she acquired the title of kilongozi (leader) for her actions. Her authority derived from her ability to convince the Giryama at large that they shed British influence, and retrieve their own Giryama traditions. Later, when the British-Giryama conflict was a fact, she assumed the aura of a true heroine. As a result, as has been reported, she was raised to the level of mwenye ts’i (owner of the land), a formal confirmation of her being a great kilongozi. She went to live in kaya (sacred centre) and became the leader of the women’s council, a position that was new and disappeared with her death (cf. Brantley 1986: 345).
Unlike a folk tale a life story leaves room for the narrator’s personal evaluations of a *kilongozi* (leader). In this particular life story they are expressed quite explicitly. Still, how should they be evaluated in the context of the overall historical/traditional perspective of a life story? In the following discussion I have adopted the analytical perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on the individual dimensions of discourse. CDA claims that personal ideas emerge in a social context, and therefore stand in a dialectic relationship with the (wider) context of social meanings. Applying this argument to the present context, we could say that Simba’s personal views stand in a dialectic relationship with the historical/traditional understanding of *kilongozi* (leader). His views are reactions to this broad context, and can be expressed by way of negation, assertion, contestation or hinting at, to name some possible reactions. For every reaction holds that it refers to some specific element(s) of ‘cultural understanding’ of the figure of *kilongozi* (leader). Therefore a personal view can be a valuable clue to gaining insight into *kilongozi* (leader).

In September 1999 I asked the octogenarian Simba Wanje wa Kagujo (picture 1), one of my informants in Gotani (see map II), if he could organise a story-telling session at his homestead. Simba is a *mwenyen mudzi* (homestead elder). The time when I asked him he was no longer *mwenyen ts'i* (*kaya* elder), the highest leadership position in the traditional Giryama context. He is considered a guardian of Giryama traditions, and a man of quite some authority in and outside his own clan. Probably that is why a large company of approximately 30 clansmen and women between 15 and 85 of age gathered in the compound of his homestead one afternoon, with other people coming and going during the story-telling. Special guests among the audience were myself and my companion Mr. Philip Jimbi, a Giryama and the curator of the Immobile Heritage of the Coastal Region at the National Museums of Kenya. Because of his position Jimbi had been involved in having the *makaya* (sacred centres) of the Giryama and fellow Mijikenda gazetted as national heritage. At the time Simba Wanje was a *mwenyen ts'i* (*kaya* elder), and that is how they became friends. As Simba had great distrust of government officials, he was not keen on having *kaya Giryama* gazetted at first. He says, it was thanks to Jimbi, that he became convinced of the benefits of the procedure.

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5 Simba Wanje was a *kaya* elder in 1997. Since 2004 he has been in office again as *kaya* elder. For an introduction on *kaya* (the sacred centre of the Giryama) see chapter two; the role of *kaya* in the Giryama understanding of peace-making and conflict is discussed in chapter five.


7 *Kaya Giryama* came to be protected under the Antiquities and Monuments Act in 1998.
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The life story under discussion is told by Simba Wanje. Before him, four clan members had presented their life stories. Like Simba after them, they told about their daily lives and the changes they had witnessed during their lifetime. Their stories lasted for about half-an-hour. Simba Wanje’s narrative stands out among them in many respects, starting from its length. Simba spoke for one-and-a-half hours and was very eager to show his skills at story-telling. Also, as he afterwards explained to me, he had done his very best to give me a complete and correct picture of present-day Giryamaland. However this may be, Simba’s story clearly affected his Giryama audience. They listened carefully and regularly expressed their appreciation by making exclamations of recognition, surprise or consent. Skilfully Simba presented details of his life and the wider socio-political context, while at the same time appealing to his audience’s sense of norms and values. It is this mixture of the personal, socio-political and moral that Giryama appreciate as marking a great narrative.

Simba Wanje has no scruples about presenting himself as a knowledgeable man: *Nidzaona maut’u manji* (I have seen (i.e. experienced) many things). Illiterate, but unlike many of his age-mates a fluent Kiswahili speaker, he was given the name ‘Simba’ (lion) by the community for his strength of character and his lack of fear of speaking out in public. He considers himself one of the *vilongozi* (leaders) of the old Giryamaland, at the same time disqualifying himself as a modern *kilongozi* (leader):

\[
\begin{align*}
Nasino fukikala funatengeza, & \quad \text{If we (Giryama leaders) make (organise) it} \\
\text{nwi k’amuzhenzi.} & \quad \text{(the land), you (modern people) don’t like it.}
\end{align*}
\]

Thus, the life-story is the story of a *kilongozi* (leader) of the old generation of *vilongozi* (leaders). As was indicated before, Simba’s narrative portrays four *vilongozi* (leaders) of different backgrounds, and in different social and political positions. They are the historical characters of Ronald Ngala (Giryama, government minister), Jomo Kenyatta (Kikuyu, Kenya’s President), J.D. Stringer (British, colonial administrator) and the contemporary Philip Jimbi Katana (Giryama, curator at National Museums Mombasa). All four are presented with personal comments on their (lack of) qualities. From the four descriptions, three are based on personal experience. The description of Mr. Stringer is the exception. Another striking element is the ‘historicity’ of some of the details, which do not coincide fully with the formal version promulgated by the Kenyan government of the time.
Paradoxically, the narrative’s historiographic non-conformism has valuable informative power, as will be demonstrated below.

III.1 Ronald Ngala

Among the four portraits of vilongozi (leaders), the one of Ronald Ngala is the most detailed. First and foremost he is a kilongozi (leader) of all Mijikenda, and became one of all the coastal peoples (including the Swahili and the Pokomo). Ronald Ngala was one of the great political leaders in Kenya’s struggle for independence, and during the time following the independence in 1963. A Giryama, he grew up and lived in Giryamaland. His death in 1972 was experienced by the Giryama as a tragic event of profound social impact. It is reflected in the Giryama chronicle as the extinction of a star: Kifwa cha nyenyezi ya Mdzichenda (the death of the star of the Mijikenda).

Simba’s account starts in the last year of Ronald Ngala’s life, when Ngala is the Minister of Power and Communications under President Jomo Kenyatta:


5. Gotani.
Akidza amba: "Nganya wañwa.
Ka'imanywire kirichomwalaga ela at'u mananungunikia. Vivi nidzakwenda thekeza haho,
dzina rangu ho ririho, hana denja. Vivi be ninainzwa.

10. Mumanye mimi nindalagwa ni asena.
Nami hatha nikalagwa ni asena, kisha sindaricha kazi."
Fujiamb vaivi: "Uricho vidzakala vizho, uwe
ukikala unenda Nairobi, hafa alume airi hedu

15. ahahu. Mwende nyosi.
Kindichokwalaga machone."

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It is the collective term for nine peoples: Chonyi, Digo, Duruma, Giryama, Jibana, Kambe, Kauma, Rabai, Ribe.
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Akijaliwa na bahathi mbii, siku idzafrica.

(...)

Unaona.

PJ: Mhu.

SW: Tsi' ikikala idzangira moho.

Muthumia wehu arekala nde muongozi (old Kig.word, here Jomo Kenyatta), akiamba: "T'aa ra Kenya nidzarizinya". Haya lola. Yuno sino hunamba adza'fa, ye anaamba t'aa adzarizinya. K'akuna t'aa kahei kuku.

(A short time) before Mr. Ngaia was involved in an accident, he came and organised a meeting here in Gotani.9 Tom Mboya and another person had died in Nairobi.10 They didn't know the reason. Mr. Ngaia was going in his own minibus so that... the sign from them, in the sign was put danger (their deaths were a sign, and the sign meant danger). Mr. Ngaia came until he reached Gotani here.

He came and said: "Someone died.

We didn't know what killed him, but people are mumbling. Now I have discovered that my name is in danger. Now I am hunted.

You should know that I will be killed by my fellow politicians.

Even if I am killed by colleagues, I will not leave my work."

We said this: "The way things are with you, if you go to Nairobi, take two or three men. You go, all of you.

They should see what will kill you."

When he was caught by bad luck, his day arrived.

(...)

Really there people had placed traps (made a conspiracy). They were told, the day that you see him by himself, let the man disappear. That day he failed to go with his companion, he went by himself. He went to be closed in there. He was killed.

You see.

PJ11: Hmm

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9 See map II.
10 Tom Mboya was a prominent trade union leader in the pre-independence period of Kenya. He participated in the Lancaster House discussions, in which the British agreed to gradually hand over government to the Kenyan people. Minister of Economic Planning and Development from 1964, he was murdered in 1969.
11 Philip Jimbi, friend and curator of the National Museums of Kenya in Mombasa.
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SW: The land had entered fire (the land was in serious trouble). Our elder who was the leader said: "I have extinguished the light of Kenya". Now look. About that one [Ngala] we say he died, he says he has extinguished the light. There is no light here anymore.

The entire passage betrays Simba's great admiration for Ronald Ngala, presenting him as a character of almost epic proportions. Paraphrasing the events narrated in the passage with the informants' responses that were cited above as reference points, we can find some clues to the Giryama understanding of leadership.

The story begins at the time when Ronald Ngala was Minister of Power and Communications. He is one of the great Kenyan politicians. Probably due to his popularity and due to the fact that high political players have been murdered during his office, he fears that he will be assassinated by political rivals. He realises that his death will have great impact on Giryamaland, and therefore decides to organise a meeting with community members in his home area Gotani (map II). He explains to those present that in spite of imminent death he will not give up his work in Nairobi. They consequently advise him to take two to three witnesses with him wherever he goes.

Analysing this part with an eye to leadership aspects, we see that Ronald Ngala's high position has not estranged him from the people at home, nor from the Giryama tradition of seeking the advice of a gathering of community members in case of personal/communal problems. This closeness at the interpersonal level and at the level of values is experienced by the people and by the leader as fundamental to their relationship. The same is expressed in the phrase anaelewana na at'u (b.) he has a mutual understanding with people), which was mentioned by informants to characterise a kilongozi (leader). Its high place on the list of responses and kuelewana (understand each other)'s pivotal role in the Giryama ideology of peace can therefore be argued to underscore the salience of this aspect in the concept of kilongozi (leader). Capturing this aspect in a semantic component of kilongozi (leader), we can take recourse to the core component of kuelewana (understand each other), ("it is good to be part of the same thing as someone else") as follows;\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{12}\) The cause of Ronald Ngala's death is officially given by the Kenyan government as due to his succumbing to the injuries of a car crash near Nairobi. Many Giryama take this version as a cover-up for the real events that led to his death.

\(^{13}\) The full semantic description of kuelewana is given in chapter three, section IV.
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1. this person makes us feel like parts of the same thing

Similar to what was found in the context of the Giryama understanding of ‘peace’ in the context of *kuelewana* (understand each other), *kilongozi* (leader) has other values going along with it. For instance, when seeking the advice of some wise community members, Ngala shows them *ishima* (respect) (II.6-16/6-14). In response they also show their *ishima* (respect) to him, in that they give advice which is based on the acknowledgement of Ngala’s choice, which is to continue working under the threat of death. Thus *ishima* (respect) is a mutual value, that goes along with the mutual value of *kuelewana* (understand each other). Incidentally, it was the one character trait that ranked highest in qualifying a *kilongozi* (leader) among the respondents. This *kilongozi* quality can be reflected in a semantic description as:

2. this person feels something good towards us (and we feel something good towards him/her)

In spite of the reciprocal nature of the values that go with the relationship between *kilongozi* (leader) and his people, Simba’s description does not suggest that they are equal. There is reference to a quality that makes the *kilongozi* (leader) an essentially different person from other people. This comes out in the line: *Nami hatha nikalagwa ni asena, kisha sindaricha kazi* (Even if I am killed by colleagues, I will not leave my work). It is a statement of Ngala’s courage (*ugumbao*). As one of the other informants explained to me: *Ngala, Karisa Maitha na angine ni vilongozi maroi Shimika kwa kukala were k’amagoha kunena mut’u hedu afisi yoyosi* (Ngala, Karisa Maitha14 and some others are leaders who are respected because they did not fear to speak their minds to a person or any institution).

Obviously, the quality of *ugumbao* (courage) is not primarily of a physical nature. It is daring to say, or do things that one thinks are beneficial to the community, and which possibly go against the interests of the power elite. In the Giryama understanding *ugumbao* (courage) accompanies vision (*maono*). Thus, a leader is a visionary (*kilongozi ni mut’u aonaye mbeere*) (a leader is a person who sees ahead), whose vision is always directed towards promoting the well-being of his people.

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14 Karisa Maitha was a Giryama and Minister of Tourism until his death in 2004.
This visionary quality of Ngala is reflected in the imagery which Simba uses when he speaks of Ngala’s death. He says that on Ngala’s death *tsi iikala itzangira moho* (the land had entered fire), and *k’akuna t’aa kaheri kuku* (there is no light here anymore). The light, or star, is considered to be a guide to those who are not so sure of their direction. Without this light they easily stray into that other light, fire, which is heat and which symbolises social chaos. Similar references to Ngala’s visionary gift come from other sources. One such source is a contemporary educational booklet about Ronald Ngala, written in English by a Kenyan author for Kenyan youths (Momanyi 2001). It is published in a series on important figures of Kenyan history. Interestingly, the qualities of *ugumbao* (courage) and *maono* (vision) are mentioned in one breath, thus underscoring their close connection: “He showed …vision and courage and became greatly admired” (p. 38).

Reflecting the meaning implications of the qualities of *ugumbao* (courage) and *maono* (vision) in a semantic description, we should be aware of the close connection between *ugumbao* (courage) and *maono* (vision). They could be reflected as follows:

3. this person is a good person
4. he/she is not like all of us, he/she is above us.
5. he/she does many good things for us.

In another line taken from the booklet that was mentioned before (Momanyi 2001), *ugumbao* (courage) and *maono* (vision) are additionally connected with *uhendzo* (love): On his death the Giryama “…knew they had lost a great leader, someone who sacrificed himself for the sake of others, who truly loved his people” (p. 83). In conversations I recorded similar statements on the strong emotional bond between the leader and his people, such as: *anahendza at’u* (he loves people), and *osí ni at’uwe* (all are his people). *Uhendzo* (love) does not feature explicitly in one of Simba’s stories. Still, as the discussion of Jomo Kenyatta bears out negatively, there is a strong affective component in *kuelewana na at’u* (have a mutual understanding with the people). Another indication of the implicitness of *uhendzo* (love), is when trying to capture it as a semantic component of *kilongozi* (leader). We find that it can be phrased largely in terms of the semantic component of *ishima* (respect):

6. he/she feels something good towards the people under him.
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As was stated before, Simba’s narrative is notable for its great admiration of Ronald Ngala. This is not only apparent from the content of the passage, but also from Simba’s word choice and profiling of certain qualities. Clearly, he appreciates Ngala’s knowledge of Giryama tradition (cf. (d) *ana elimu ya mudzini* (he has had education of the homestead)), while he does not refer to Ngala’s formal education (he studied at the University of Kampala (Uganda) to become a teacher). Among the Giryama informants formal teaching was cited as an aspect of leadership (cf. ((c) *ana elimu ya sikuli*, he has had formal education). Should we then assume that since Simba Wanje is himself a *kilongozi* (leader) of the older generation, he does not value formal education? Having come to know Simba Wanje as a person who is convinced of the opportunities that are created for Giryama children by formal education, I don’t think he would reject it in a *kilongozi* (leader). It is more likely that formal education is not an essential aspect of the figure of *kilongozi* (leader). This is underlined by one Giryama informant who explained to me in English:

2.

Among the Giryama education is not a prerequisite for being a leader. Education is merely an added advantage. When it comes to contesting [for a leadership position], the person who has [a] high level of education could easily be beaten by one with a lower standard of education.

Lastly, there are two details in Simba’s text that are revealing for how Simba perceives the kind of leadership that Ngala personifies. They are the two titles given to Ngala. In spite of the true *kilongozi* (leader) status of Ronald Ngala Simba does not use the term *kilongozi* nor the common term *muthumia* (elder) for him. Instead, he calls him *Bwana* ((Kisw.) ‘Mr.’), which is a general Swahili title for an adult male. Thus Simba Wanje suggests that Ronald Ngala was a man like other men, and belonged to a world that extended beyond Giryamaland. At the same time, he underlines his unique greatness to the Giryama by calling him *t’aa* (light). This duality in the presentation of Ronald Ngala is not accidental, although it is rather extreme. Looking back at the list of Giryama explications of *kilongozi* (leader), we find the same duality in the term *kuelewana*, cf. (b) *anaelewana na at’u* (he has a mutual understanding with people) besides (g) *anareha kuelewana* (he brings ‘understanding each other’). In both instances, the first element implies the *kilongozi’s* identification with the people, and the second his superior position.

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15 Ronald Ngala took a keen interest in Giryama traditions. Illustrative is his publication, *Nchi na Desturi za Wagiryama* ((Kisw.) *The land and the Customs of the Giryama*) (1949).
Kilongozi as a mediator of peace

A rather humorous illustration of this fundamental duality that Giryama understand the relationship between kilongozi (leader) and people to imply, is given in the folk tale ‘Katsungula na Mutsara’ (the hare and the dam). It was narrated by an old woman, Kadzo Masha wa Gona, during a story telling session at Tsangats’ini in the year 2000 (pictures 4.5). A group of six women, of whom the youngest was sixty, were telling folk tales to an audience of 20 youngsters, the sub-chief, Mr. Yeri, my assistant at this session, and myself. We were at the compound of the sub-chief’s office. This is not a usual setting. However, considering their enthusiasm and the gradual participation of the audience in the story telling, I think the setting did not affect the stories adversely.

‘Katsungula na Mutsara’ (the hare and the dam) is a narrative about an animal community. The hare stands up and suggests to the community to dig a waterhole, arguing that the waterhole will be filled in the rainy season, and will provide them with water in the dry season. The entire community applauded his maono (vision) relating the well-being of the community, and by doing so confirm the hare’s position of a kilongozi (leader). Together they appoint the day on which they start digging. Then things start to go wrong.

3.

Marihokudzafika haho, katsungula akiamba: When they came there, the hare said:
“Atu (sic) ninwi be tsimbani, mino sindatsimba.” “People, you dig, I will not dig.
Kisha madzi ndanwa mino.” Later I will drink the water.”
Makiamba: “Undaganwadze, nawe They said: “How will you drink, and
k’undatsimba?” not dig?”
Akiamba: “Ndamwa vizio.” He said: “I will still drink (the water).”
Akihauka. He got up.
Haya, atu makikwacha kutsimba mutsara. Well, people started digging the waterhole.

Although the animals (among whom an elephant and a lion) have consented to the hare’s leadership, it is against all expectations that the hare exempts himself from working. The animals express their indignation at his unwillingness to work in the rhetorical question: “Undaganwadze nawe k’undatsimba?” (How will you drink and not dig?). As a kilongozi (leader) the hare should display behaviour that reflects his understanding with the people

16 Mr. Anderson Yeri lived in Mombasa at the time, but his home is Tsangats’ini.
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and therefore work with them for the benefit of the community. When the animals realise the hare’s lack of commitment towards the community, they carry on with the hare’s plan and ostracise the hare by banning him from using the waterhole.

Even if in reality a kilongozi (leader) is not expected to do the same things as the common people, he is expected to be able to think along the same lines as his community members. A leader who lacks this quality is not a good leader. Although this argument is discussed in greater detail in the analysis of the description of Jomo Kenyatta, we could propose a semantic description of this meaning aspect:

7. He/she does many things with us, not because he/she is the same as us.

Evaluating the qualities that are historically and personally attributed to Ronald Ngala in Simba’s story, we get the impression that he is a person ‘larger than life’, a role model for all vilongozi (leader). Could we conclude then that Simba’s portrait of Ngala reflects a folk ideal of kilongozi (leader), and by extension could we argue that every kilongozi (leader) is essentially conceived in terms of a folk ideal among the Giryama? In the following three portraits of vilongozi (leaders) we may find some clues to these questions. However, before we continue with the narrative portrait of Jomo Kenyatta, I would like to briefly sum up the leadership qualities that emerge in the passage on Ronald Ngala.

Central among these qualities – and in fact the pre-condition for all qualities to qualify as aspects of kilongozi (leader) – is kuelewana na at’u (having a mutual understanding with the people). In the context of kilongozi (leader) this manifests itself as a dual phenomenon. On the one hand, the kilongozi (leader) is “part of the same thing as someone else”. On the other, he is the agent that makes people feel part of the same thing. They are two aspects of the same understanding. A quality that was found to go along with kuelewana (understand each other) is istsima (respect), which is similarly characterised by mutuality. Although this is a pervasive aspect of their relationship, the leader and the people do not share the same status. Qualities of the kilongozi (leader) like ugumbao (courage) and maono (vision) express this difference.

To bring out the connections between the various qualities, a provisional semantic description is suggested, which runs as follows:
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A kilongozi is someone people think of like this:

1. this person is a good person
2. he/she is not like all of us, he/she is above us
3. he/she does many good things for us
4. and does many good things with us, not because he/she is the same as us
5. he/she feels something good towards us
6. he/she makes all of us feel like parts of the same thing
7. because of this we feel something good towards him/her.

Using this description as a point of departure for the next three vilongozi (leaders), we have actually started to lay the foundation for a Giryama understanding of kilongozi (leader) in terms of a folk ideal. In the semantic description the word ‘good’ as a recurring attribute of the person, of the things he/she does, of the feelings he/she has, and of the feelings we have towards this person, suggests that kilongozi (leader) is an idealised figure.

III.2 Jomo Kenyatta

During the struggle for independence Jomo Kenyatta and Ronald Ngala were political friends, Kenyatta representing the influential Kikuyu, and Ngala representing the entire coastal region. When Kenyatta was imprisoned, Simba argues, it was Ronald Ngala who managed to persuade the British colonial regime to set him free finally. During the struggle for independence Jomo Kenyatta became the symbol of independent Kenya, the leader of all Kenyans. As a result he, rather than Ronald Ngala, became the first president of Kenya.

In Simba Wanjie’s narrative Kenyatta is first mentioned at the death of Ngala (cf. [1.]):

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17 The usual terms used to refer to Jomo Kenyatta is Mzee Kenyatta, mzee being the Kiswahili equivalent of Kigiryama muthumia (elder).

18 In official Kenyan historiography it is argued that Tom Mboya was instrumental in getting Mzee Jomo Kenyatta out of detention.
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Our elder who was the leader said: “I have extinguished the light of Kenya”. Now look. About that one [Ngala] we say he died, he says he has extinguished the light.

The words that Simba Wanjie makes Jomo Kenyatta say at the death of Ronald Ngala are so utterly shameless, that I assumed they were Simba Wanjie’s own view on the event. To my great surprise older Giryama people remember these words as Jomo Kenyatta’s. Kenyatta’s shamelessness does not only come out in admitting his role in Ngala’s demise, but also in his flagrant use of the collocation *kuzinya t’aa* (to extinguish a light). Implicit in his use of it is the acknowledgement of Ngala’s fame as *nyenyesi ya Midzichenda* (the star of the Mijikenda). Yet more hurting is his abuse of a Giryama saying *Kufa ni kuzinya t’aa* (dying is like putting the light out). The effect of this conscious misuse of the (Giryama) saying enhances the hatefulness of his remark. This is underlined by Simba, when he says that the Giryama use different words to express the death of a person. Indeed, this single utterance shows that Jomo Kenyatta lacks the most essential quality of a *kilongozi* (leader), which is *kuelewana na at’u* (to have a mutual understanding with the people).

We may therefore conclude that, from his very first appearance in the narrative, Kenyatta is the opposite of Ngala. Surprisingly, Simba still uses the words *kilongozi* (leader) and *muthumia* (elder) to refer to Jomo Kenyatta. By doing so, he in fact brings out the painful contrast between the person who was a ‘natural’ *kilongozi* (leader), Ngala, – who did not need the title to make this clear – and a person who called himself a *kilongozi* (leader) of all Kenyans but was not a real *kilongozi* (leader), Kenyatta. The irony that lies in the use of the epithets *kilongozi* (leader) and *muthumia* (elder), used as a term of address for a *kilongozi* (leader), is all the more biting because of their juxtaposition in: *Muthumia wehu*

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19 The collocation *kuzinya t’aa* is used in a figurative sense only in the Kigirama saying *Kufa ni kuzinya t’aa* (dying is like putting the light out). It is obviously not expected to take an object form; putting in a person in the object form is a major flouting of Giryama syntactic expectations. A proper phrase in this context would have been *t’aa ritzizina* (the light has gone out), expressing the death of a person, esp. the one who is important to the continued existence of a social unit, such as the breadwinner.
arekala nde muongozi (our elder, who was the leader), the attributive clause arekale nde muongozi (who was the leader) being a pleonastic addition. The effect of this is contrary to what attribute clauses are supposed to do, namely give additional information. Indeed, by giving the same information the attributive clause questions the correctness of the descriptive phrase of muthumia wehu (our elder).

The negative picture of Jomo Kenyatta that emerges from the above quotation is enhanced by the following scene, in which Simba Wanje describes Kenyatta coming down to the coast. On one occasion he speaks about the Giryama:

5.  


Then he came to abuse us. He said: “The Giryama is an ignorant person. He sits at the base of a mango tree and picks the mangoes.” We are in awe of the government. We respect it, you don’t like that respect, you consider us really fools.

Simba argues, that (even after the death of Ronald Ngala) the Giryama show respect (ishima) to the government. However, their respect is not reciprocated by the kilongozi (leader), qualifying the Giryama as lazy and backward. Again Kenyatta ignores one of the basic principles of leadership in the Giryama understanding of it.

As was stated before, the description of Kenyatta is the reversal of the previous portrait of Ngala, underscoring two central values: kuelewana na at’u (having a mutual understanding with people) and ishima (respect) as a reciprocal concept. Yet, we may ask ourselves, are these two leaders comparable at all, one being a Giryama and the other not. Could this count already as a negative factor in the description of Kenyatta? And, can Giryama people experience kuelewana (understand each other) at all with a leader who is not a Giryama? While the description of Kenyatta does not produce new insights into qualities of a kilongozi (leader), it does raise the question of ethnicity. The following description of a British kilongozi (leader) from Simba’s life story sheds some light on the issue.
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III.3 Stringer

Mr. J.D. Stringer was British and a D.C. (District Commissioner) of Kilifi District, the home of the Giryama, in 1936. Simba describes him visiting the kaya (sacred centre) elders.

From the description it is clear that it concerns a meeting of vilongozi (leaders):

6.
1. Siringa were akala kuko, akadza kuku kaya.
   Ni Muzungu iye. Be akifika kuku kaya anauza athumia:
   ‘vidze mukandadzwe’. Gonya anauza athumia kuvuva nguvo yaye kwakwe.
   “Ahoho mbindokala mackaka mabarabaru mabonou, lazima athumia muandhike.
5. Nidze, munambire niandhike malazhe kodi.
   Ela kala k’amuhandere vzizo, athumia,
   nindamona k’amuna ishima.” Akangwa sino, ahoho makikalo abonou, fundatosa kodi. Ni kaya Giryama...unasiika ?...mana were manaielewana.
   Machambira, K’amaambira maneno maimai. Muzungu naye k’ana maneno maimai.

1. Stringer was there, he came here to kaya.20
   He is a European. When he arrived here at kaya, he asked the elders:
   «What do you do ?» Then he asked the elders to pull his strength (i.e. find out if he will be successful). “The youngsters who have become grown-ups (16-18 year olds), you elders should register them. I come (and) you tell me (and) I write (so that) they pay hut-tax. But if you won’t do it that way, elders, I will take it that you do not have any respect.” He said that, if our children are big, we should pay hut-tax. At kaya Giryama...you see? ...
   because they understood each other. They talked, and they did not talk bad words. The European also did not have bad words.

In the passage Simba Wanje presents a positive picture of Stringer. It is developed from the fundamental value of kuelewana (understand each other) between Stringer and the kaya elders (I.8/II.7-8)...mana were manaielewana (...because they understood each other). Evidence of this mutual understanding is Stringer’s invitation by the elders to kaya.

This show of trust is reciprocated by Stringer, who expresses respect for the institution of kaya elders. Moreover, he addresses them with the appropriate title of athumia (elders).

Then again, Stringer also shows himself a no-nonsense person; he makes a moral demand on the elders, and is quite explicit about the negative effects in case the elders do

20 Kaya – reference is made here to kaya Giryama, the sacred centre of the Giryama.
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not respond to it. He says that if the Giryama elders do not comply with his request, they
do not show _ishima_ (respect). Interestingly, Simba Wanje was not a _kaya_ elder at the time,
and therefore cannot have been present at the meeting of the _kaya_ elders with Stringer. It
is really his own view that is revealed here, which shows that he attaches great
importance to mutual respect in the relationship between a Giryama and a non-Giryama
leader. The opposite is also true; lack of respect, as shown by Kenyatta, rather than
ethnicity, is the main reason for not being considered a true _kilongozi_ (leader) by Simba,
or by any Giryama for that matter.

The passage about the meeting between Stringer and the _kaya_ elders contains another
value which underlines the primacy of personal qualities over ethnicity in the folk ideal of a
_kilongozi_ (leader). As was mentioned before, Stringer’s co-operation with the Giryama
_vilongozi_ (leaders) is based on _kuelewana_ (understand each other). His request is
presented by Simba as a test of the _kaya_ elders’ respect for Stringer. More specifically I
would say it is a test of another constituting aspect of _kuelewana_ (understand each other),
which is trustworthiness (_uaminifu_). The _kaya_ elders have shown Stringer already their
trust in inviting him to _kaya_ Giryama, but their trust is put to a major test when they are
asked by Stringer to act on behalf of the colonial regime. At the same time it is a test of
how much trustworthiness they credit him with. Simba’s concluding remark suggests that
both parties attribute each other _uaminifu_ (trustworthiness/integrity): _Machambira,_
_k’amaambira maneno maimai. Muzungu naye k’ana maneno maimai_. (They talked and
they didnot talk bad words. The European also did not have bad words).

“Not speaking bad words” implies that they use language that promotes or confirms
_kuelewana_ (understand each other). Simba uses the expression with a slight edge, by
making the seemingly superfluous remark: _Muzungu naye k’ana maneno maimai_ (the
European also did not have bad words). He suggests that there is some ‘natural’ distrust
of Stringer among the _kaya_ elders. This is probably due to the colonial experience (for
details see chapter two). Still, the discussion is characterised by speaking ‘good words’
i.e. both parties promote _kuelewana_ (understand each other). Although not mentioned in
this passage, Simba Wanje later explained to me that the _kaya_ elders complied with
Stringer’s request and listed all the sixteen year olds and above for hut tax. We may
conclude that they did so because they considered the words that Stringer spoke, the
words of a trustworthy man. Phrased in Simba’s words however, we should say that they
showed respect for Stringer’s words.
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On the strength of Simba’s explicit use of *ishima* (respect) for qualifying the *kaya* elders’ behaviour, while *uaminifu* (trustworthiness, integrity) is at stake, I would suggest that *ishima* (respect) is the more general term and *uaminifu* (trustworthiness, integrity) the more specific for describing (a certain type of) leadership behaviour that is based on a mutual understanding with the people (*kuelewana na at’u*). Some confirmation for this observation is gained from a Giryama informant, who explained to me the concept of *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/ integrity) in connection with a *kilongozi* (leader):

7.

At’u enye elimu chache madzagerwa ishima ya kilongozi kwa kukala at’u maamini. Mathimiza viryahu marizhoomba mandatengeza. Manadima kuaminika kwaviza at’u hedu kuausira thabu zao kwa *uaminifu* (bold print is added).

People with little education have been accorded the respect of being a leader because people trusted in them. They fulfilled what they said they would do. They can be trusted to help people or to deal with their problems in a way that shows integrity.

The informant is quite explicit about the kind of leadership behaviour that *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/integrity) effects: ‘doing what one promises to do’ and showing integrity when doing it. In this way the leader earns trust from the people, which manifests itself in respect for him.

That *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/integrity) is a constituting aspect of the Giryama understanding of *kilongozi* (leader) is only too apparent from a generally shared view among the Giryama that most of the problems that the Giryama face are due to corrupt administrators and politicians. In many conversations that I had with Giryama the topic of corruption was brought up. Still, the term *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/integrity) was not mentioned very often by the respondents who were asked to name qualities that distinguish a *kilongozi* (leader), and if it was mentioned, only so by informants who had enjoyed some education. Can we then after all speak of a salient cultural understanding?

I think the fact that *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/integrity) is quoted only by educated people is significant. It indicates that it is not a basic level word in the sense of reflecting generally shared knowledge. In this way it is totally different from *ishima* (respect) which is a very common word, comprising a wide diversity of social contexts as well as behaviour. *Ishima* (respect) is clearly the umbrella for different types of behaviour that fall under it. Assuming that *ishima* (respect) belongs at the basic level of knowledge organisation, we could argue
that *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/integrity) is a particularisation of it, and therefore a subordinate category. This also explains why *ishima* (respect) is the leadership quality that was cited most among Giryama respondents in the semantic task, while *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/integrity) was so scarcely mentioned that it does not appear on the list of Giryama explications. The most we can argue for *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/integrity)’s salience in the context of *kilongozi* (leader) is that even if Giryama do not have active knowledge of it, they do have an understanding of different types of respectful behaviour in their folk ideal of a *kilongozi* (leader).

In view of the cognitive inclusion of *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/respect) in the basic level concept of *ishima* (respect), I would argue that what *ishima* (respect) expresses should include *uaminifu* (trustworthiness/integrity) – *uaminifu* is indirectly there.

**III.4 Philip Jimbii Katana**

In recounting the events in which the different *vilongozi* (leaders) were involved, Simba gradually develops a picture of the necessary properties of a *kilongozi* (leader) who can lead Giryamaland and represent it in government. He addresses himself to Jimbi, his special guest, when presenting his conclusion of the person who fits the picture: *Muilongoze ino ts'i* (You should lead this land (i.e. Giryamaland)).

Philip Jimbii Katana has many qualities that make him a desirable *kilongozi* (leader) in the opinion of Simba Wanje. What is more, Simba describes him in a way that makes him fit in with the Giryama ideal as it has been developed so far. This is illustrated in a passage where Simba recollects the words that Jimbi spoke at a recent meeting with him:

*Vivi dzuzi unzhokudza uwe ukiamba: "At’u manahayuka zhoumu. Ni baha humale maingu, ga kala ts'i indahurira.*

*Weredzawira mwanya uryahu wa athumia a kwehu.*

(......)

*Mana arehaye vula be anahehera ts'i.*

(......)

*Vivi kala si Jimbi haka, ngere funa thabu sana.*

Now when you came recently, you said: “People are going totally crazy. It is better we seek the clouds, so that the land will be quiet (at peace).”

You had followed the footsteps of our elders.

Because he who brings rain is fighting for the land.

Now if Jimbi had not been here, we would
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already have big problems. But when Jimbi came here, he said: « The land is destroyed. The children will be more and more like that (thieves).” Jimbi gave his money, it went there where there is rain.

In this passage Simba presents a rather exaggerated picture of Jimbi’s familiarity with Giryama traditional wisdom. For one, it is doubtful whether he quotes Jimbi correctly. Jimbi being a careful speaker, would not, I think, publicly denounce Giryama as going crazy. In fact, the sentences that Simba recalls Jimbi to have uttered are permeated with Simba’s own views on the way things are with the Giryama. This comes out very clearly in his word choice in: Ts’i idzanongeka (the land is destroyed). It is not a regular idiom, but rather a metaphoric rendering of the situation by Simba himself. That it is Simba rather than Jimbi who created the metaphor is underscored by its occurrence earlier in Simba’s life story.

One statement that is based on fact, is that Jimbi gave the kaya elders an allowance when they had finished the discussions on kaya Giryama being gazetted, and that the money was used to fetch medicine from Tanzania (‘where there is rain’) to ‘clean’ kaya and bring rain to the Giryama. When related to Simba’s description of Jimbi, we see Simba’s clever use of this event. Retrospectively he manipulates it into a factual justification for his eulogy on Jimbi’s largely imagined traditional leadership intuition. Why would Simba do this? As much as wanting to portray Jimbi as an excellent kilongozi (leader) to the audience, he impresses on Jimbi that there is a particular claim from the Giryama society on a kilongozi (leader). Clearly, if Jimbi wants to be a kilongozi (leader), he has to confirm the image that Simba constructs of him.

Simba’s description expresses Jimbi’s great concern for and identification with the Giryama. In other words, Jimbi’s portrait demonstrates his relationship with the Giryama as one of kulelewana (understand each other). He sees that people are losing Giryama values, and wants to reverse the moral deterioration of the Giryama. He acts from a clear understanding of what will happen if things stay the way they are now, Simba suggests. He is a leader with maono (vision), who aims at restoring communal values. Thus he displays the dual quality of kulelewana (understand each other); besides a mutual understanding with the people ((b)anaelewana na at’u), he brings ‘understanding each other’ ((g)anareha kulelewana). More than in the other kilongozi (leader) portraits anareha kulelewana (he brings ‘understanding each other’) is associated with bringing peace: …ga
Kila ts’i indahurira (so that the land will be quiet (be at peace)). Thus Simba suggests that there was a situation of ‘lack of peace’, which Jimbi managed to redress by having the clouds brought in. The cloud metaphor basically refers to a peaceful state, and indicates that the Giryama have regained the communal ideal of kuelewana (understand each other).21 Thus the kilongozi (leader) is considered not only to be instrumental in maintaining or promoting peaceful living among the Giryama, but also in restoring peaceful living in case of any disruption of social relationships.

As much as Simba emulates the personal leadership qualities of Jimbi within the traditional context of rain-seeking, he equally praises him for his potential in the context of national politics:

8.

Funaona utsungu sana. We feel very bitter.
Zhakuhenda k’afuna. What to do, we (kaya elders) we have not (we don’t know).
Fukinena dza vivi mimi, hunaangwa: “Be hatha we ulahi?” If we speak out like I do now, we will be told: ‘Where are you from?’
Ati, mut’u wa sisa. Ela ninwi muhendao Well now, politician (addressing Jimbi).
kazi ya kisirikali, mukiganenato kuryahu But you (pl) who do government work, if
na hatha mu mawakili ehu… mariomamumo you just speak them (the words) well there, as our advocates… they who are in, are
Azungu, Agiryama mamumo, kabila Europeans, they are Giryama, any tribe,
oyosi, (those) who have respectful souls,
aryahu mariomana maroho ga ishima. and compassionate souls.
na maroho ga mbazi. You can find them there.
Munadima kuona kuko.

Simba argues that Jimbi (and people like him) will be listened to in government, because of his senior position in the government administration. This is the first time that Simba Wanje explicitly refers to a certain formal status as a pre-condition for being listened to. Obviously, Simba associates political leadership with education and professionalism. However, in explaining to Jimbi the members that constitute parliament he quotes personal qualities as ‘respectful’ and ‘compassionate’.

Citing mbazi (compassion) as a leadership quality, Simba uses a term that has not come up in the discussion nor in the list of descriptive phrases of Giryama informants. Should

21 The cloud metaphor is a characteristic element of the Giryama discourse on (Giryama) continued existence, discussed in detail in chapter five.
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we therefore ignore it, assuming that it is Simba’s personal view on a personal quality of a kilongozi (leader)? Recalling the discussion of kuelewana (understand of each other), we may argue that mbazi (compassion) is not merely Simba’s opinion. In the discussion one of explanations that Giryama informants were noted to give of kuelewana (understand each other), was: manaconerana na mbazi (they people show compassion to each other) (cf. p.74). On this score, we could claim that mbazi (compassion) is a specific manifestation of the more general behaviour of kuelewana (understand each other). Mbazi (compassion) is expressed in the kilongozi (leader) who does things that intend to help and comfort people. This quality is also expressed in a Giryama saying: Muthumia ni dzala (the elder is a dustbin i.e. you can leave all your problems with him and he will solve them). It can be further illustrated from the educational booklet on Ronald Ngala (Momanyi 2001), mentioned before. In a reaction to a friend’s reservation about his capacities as a politician, Ronald Ngala says: “A good politician is one who understands the people’s problems and is able to help them” (p.46).

Concluding, we may phrase the quality of mbazi (compassion) thus:

8. he/she does good things for us, when he/ she sees that something is not good about us.

In fact, this semantic component is an elaboration on one that was cited before as: “he/she does many good things for us”. In view of this we may assume that mbazi (compassion) is a particularisation of ishima (respect), in the same way as ugumbao (courage), maono (vision) and uhendzo (love) are. This assumption is supported by a sentence from the same educational booklet about Ronald Ngala. The sentence, which was cited before, illustrates not only a connection between ugumbao (courage) and maono (vision) but also a link with mbazi (compassion): “…he showed compassion, vision and courage and became greatly admired” (Momanyi 2001: 38).

Once Simba has affirmed Jimbi’s qualities, and assuming that Jimbi has a say in government, he impresses on him his responsibility of speaking up in Parliament. Having pointed out the bad social and economic situation of Giryamaland, he says Jimbi has to discuss it there:

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9.

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*...munene porepore: ‘Ino ts’i funeihendadze?’* You speak carefully. “This land what will we do with it?”

This line echoes the meeting of Ronald Ngala with the Gotani community. Clearly, Simba views the Kenyan parliament in terms of a community council, which Jimbi seeks help from. Comparing the two events, we may note that in the case of Ronald Ngala it is a high level politician seeking the advice of local advisors, while Jimbi is the (prospective) local leader seeking the advice of higher ranking advisors. This difference brings out the lack of salience that hierarchy has in the Giryama understanding of *kilongozi* (leader). It is the quality of the words that is important, rather than the status. The importance of ‘good words’ was noted explicitly in the context of Stringer and is reiterated in the context of Jimbi by Simba. The importance of ‘good words’ was noted explicitly in the context of Stringer and is reiterated in the context of Jimbi by Simba.

Here Simba indicates that words demand a certain way of speaking. This is a widely appreciated quality, as is underlined by explication (f.) (*ana kidyomo kidzo* – he has a good way of speaking (i.e. his words are stimulating)). We could phrase this quality as:

9. he/she says many good things in a good way.

One last aspect in the Giryama understanding of the person of a *kilongozi*, that has not been mentioned yet, is age. Simba Wanje’s characters are all middle-aged. People generally tend to think of a *kilongozi* (leader) as a person older than forty, yet reality may be different. At the meeting of the Muungano water project (see chapter three, section V.2) the young age of the D.O. (approx. 35 years) caused an outspoken reaction among the audience, when they first caught a glimpse of him: “*Ni muhoho yuyu*” (It is a child that one). Still, the audience accepted him fully as a *kilongozi* (leader) when he showed himself to be quite capable of dealing with the problems at hand, carefully listening to and

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22 The importance of ‘good words’ is articulated graphically in the saying *Maneno matzoz gausa ndzovu mundari* (Good words drove elephants from the farm), visually portrayed on the front of this book.
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taking into account the ideas of the audience, and trying to harmonise the different interests. When I asked some of the people in the audience after the meeting whether they thought he was a *kilongozi* (leader), they all agreed. In response, some of them added: ‘*Ni kilongozi mudzo*’ (he is a good leader). We may therefore conclude that, in spite of the assumed middle age of a *kilongozi* (leader) it is not the number of years that count but rather the wisdom that is associated with age. This can be reflected in a semantic component as:

10. he/she knows many things, like someone who has lived for a long time.

**III.5 The figure of *kilongozi* (leader) in the life story and the explications compared**

In the introduction to the analysis it was stated that Simba Wanjé’s narrative portraits of four *vilongozi* (leaders) are assumed to be largely unconscious mental constructions. In view of the very explicit picture that Simba paints in his life story, this may seem a misguided assumption and therefore deserves some explanation. The main reason for assuming it to be a largely unconscious construction is that Simba Wanjé operates within the framework of ‘collective memory’ when narrating his life story. This implies that his descriptions of the *vilongozi* (leaders) echo long-standing understandings of leadership. The presentation of ‘talking’ characters (i.e. the use of direct speech rather than reported speech) and phrases that belong to accepted Giryama oral history underline this historical ‘framing’ (cf. Kenyatta’s words on Ngala’s death in [1.]). Within this overall historical framework Simba Wanjé expresses his personal views, which strongly relate to traditional values. One clear instance of this (unequal) relationship is Simba’s half-way stand on the importance of formal education. As was indicated, formal education is not a salient aspect in the Giryama understanding of *kilongozi* (leader). This is confirmed in Simba’s portrayal of Ronald Ngala. Nevertheless, one of the reasons why Simba Wanjé singles Philip Jimbi out as the prospective leader in national politics is his professional background. This suggests that Simba attributes importance to education in a modern *kilongozi* (leader). Also, formal education was noted in the list of explications to be a quality that marked a *kilongozi* (leader). However, the dominant Giryama notion of the leader’s mental abilities is in terms of wisdom. Wisdom is a matter of personality development rather than schooling in the Giryama understanding, and it therefore relegates formal education to the
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background. Thus, Simba’s personal view on education relating to a leader is secondary to the overriding cultural notion of wisdom, and therefore does not feature prominently in a narrative that positions itself within the framework of ‘collective memory’.

On this score, we can defend a lesser degree of consciousness in the life story than in the explications. A comparison of the list of explications with the conclusions from the analysis of the life story not only illustrates this, but also indicates that there are differences in (degrees of) signification. First, while ishima (respect) and the dual phenomenon of kuelewana (understand each other) were accorded the same prominence in the list of explications as in the analysis, the ranking of the other descriptive elements of the respondents was not reflected in the analysis. Secondly, from the list of explications five out of eight recur in Simba’s narrative as salient qualities of the kilongozi (leader) (other qualities feature in the narrative and not in the list). As was noted before, formal education 

((c) ana elimu ya sikuli (he has formal education) does not manifest itself as a salient quality. The two other explications which are not mentioned in Simba’s narrative are: (e) mutu lwazu (an open person) and (h) anasinkizat’o (he listens well). In fact, they express two sides of a value that may be termed ‘attentiveness’; an ‘open’ leader is a person who listens carefully to the ideas, needs, and arguments of the other. I think it takes little imagination to see that these qualities are reflected in the life story of Simba Wanje, even if they are not explicitly mentioned in the context. Surely, Ngala’s meeting with his Gotani community was based on an open mind for each other and proceeded in the highest concentration on the matter at hand. Also Stringer’s meeting with the kaya elders conveys an atmosphere of mutual ‘attentiveness’. When we look beyond the confines of Simba’s life story we find a Giryama folk tale, which sheds a clear light on the positive aspects of ‘attentiveness’. Actually, the folk tale does more than that, it is a fine illustration of the Giryama understanding of leadership in terms of a person that has superior qualities, not shared by other people. For these reasons it offers a nice conclusion to our discussion of kilongozi (leader).

The folk tale Lungwi Mulachu (the smart chameleon) was narrated to me by my research assistant, Michael Kazungu. In it the lion is presented as a visionary leader who wants to protect his community from starvation in time of a poor harvest. He calls a meeting of all animals, and urges them to think of a plan of action in case famine strikes the community.

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23 The most one could argue is that the mention of a certain professionalism is an indication of a changing notion about ‘wisdom’ in a kilongozi (leader).
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In the spirit of kulewana (understand each other) each animal is allowed to voice his idea: Kila mumwenga wao wamboza maonige, ela Mbenwa nde aremboza maoni madzo kukira ga osini (Every one of them expressed their view, but the jackal was the one whose idea was the best of all). Every view is taken seriously by the lion, and he only decides which is the best after hearing all of them. His decision is the outcome of a process of ‘listening well’ and being open to the views of others. This quality of ‘attentiveness’ is brought out more dramatically at another communal meeting. The lion summons all animals after it has been discovered that thieves have been stealing from their communal food supplies:

11.


There at the meeting they talked for a long time, when at last the chameleon expressed his view. Among all those who were there, there was no one who liked to listen to the chameleon. They considered the chameleon a small animal who liked making jokes. The sheep got up and said: If the rhino and the whale have been defeated by these thieves, what will you, as a small animal, do? The chameleon persisted in saying that he could do it. These things happened there until their ruler did not know what to say, and thought it was better to give him (the chameleon) the opportunity to do that job.

Here ‘attentiveness’ distinguishes the leader from the other animals. The others do not want to listen to the chameleon because of their preconceived ideas about him. They obviously do not have the same openness to others that the lion displays. In this respect the leader stands out from among the other members of his community; he is able to overcome the reservations that the others impress on him (and which he may himself tacitly entertain) about the chameleon. And of course he is rewarded for it. The chameleon turns out to be the hero of the community, catching three adult hyenas and a baby hyena in the granary!
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Although the folk tale is primarily about big and strong versus small and cunning in time of distress, at a deeper narrative level it is a portrayal of ‘attentiveness’ as a leadership quality that contributes highly to the well-being of the community. Indeed, it is basically the lion’s attentiveness which ensures that kuelewana (understand each other) is restored in the end.

Although ‘attentiveness’ is articulated explicitly in the context of kilongozi (leader) it is considered by Giryama as a general value. In fact, Lungwi Mulachu (the smart chameleon) suggests the negative effects of lack of ‘attentiveness’ among community members. Their lack of ‘attentiveness’ results from lack of respect for the chameleon. This linking up of ishima (respect) and ‘attentiveness’ is not incidental. Like uaminifu (trustworthiness/integrity) ‘attentiveness’ is an expression of respectful behaviour, which gains heightened significance in a kilongozi (leader). Similar to uaminifu (trustworthiness/integrity) too, ‘attentiveness’ is an implied meaning dimension of ishima (respect) rather than a distinct element of leadership behaviour. As a result it is not reflected as a separate component in the description of kilongozi (leader).

IV Cultural semantic description of kilongozi

From the analysis a set of ten semantic components have been distilled that reflect the salient qualities of kilongozi (leader). They are presented as a rather loose set of descriptive details. However, as we have noted before, leadership qualities are connected and seem to reflect a coherent image of kilongozi (leader). One foundational component was found already in the analysis of the leadership that Ronald Ngala represents, and which can be summed up as ‘goodness’. However, what does ‘goodness’ refer to? Although the semantic description includes many references, I tried to derive from the ten descriptions some more general categorising features. In fact, I found that each of the components could be summarised with the help of three basic verbs viz. Ø (= ‘be’), ‘do’ and ‘feel’, reflecting the people’s evaluation of the leader’s personality, the leader’s behaviour, and how kilongozi (leader) influences them, respectively. These then combine with the evaluator ‘good’ into ‘be good’ (character), ‘do (many) good things’ (behaviour) and ‘feel good’ (positive self-evaluation).

Apart from structuring the picture of the kilongozi (leader) into three relevant areas of understanding, the three verbs also bring out that some leadership qualities require more than one of these verbs to be adequately expressed. As a result some qualities are
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represented in the semantic description across ‘be good’ ‘do (many) good things’ and ‘feel good’. For instance, ishima (respect), uaminifu (trustworthiness/integrity) and mbazi (compassion) are partly reflected in: “This person is a good person”. Ishima (respect) is also referred to in “…we feel something good towards him” while all three are reflected in “He does many good things for us”. The reflection of concepts in different experiential domains underscores not only their salience, but also the degree of overlap between the various concepts at a cognitive level.

Before presenting the final semantic description, I must indicate one essential element that is still missing in the description of kilongozi (leader). Although attention has been given to the aspects of the relationship between kilongozi (leader) and people, the semantic components have not made clear the position of the kilongozi (leader) as heading a social unit. Indeed, it is the assumed context in which the understanding of kilongozi (leader) is embedded. It should therefore be reflected in the semantic description. At the same time reference to a ‘natural’ hierarchical order should be avoided. After all, it was argued to lack salience among the Giryama. Capturing this social status without reference to a hierarchical structure, I suggest the following semantic description:

11. he/ she is part of the same thing as us.
12. because of him we can think that we are one.

With this addition we can now present a comprehensive picture of kilongozi’s features:

*Kilongozi* (leader)

A kilongozi is someone people think of like this:
this person is a good person
he/she is part of the same thing as us
because of him/her we can think that we are one
he/she is not like us, he/she is above us
he/she knows many things, like someone who has lived for a long time

he/she does many good things for us
he/she does many good things with us
   not because he/she is the same as us
he/she makes all of us feel like parts of the same thing
because of this, we feel something good towards him/her
this is good for us.

This description does no more, but also no less, than express a Giryama folk ideal of
kilongozi (leader). It shows a picture of a charismatic person, who endears him/herself to
people by being one of them, but is extraordinary in his/her capacities to guarantee the
well-being of the community.

This claim to the Giryama understanding of kilongozi (leader) in terms of a folk ideal gains
unexpected and additional force when reflected upon in a cross-cultural discussion. In the
following section the concept of kilongozi (leader) features against the backdrop of some
Western ideas on leadership.

V Reflections on Western and Giryama understandings of leadership

Similar to the discussion of the Giryama understanding of kuelewana (understand each
other) (chapter three), English and Dutch concepts are used for cross-cultural
examination. Additionally, and different from usual practice, another source of information
has been used. George Goethals’ (2005) review of psychological theories of leadership in
the West offers a relevant angle for comparison in a context where emotional and moral
evaluations overrule rational ones, as characteristically happens when concepts are
understood in terms of a folk ideal.

To start with the most conscious mental constructions of leader/leider, we find that LDCE
(2003) cites as the most general understanding of ‘leader’:

1. IN CONTROL the person who directs or controls a group, organization,
country, etc;

Although not expressly stated, but demonstrated in the second part of the definition, this
sense of the word ‘leader’ does not occur on its own. It always demands particularising
elements:

- ruler: [+] of the leader of the local black community /
party/union/government/ opposition etc leader / political/military/ religious leader /
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*the largest ever gathering of world leaders* (= people who are in charge of countries) *natural/born leader* (someone who naturally has all the qualities needed to be a leader).

The most general understanding of Dutch ‘leider’, as defined in the Van Dale dictionary (2005), echoes this definition, both in content and in its linguistic manifestation:

1 persoon die leidt, bestuurt….: *de leiders van de opstand, van de rebellen, de leider van een studieclub, van een cursus; degene die de besprekingen, het onderwijs bestuurt; ….politiek leider, lijsttrekker; - ook als tweede lid in samenstelling als de volgende, waarin het eerste lid een groepering, vereniging of activiteit noemt: arbeidsleider, campagneleider, gespreksleider, juntaleider, moslimleider, rebellenleider, sekteleider, vakbondsleider.*

Translation:

1 person who leads, rules….; *the leaders of the rebellion, of the rebels; the leader of a study group, of a course; the person who controls the discussions/education; …political leader, person who heads the list of candidates of a party; - also the second part of a compound word as the following, in which the first part cites a group, society or activity: workers’ leader, campaign leader, discussion leader, junta leader, Muslim leader, rebel leader, sect leader, trade union leader.*

In spite of the different linguistic manifestation of leader/leider, their definitions seem to be compatible with parts of the Giryama understandings of *kilongozi* (leader): ‘He/she is not like all of us, he/she is above us’, and ‘he/she does (…) things for us’. Characteristically, no evaluating elements are included. This can be partly explained as consistent with the aim of most dictionaries, which is to be ‘objective’. In reality, Western societal expectations are that a leader is morally superior. Instances to the contrary lead to a general outcry, and especially in Britain, have resulted in calls for the politician’s resignation (see note 26).

The second source of information on the Western understanding of leadership underscores the salience of people’s evaluation of the leader in moral and affective terms. In his article on psychological theories of leadership, George Goethals (2005) reviews
modern studies of leadership (including Sigmund Freud) as well as American Presidential leadership. Each of these studies describes Western people’s expectations of a leader. In many respects they show striking resemblances with the Giryama understanding of kilongozi (leader) as a folk ideal. He notes that what is common to all the approaches “is the idea that people do have a schema about leadership and that this schema forms a standard for judging leaders” (2005: 553). Interestingly, Goethals demonstrates that this schema includes the same ‘building blocks’ as those that we claim to structure the Giryama understanding of leadership: the leader’s personal qualities, the leader’s behaviour, and how he influences the people.

Starting with the personal qualities of a leader, he implicitly introduces the concept of leader as a folk ideal in his brief review of Freud’s theory of leadership:

Humans are prepared…to identify with and respond to leaders. However, leaders must have particular qualities. They must be imposing ideal types, and they must command language and ideas (italics added) (2005:548).

In this description we find clear echoes of the Giryama understanding of kilongozi (leader). Being an ideal type, and commanding language and ideas made Ronald Ngala the perfect Giryama leader, and Philip Jimbi too in the eyes of Simba Wanjie. Also the list of leadership qualities that Goethals cites from Lord’s psychological study of people’s image of leaders resonates with Giryama understandings:

...leaders are thought of as competent, caring, honest, understanding, outgoing, verbally skilled, determined, aggressive, decisive, dedicated, educated, kind and well dressed (2005:553).

In nearly all respects this description fits the kilongozi (leader). Marked distinctions are descriptive elements such as ‘aggressive’ and ‘well dressed’. Also, even if education features as a descriptive element of kilongozi (leader), it does not have the same connotation as in a Western leader. The formal education which the Western understanding implies, is not a salient element in the Giryama understanding. In the Giryama context wisdom, based on life experience and the teachings of the homestead, is considered more essential than formal education, as has been indicated before. Interestingly, wisdom is not mentioned in the above quotation. However, Verwey (2006) points out that European leaders, different from their American counterparts, are expected
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to demonstrate wisdom in their behaviour. He explains the difference from the social grids in which they operate. The European leader is a product of a so-called hierarchical social grid-group, which favours both formal education and a gradual process of learning from life experiences. His American counterpart is the product of a social grid-group that is characterised by individualism. Verwey argues therefore, that the American ideal is a leader who is bold and daring, age being immaterial – there is even a strong tendency among leaders to present themselves in the media as young and energetic. His argument indicates two things. One is that the author of the quotation cannot be a European. Secondly, and more important in the present context, that the European ideal of leadership is closer to the Giryama ideal as the American in attaching importance to the element of wisdom.

Psychological studies of the behaviour of leaders also indicate cross-cultural similarities. Goethals (2005) notes that behaviour is largely understood in terms of charismatic leadership. Citing from the psychologist Bass’ study of the behaviour of so-called transformational leaders, Goethals lists the following attributes:

1. …they have charisma, or idealized influence. They “display conviction,” “present… important values,” and “emphasize the importance of purpose, commitment, and ethical component of decisions …” (p.551).
2. … transformational leaders use inspirational motivation, meaning that they “articulate an appealing vision of the future, challenge followers with high standards, talk optimistically with enthusiasm, and provide encouragement and meaning for what needs to be done” (p.551).
3. …such leaders provide intellectual stimulation, pushing followers to consider new points of view and to question old assumptions, and to articulate their own views (p.552).
4. …they demonstrate individualized consideration, meaning that they take into account the needs, capacities, and aspirations of each individual follower in the effort to treat each individual follower equitably (p.552).

24 Marco Verwey is one of the advocates of the grid-group theory on institutional organisations, introduced by Mary Douglas (see introduction).
25 Transformational leaders are understood to be leaders who ‘…move followers a long way’ (Goethals 2005: 551).
To this list another theory adds that “charismatic leaders must take risks and sacrifice themselves for their goals, thus demonstrating … courage and conviction” (2005: 552).

Parallels to these characteristics are evident in the descriptions of Ngala who was portrayed as ‘the star of the Giryama’ (cf. Goethals [1]), displaying vision (cf. Goethals [2]) and courage. The description of the leader’s behaviour as ‘individualised consideration’ (cf. Goethals [4]), echoes the kilongozi (leader) quality of mbazi (compassion), even if it manifests itself in relation to the individual rather than the collective. Another aspect which the Western and the Giryama leader images share is moral authority. Goethals expresses this in ‘present…important values’. A striking example of the salience of moral soundness in leadership among the British is the case of three political leaders being ousted from office in 2006 after having been publicly denounced for immoral behaviour.26 Their resignation was experienced as the only right way of behaviour. Similarly, the Giryama may publicly reject a leader who does not display expected moral soundness. This was illustrated earlier with a passage from the folk tale ‘Katsungula na Mutsara’ (the Hare and the Dam) (section III.1).27

An essential difference is presented in [Goethals 3], where the Western leader is described as ideally stimulating his people intellectually. The advancement of rational intelligence is not contained in the folk ideal of kilongozi (leader). Rather, the stimulation of social intelligence is highlighted, kilongozi (leader) providing stimuli for peaceful living.

The third category that constitutes the folk ideal of a leader was argued to be the people’s evaluation of the leader’s relationship with them. This evaluation is described by Western psychologists in strikingly similar terms as the Giryama. Freud claims that people have the illusion that their leader loves all of the individuals equally and justly (2005:549). His statement recalls the Giryama element of uhenzo (love), which was argued to be a characteristic feature of kilongozi (leader). In view of the experience of love of the leader,

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26 The three leaders are the ex-leader of the Liberal Democrats, Charles Kennedy, the ex-Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, and the ex-Minister of Home Affairs, Charles Clarke. Alcoholism, adultery, and the release of foreign criminal convicts, who were to be expelled from the country, respectively marked them as not morally above board in the eye of the general public.

27 Even without cross-cultural examples, Goethals suspects already cross-cultural compatibility of leadership behaviour, when he writes: “The behaviours of the charismatic leaders … very likely fit, at least in many cultures, people’s expectations for what a leader should be like” (2005:552).
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it is not surprising that the people “have strong emotional attachments to leaders” (2005:557). This emotional attachment that western people are argued to experience towards their leader clearly resonates with the phrase “we feel something good towards him/her” from the semantic description of kilongozi (leader) above.

Indeed, Goethals’ review of psychological theories of leadership demonstrates that the largely unconscious mental constructions of Western people have many resemblances with those of the Giryama. Does this mean that the concept of leader is trans-cultural? I don’t think we can give a comprehensive answer to this question on the basis of the previous discussion. What the above discussion has borne out, and which is a major constituting aspect of the understanding of leadership, is the difference of socio-cultural contexts in which the images emerge. This difference is apparent already in the dictionary explanations of leader/leider. It is a word that does not usually appear on its own, while in Kigiryama the word kilongozi (leader) does usually occur on its own.

Basically, it is the different social organisation of Western nations and Giryama society which gives rise to this linguistic phenomenon. A Western society is much more compartmentalised than the Giryama. As a result, Western leaders are differentiated according to the compartments they represent. Obviously, this leads to understandings of the concept of leader that is co-determined by the particular compartment he is associated with. This is a very different situation from kilongozi (leader). As was mentioned earlier, the word kilongozi (leader) criss-crosses through Giryama society. The term can be applied to people as different as a family head, a Giryama elder, a religious leader, or the President. Because of his essential oneness the kilongozi (leader) is always within close range of every Giryama. This physical closeness is in fact the context from which Giryama develop their feelings of emotional closeness. In Western countries on the other hand, leaders are accepted as (somewhat) remote, because of their ‘natural’ superior position in the hierarchy of social positions (especially in Europe). This popular understanding is enhanced by the way people characteristically picture a leader, as a person who distinguishes himself from his people by his outfit (cf. ‘well-dressed’, p.135). Concluding, we may argue that Western people do not develop emotional attachments from proximity, but rather from the ideas that a leader forcefully expresses and vividly embodies (cf. Goethals 2005:557).

Another corollary of the fundamental ‘oneness’ of kilongozi (leader) in Giryama society is the central position of kuelewana (understand each other). Throughout Giryama society
**Kilongozi as a mediator of peace**

kilongozi (leader) is understood to promote this Giryama ideological principle of social relationships. In the West, where leaders are generally leaders of a particular interest group, leaders are evaluated on their capacity to bind people together in relation to the particular interest they represent. In fact, Western leaders who come closest to the Giryama conception are political leaders or heads of state, who are understood to bind people together as a whole. However, this is considered a corollary of the leader's successfulness at Goethals [1. to 4.]. In the Giryama context, a leader's behaviour is essentially understood in terms of an agent of peace, promoting mutual understanding among his people and identifying with them.

**VI Conclusion**

Even though it is impossible in such a brief comparative discussion to gauge the degree to which the two understandings are compatible or incompatible, I think we can make some general concluding observations on striking similarities and differences.

Approaching the concept of kilongozi (leader) from an inside and a cross-cultural perspective, we have gained insight into the semantic and ideological dimensions of kilongozi (leader). One general aspect is that the Giryama understanding of kilongozi (leader) is conceived in terms of a folk ideal. This appears to be a shared feature with Western understandings of leadership. Both folk ideals contain moral and emotional evaluations, of which moral authority is a major element in the understanding of leadership. Another similarity between the two understandings is that they are constituted of three defining categories: personal leadership qualities, leadership behaviour and the leader's influence on the people. Notwithstanding these broad similarities, the two folk ideals emerge in societies that are very different from each other. As a result of this, they were seen to display significant culture specific dimensions.

Having outlined the most striking similarities and differences between Western and Giryama conceptualisations of leadership, I think it is important to make some concluding remarks on the central aim of the discussion, which is to gain better insight into the person and the role of kilongozi (leader) in Giryama society. The kilongozi (leader) has been demonstrated to be an essential node in the Giryama network of social relationships, including every head of every single social unit of Giryama society and beyond. Not surprisingly, his leadership qualities are predominantly defined in terms of social intelligence. More specifically, his character and behaviour are evaluated as to the degree
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in which he manages to promote the norms and values that are entailed in *kuelewana* (understand each other). Characteristic leadership qualities that facilitate the enhancement of *kuelewana* (understand each other) are *ugumbao* (courage) and *maono* (vision), which are additional leadership values to the ones that he is considered to have as a Giryama, and of which the most salient is *ishima* (respect). The influence of *kilongozi* (leader) on the people is articulated in terms of a charismatic leader. His love for them, with concomitant expressions of compassion with the people and trustworthiness, appeals to their social intelligence. Ideally, this affects people so strongly, that they feel good about being committed to promoting *kuelewana* (understand each other). We can therefore conclude that the focus of the folk ideal of *kilongozi* (leader) in the context of the Giryama ideology of peace and conflict is not so much on an ideal type of Giryama, but rather on the ideal mediator of the many dimensions of *kuelewana* (understand each other).

It is not difficult to see now why *kilongozi* (leader) has been chosen by so many respondents to be a category head in the sort-pile task. He ideally incorporates all the elements that promote peaceful living and prevent conflicts. Although no mention has been made yet of the role of *kilongozi* (leader) in conflicts, he does play a central part in resolving them, as will be evident from the discussion of the Giryama understanding of conflict resolution, or, more appropriate in the Giryama context, reconciliation (chapter six).
5 Ts"i (land), the substance of peace and conflict¹

Introduction

It cannot be denied that with the introduction of ts"i (land) we tread on sensitive ground. Land, and especially coastal land, is a major object of concern and interest for Kenyan national politics and tourism investors. In fact, national politics with the support of the local government institutions, have dramatically affected the Giryama situation as regards access and ownership of land over the last four decades. Before exploring the Giryama understanding of ‘land’, I would therefore like to consider first some of the most characteristic features of the Giryama contemporary predicament relating to land ownership and access to land.

During my first period of fieldwork in the late nineteen nineties, there was a real scramble for title deeds among the Giryama of Kailoleni (map II). Giryama were given the opportunity by the government to buy title deeds for the land on which they were living, and land that was not yet occupied was put up for sale. Until that time land had been Trust Land, i.e. land was owned by the government. The access to land and its ‘ownership’ had been the prerogative of clan elders. They were in charge of the proper use of the land, and of its boundaries. The change to ‘commercialising’ land, imposed by the government’s issuing of title deeds, came as a shock to those who considered the land on which they had lived for generations, as their own. People were also worried about the impact of the new policy. What would happen if they were not able to pay for the title deeds, would they be ousted from their land? And another worrying thought was whether the government would use the boundaries that had been observed traditionally as guidelines for land partitioning.

In the interior parts of Giryamaland, where land is less fertile, the Giryama are left undisturbed. There land is either communal land i.e. belonging to a particular clan, or Trust Land.

In Tezo (map III) the situation is different again. There a settlement scheme enabled Giryama to acquire freehold titles at a very low cost in the sixties of the last century. Still,

¹ Ts"i in Kigiryama can also be used as an adjective to mean ‘low’ or ‘down’, as in the saying Mumala vidzo aiala ts"i (A person who wants good things, sleeps low). In this chapter only the noun ts"i is discussed.
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the rapid growth of commercial centres along the Mombasa-Malindi tarmac road has resulted in a considerable increase of the population, and consequently in a major pressure on the availability of land. Nowadays illegal occupation of land is a common feature in the strip along the Mombasa-Malindi road.

Another factor which affects the access to land adversely in Tezo is the high prices that are paid for plots that come on the market. This means that most Giryama cannot possibly buy land in this area, and the result is that land is bought by outsiders, and usually it is bought for commercial development. Once I asked Giryama what they thought of the Arab-owned quarry near Kakanjuni, which clearly destroyed part of the grazing ground of their cattle. They simply said they could not do anything about it. This was in 2003. However, there seems to be a growing awareness among the Giryama that they need to protect themselves against the disruptive influences of outsiders on their living conditions and their access to land. An article from the East African Standard, a Kenyan national newspaper, signals this growing awareness.

The Malindi District Commissioner has assured residents of Matolani in Chakama location that nobody would be displaced to pave way for the construction of a multi-million shilling soda ash company.

The DC Jan Ireri dismissed claims by some individuals that more than 50 families will be displaced for the establishment of a Sh500 million soda ash company in Chakama location.

(Paul Gitau, September 2 2006)

Being at the mercy of powers that are far beyond the influence of ordinary Giryama is a characteristic feature of the Giryama experience of access to and ownership of land. One of these powers is the government, another is the inheritors of land from the time when the Kenyan coast was part of the Sultanate of Zanzibar. They are a legacy of the British negotiations with the Sultan of Zanzibar over the Kenyan coast. As a matter of fact, one of the pre-conditions for the Sultan of Zanzibar for agreeing to a British Protectorate of the Kenyan coast in 1895, was that his subordinates would keep the rights of the land owned by them. This was laid down in the Kenyan constitution. When I was in Tezo in 2003, some people pointed out to me a plot which had been claimed quite unexpectedly by an Arab person. When I asked them why this plot belonged to the Arab person, they said they did not know, but they knew the same had happened in other places. Later I was told by a member of the Land Board that indeed once in a while an Arab owner turned up to claim his right to a plot.
From the above description it may be clear that many Giryama live their lives as ‘squatters’, under constant threat of eviction by the legal owners of the land. Still, many of those ‘squatters’ have lived all their lives in the same place, as well as their parents before them. They feel they belong there, and consider the land on which they live to be theirs by tradition. Their interpretation rubs uncomfortably of course with the government land policy. This, together with the stalled settlement programmes of the government – argued to be due to corruption in its execution – has been indicated by analysts as a major trigger for young Giryama men to participate in the Likoni clashes in 1997. From the government point of view a complicating matter in the distribution of land is the increasing scarcity of it, and the increasing poverty of the soil. However that may be, the government seems to realise that their lack of action could stir up anti-government feelings among the Giryama. In the East African Standard of 31 August 2006, we read:

Kibaki [Kenya’s President] stepped into Bahari [Kilifi District] to a rousing welcome organised by Khamisi and other leaders in the constituency. During his last visit in the Coast two weeks ago, Kibaki issued title deeds to thousands of squatters in Malindi and Kilifi and told off absentee landlords who own large chunks of land at the Coast. He ordered the Ministry of Lands to repossess such land and re-distribute it to squatters before December this year.

Although the President’s statement may have roused some appraisal among the Giryama, no doubt their prevailing reaction must have been “Let’s wait and see”, as so many government promises have gone up in smoke before.

The above description gives the impression that the Giryama feel that the government does not take good care of them. Although this is indeed a general feeling among the Giryama, their experiences differ according to where they live in Giryamaland. Obviously,
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the Giryama who live far away from government intervention are less guided by the government policy (Kanyinga 2000: 5). In the Land Settlement areas (*inter alia* Tezo and Kilifi Township (maps II and III)) and areas where land has become private property (e.g. Kaloleni) people deal on a daily basis with the reality of the government rules relating to land ownership. In view of these disparate experiences of land, it is not surprising that discourses on land vary among the Giryama.  

We may wonder, how this affects the exploration of the Giryama understanding of *tsi* (land). In view of the different discourses can we still assume that there is a shared understanding among the Giryama of *tsi* (land)? In fact, the answer to this question has a direct bearing on the way *tsi* (land) is approached. Thus, this question needs to be addressed, before exploring the meaning aspects of *tsi* (land). Another matter which is not so much part of the central discussion, but which cannot be ignored in the context of *tsi* (land), is the impact of the culture specific features of the Giryama understanding of *tsi* (land) on their experience of the government’s land policy. The evaluations of Giryama people and Kenyan administrators of a situation as one of ‘rightful dwelling’ versus ‘squatting’, are already an indication of diverging understandings between the two. I think we will be able to say more on the subject after we have explored the Giryama understanding of *tsi* (land).

I Analytical outlines

*Tsì* (land) was an enigmatic key word in the initial stages of researching it. On the one hand, there was general agreement among Giryama informants that *tsì* (land) is the one necessary pre-condition for peace. Yet, with 33% it scored lowest of all the key words in the sort-pile task. Additionally, the explications of the Giryama informants vary considerably, and do not seem to contain any ideological charging. This is confirmed by the use of *tsì* (land) in interviews, conversations and life stories, in which a similar variety of interpretations emerges.

Trying to find the underlying motivations, I started analysing textual instances of *tsì* (land) from across Giryamaland. I found that *tsì* (land) features in these texts in a distinct

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5 For a critical analysis of the land settlement scheme see: Jan Hoorweg (2000).
6 Janet McIntosh (2005b) found a very politically pronounced discourse on *tsì* among Giryama in the Malindi area, where land is considered God-given. In the areas of my fieldwork the story of Singways as the original home of all Mijikenda sub-groups is still the dominant discourse.
collection of set phrases and collocations, which characteristically reveal metaphoric and metonymic renderings of *ts’i* (land). This finding was decisive for the direction of the analysis. To realise the full impact of it, we need to briefly recall the cognitive status of metaphors and metonymies – if less articulately – argued for in the introduction of the analytical framework.

It was indicated that metaphors can be instruments for thinking about abstract phenomena, while metonymy guides our thinking to a salient aspect of a phenomenon (cf. the conceptual metaphor of TIME IS MONEY in *spend* time, *run out of* time, have *little* time; cf. metonymy in: “She owns a Rembrandt” (= producer for produced)). Applying this argument to *ts’i* (land), we can claim that metaphoric collocations with *ts’i* (land) – as well as metonymic expressions of *ts’i* (land) – are building bricks in Giryama thinking about *ts’i* (land). Consequently, they should be a rich source of information on the more profound levels of the Giryama understanding of *ts’i* (land). This is the reason why metaphoric and metonymic renderings of *ts’i* (land) are the central object of analysis. In the analysis due attention will be given to the question of their salience to all Giryama.

The discussion is organised along the same lines as those of the other *key words*. It starts on the more conscious mental constructions of *ts’i* (land). Explications by Giryama and Dutch and English counterparts of *ts’i* (land) are explored, to foreground some basic conceptual characteristics of *ts’i* (land). Then the discussion proceeds with less conscious mental constructions, both verbal and non-verbal. Their interpretation is a first step to gaining insight into the more abstract dimensions of *ts’i* (land). As will be obvious from the discussion no conclusive observations can be made from the analysis of the collocations separately, but hints of underlying meaning relations emerge in the process of interpretation. The ‘loose ends’ come together in the second half of the analysis, which features *ts’i* (land) in its relationship to *kaya* (sacred centre), and the role of rain (*vula*) in that relationship. Throughout the discussion new meaning components of *ts’i* (land) are reflected in semantic descriptions. The analysis is rounded off with a full semantic description of *ts’i* (land).

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7 In former times the word *kaya* meant ‘home’. This meaning is still current among the Digo, a fellow Mijikenda sub-group. A remnant of *kaya* as home is found in the Giryama saying: *Muzigo unerera hehi na kaya* (a load becomes heavier as one comes nearer the home).
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II Explanations of *tsi* (land)

II.1 *Tsii* (land) defined by Giryama

When I asked my response group of roughly one hundred Giryama men and women: *Tsii ni non?* *(What is tsii?)* they generally gave me a puzzled look. In group discussions my assistant would then emphatically state my interest: *Anahendza amanye* *(she really needs to know).* After experiencing this reaction a few times, even my assistant queried me, if it was really necessary to include the word in my questionnaire.

I guess that the reactions of the informants and my assistant could be explained by their general association of ‘land’ with ‘ground’. Asking the meaning of ‘ground’ is asking for the obvious, and how should one explain the obvious? The first explication of the list below exemplifies this reaction. Still, the explications bring out some interesting points for reflection. One is that they suggest that Giryama people prioritise one among different definitions according to their situation. Another remarkable feature of the definitions is, that they closely resemble the words ‘land, country, ground’, which are cited as translations of *tsi* in Deed’s *Giryama-English Dictionary* *(1964).*

In descending order of frequency the answers that were given, are:

a) *ii* this (in the sense of ‘here’, the hand pointing down to the ground)
b) *Giryama* Giryamaland
c) *Kenya* 
d) *hatu* a place
e) *kurima* cultivate

The list includes the reactions of all of the hundred informants, 70 people from Land Settlement areas as against 30 from the interior parts. In the Land Settlement areas [b] and [c] show equal numbers; the responses from the interior area show a slightly different sequence and an even shorter list: [a], [e], [b]. As this group is small, the explications have little statistical value, yet the discussion below demonstrates that the figures are consistent with the general discourse in the interior parts of Giryamaland.
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Within the group of the Land Settlement areas, I found that the younger people (15-30 years old) gave the explication ‘Kenya’ before ‘Giryamaland’, thus prioritising being a ‘national’ to being a ‘Giryama’. This answer may relate to the better prospects and possibilities that Giryama youth and young working class attribute to being a Kenyan citizen, rather than to being a Giryama.

One definite, if somewhat general, characteristic of these explications, is that they have geographical, cultural and livelihood dimensions. Thus we could suggest the following initial semantic description:

1. It is a big place
2. People who speak Kigiryama have lived here for a long time.

Although not made explicit in the explications, yet a general assumption among the Giryama is that ts’? (land) is where one’s father and one’s father’s ancestors were born, and where one expects to be buried. Phrased in a semantic explication, these elements can be summed up as:

3. I am part of this place all the time
   a. because my father is part of it
   b. and because when I die I will be buried here
4. There are many people like me, because their fathers are part of the same place.

Taken together these four semantic components are a basis for reflecting on the Giryama understanding of ts’?(land) form a cross-cultural perspective.

II.2 Ts’? compared with English country/land and Dutch land

If we set the components of the semantic description [1.-4.] against the English translations of ‘land, country, ground’, the word ‘country’ appears to be the most compatible candidate, in the sense of “He has been in the country for a week already”. With some reservation to the explicitness of ‘when I die I will be buried there, so that I stay...
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part of it', all the elements of the above semantic definition seem to fit. However, 'country' has primary connotations of state and nationhood, which ts'i (land) has not. It may refer to a nation [cf. c], but this is a derived meaning, in the sense that it has aspects of state and nationhood in addition to the primary meaning elements of ts'i (land).

The English term 'land' does not have these connotations of state and nationhood, and might be considered therefore a more suitable candidate. The relevant vocabulary definitions in LDCE (2003), however, show a different picture:

i. **ground**, an area of ground, especially used for farming or building (cf. informants' explications [a], [d] and [e])

ii. ([iii] in LDCE) **country**, literary country or area (cf. informants' explications [b] and [c])

Besides having a restricted use, occurring only in a literary context in the sense of 'country', there is no reference to people's identification with it, which is so specifically present in its Kigiryama counterpart [cf. 3.,4.]. The English word 'homeland' seems a closer semantic equivalent. Still, the proper Kigiryama translation of 'homeland' would be *kwetu* (our place) or *ts'i ya kwetu* (lit. the land of our place), which has explicit affective connotations.

With a view to the elusive character of *ts'i* (land) when comparing it with English counterparts, we may assume that a comparison with its Dutch counterparts shows the same phenomenon. Interestingly, Dutch *land* is defined in the Van Dale dictionary (2005) among other things, and without modifiers, as (v) *het eigen land*, *het land waar men is geboren*, syn. *vaderland* (the 'own' land, the land where one was born, synonym: fatherland), like in "hij is al weer een week in het land", the equivalent of "he has been in the country for a week", quoted above. The aspect of 'belonging' in *eigen* (own) reflects element [3.+3.a] of the semantic explication of *ts'i* (land) (the Dutch counterpart does not

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8 Although this is not a common feature of the British discourse on 'land', the relationship between 'the dead' and 'land' gains salience in the context of war. Cf. the famous lines from "the Soldier" of the 'War-poet' Rupert Brooke:

> If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England.

9 In Understanding Cultures through their Key Words (1997) Anna Wierzbicka presents an elaborate comparative cultural-semantic analysis of 'homeland' words in German, Polish and Russian.
generally entail ‘belonging’ in the sense of [3.6]). Additionally, it does not have the affective overtones that ‘homeland’ has, and it does not have connotations of nationhood or state. Similar to ts'í (land) too, Dutch land can mean different things (‘ground’, ‘geographical area’, ‘nation’, ‘land to which I belong’, and (metonymically) ‘the populace of a country’).^{10}

Yet it would be premature to conclude that, because of these similarities, Dutch ‘land’ and Kigirryama ts'í (land) are semantic equivalents. All they can do at this point, is underscore the salience of element [3]: ‘I am part of this place...’ in the understanding of ts'í (land). As the following discussion will demonstrate, the ‘I am part of it’ element has a distinct cultural interpretation in the context of ts'í (land).

### III Textual instances of ts'í (land)

One thing that the discussion has not borne out yet, but which is tacitly assumed in the following analysis is the semantic fluidity of ts'í (land). While in Dutch for instance the semantic boundaries between ‘land’ as ‘area’, ‘land to which I belong’ or ‘ground’ are clear-cut, in Kigirryama the word ts'í – with ‘land to which I belong’ being the default interpretation – can mean different things at the same time. According to the context, meaning aspects of ‘ground’, ‘area’ and ‘the Girryama may surface in combination or individually as context appropriate manifestations of ‘land to which I belong’.^{11}

This can be illustrated with one of the few Girryama sayings that feature ts'í (land):^{12}

\[ Ts'ík'aiangwa: songerako \]

The land cannot be told: ‘move up’.

The saying has two different uses. Firstly, it can be uttered in the context of conflict resolution (cf. chapter six, section II.3.a). As a verdict of the council of elders, it expresses the excommunication of the guilty party from the homestead. Here the meaning of land as ‘land to which I belong’ is clear and its meanings of ‘ground’ and ‘area’ are prominent. They express the immobility of ‘land’, thus highlighting the utter severing of the ties.

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^{10} Similarly in Kigirryama ts'í can be used metonymically for ‘the Girryama’ (see section III.1.a).

^{11} ‘Country’, as was argued before, is a derived meaning with a similar semantic structure.

^{12} Related words such as munda (agricultural field) or mitsanga (soil, sand) appear in a few other sayings, highlighting ‘ownership’ and ‘dirt’ (in the sense of dishonest dealings) respectively.
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between the community and the individual, and at the same time the non-negotiable status of ‘land’.

Its second interpretation is more expressive of the Giryama frustration with the present-day land question. Its meaning is: You don’t tell the occupant of the land “move up”. Here $ts'i$ (land) represents metonymically the person or persons who belong there. However, the physical aspect of $ts'i$ (land) as ‘ground’ is included too in this understanding.

III.1 Metaphorical collocations and metonymic expressions

The list of explications has demonstrated that $ts'i$ (land) is something to which people feel they belong. In this interpretation $ts'i$ (land) and people are considered separate entities. The distinction starts to blur in the less conscious, metaphoric and metonymic contexts of $ts'i$ (land). Collocations with $ts'i$ (land) were collected from life stories and discussions about ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ with Giryama informants. In fact, these larger expressive frameworks are generally not considered an interpretative element in the analysis of collocations. This has to do with the specific nature of metaphorical and metonymic expressions. It is assumed that they are largely textually ‘context-independent’, but are context-inspired in a broader sense. This broader context is the metaphorical and metonymic processes, which underlie the metaphorical and metonymic collocations respectively. These processes have a decisive and restraining impact on the meaning dimensions of the collocations. Since cognitive metaphors and metonymies are historically developed, I would argue that metaphorical collocations and metonymic expression – as well as non-metaphorical and non-metonymic ones for that matter – can best be qualified as members of the domain of sites of collective memory.

From the above it is clear that the specific domains of cultural discourse to which the textual contexts belong, are not an interpretative element in the discussion. Still, the organisation of the analysis is based on the general structure of one type of the domain of public event, the discussions with Giryama informants about ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. In these discussions the leading question was: Vidzë, ni maut'u gani garigo ganahehesha at'u, na ni maut'u gani garigo ganareha dheri ko ts'i ya Agiryama? (Which issues incite people into conflict, and which things bring peace in Giryamaland?). Not surprisingly, the answers were phrased in terms of oppositions. These opposing categories appeared to be a productive organisational framework for the analysis of $ts'i$ (land) in the context of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’.
Starting with those conditions that are detrimental to peace, the most salient examples are:

1.a. *li ikikala ndzala ya ts'i yosi, k'akuna dheri*  
If there is famine of the entire land, there is no peace.

1.b. *li ts'i fayanonga enye kwa kutsothuwa maadha ga azhazi ehu.*  
We destroyed the land ourselves by not following the advice of our parents.

1.e. *ts'i moho*  
Hot land

The most common collocations with *ts'i* that directly or indirectly refer to peace, are:

1.c. *ts'i ihunire*  
The land is quiet

1.d. *ts'i ina nguvu*  
The land has strength

1.e. *ts'i peho*  
Cool land

These phrases are discussed one by one, as each of them reveals specific meaning dimensions of *ts'i* (land). The terms *p'eho* (cool) and *moho* (hot) are an oppositional pair and are therefore discussed together.

### III.1.a ndzala (famine)

The first example describes famine as a possible condition of *ts'i* (land):

1.a. *li ikikala ndzala ya ts'i yosi, k'akuna dheri.*  
If there is famine of the entire land, there is no peace.

From this sentence we may conclude that famine is a peace-negating condition of *ts'i* (land). Entailed is the understanding of the availability of ‘food’ as a peace-enhancing condition of *ts'i* (land). This interpretation brings out that the word *ts'i* (land) refers to people rather than ‘land’, and therefore may be interpreted in the particular sense of Giryama society. Yet, how does this observation relate to the earlier claimed semantic fluidity of *ts'i* (land)? In fact, this can be considered a case of metonymy, *ts'i* (land) being ‘the whole’ and the Giryama ‘a part’. In the present context *ts'i* (land) is apparently the most effective way of suggesting the serious impact of famine on peaceful living.

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13 The reference [1.e] indicates that *ts'i moho* (hot land) will be discussed together with its opposite *ts'i p'eho* (cool land) [1.e].
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Assuming that the interpretation of *ts’i* (land) as Giryama society is correct, the condition of ‘famine’ or ‘food security’ is conceived of in terms of a social phenomenon. This makes it necessary to refine our description of famine as the ‘peace-negating’ and food security as the ‘peace-enhancing’ condition of *ts’i* (land). In the discussion of *kuelewana* (understand each other) the analysis of the expression *ndugu si mut’u* (the relative is not a person) demonstrates that the Giryama rely on social networks to cope with famine. I would argue therefore that an interpretation that is more in line with the Giryama understanding of *ndzala ya ts’i yosi* (famine of the entire land), is the destructive power of famine on social relationships. The availability of food on the other hand has a beneficial effect on them. This is indeed a generally accepted view in Giryamaland.14

III.1.b kunonga (destroy)

Where [1.a] cites a physical reason for the lack of peace, [1.b] quotes a moral cause for the lack of it in terms of *ts’i* (land):

1.b *li ts’i fayanonga enye kwa kutsothuwa maadha ga aghazi ehu.* We destroyed the land ourselves by not following the customs of our parents.

Here the general aberration from the ways of the older generation is argued to cause the destruction of *ts’i* (land). The line presents *ts’i* (land) foremost as the embodiment of Giryama identity. If we assume that the word *ts’i* (land) here includes all its meaning aspects of ‘land to which I belong’ ‘Giryama society’, ‘geographical area’ and ‘ground’, then we must conclude that they are all suffused with Giryama identity. The following collocations of the verb *kunonga* (destroy) with *ts’i* (land) illustrate this:

1.b.i *Kidzinonga ts’i, ni ahoho.* That which has destroyed the land, is the children.

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14 This view is not exposed in historical descriptions of famines that the Giryama — and other Mijikenda peoples—suffered. Descriptions of them highlight Giryama creativity in dealing with famines, such as re-defining blood bonds as a survival strategy. For a chronological survey of the famines which the Mijikenda, including the Giryama, suffered from 1880 until 1980, and the different strategies of coping with them, see Thomas J. Herlehy (1984).
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1. b. ii Kutza at’u a dzulu bara, madzanonga ts’i.
   The people who came from up-country (Western Kenya) have destroyed the land.

1. b. iii Madheni masha gadzigokudza gadzanonga ts’i.
   The new religions, which came here, have destroyed the land.

Especially the mention of children in [1. b. i] and foreign religions [1. b. iii] as the ‘destroyers’ of ‘land’, can leave no doubt about the nature of the attacks on ts’i (land): they are aimed at the norms and values rather than at the physical aspect of it. Additionally, example [1. b. i] illustrates that not only forces from without can cause the destruction of ts’i (land).

Although [1. b. i] may suggest some xenophobia, this is not a general feature of the Giryama.15

The following example underscores the cultural salience of thinking in terms of ‘Giryama identity destruction’ – and its opposite ‘Giryama identity construction’ – in the context of ts’i (land). In the course of telling his life story one elderly informant speaks of the sixteenth century Portuguese siege of Mombasa and its surroundings. He says that the Giryama were pulled into the war, until they refused. The forcefulness of the refusal is clear from the words the informant adds to his statement: “tha [Agiryama] makitengeza ts’i yosi” (until the Giryama made the entire ‘land’). Here the verb kutengeza (make) is the opposite of kunonga (destroy) quoted in [1. b. i, ii, iii]. It appears to refer to something different from the physical restoring of the land, as the speaker continues by saying that until now no war has broken out. In fact, the verb tengeza refers to the placing of protective medicine (fingo) in the homes of all Giryama. The general consent over the Giryama ritual means more than just a massive fear of the Portuguese. It is a statement of Giryama identity with its adherent norms and values. A similar general assertion of ‘Giryamaness’ has been recorded during the Giryama-British conflict in 1914.16

These examples from conversations and a life story underline the Giryama association of ts’i (land) with Giryama identity as a set of norms and values. Moreover, the general

15 The Giryama have shown throughout their history to welcome ‘foreigners’ into their communities to become Giryama. Cynthia Brantley (1981) notes: “Additional increases in population occurred through continuous assimilation of peoples during the nineteenth century. Ex-slaves, Waata, Oroma, and other Mijikenda joined Giryama clans” (52). This process continued in the 20th c. (Brantley 1981, 1986).

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observance of this set of norms and values is understood to secure and ensure the well-being of *tsi* (land).

On the basis of these observations I would provisionally propose the following semantic components to be included in the understanding of *tsi* (land):

1. It is a big place
2. people who speak Kigiryma have lived here for a long time
3. I am part of this place all the time
   because my father is part of it
   and because I will be buried here
4. there are many people like me, because their fathers are part of the same place
5. *this place is in a bad state when some or all of the people do not do good things*
6. *when this happens they can make it to be in a good state again*
7. *they can only do this when they all do good things.*

The description is not very smooth yet. It really falls into two different sets of semantic components, [1-4] and [5-7]. At this point, however, other salient information is missing that could combine the two in an integrated description.

III.1.c *kuhurira* (be quiet)

While [1.a] and [1.b] feature *tsi* (land) in terms of a social construction, a different aspect of *tsi* (land) is conveyed in:

1.c *tsi ihurire*  
the 'land' is quiet  

Here *tsi* (land) is attributed a positive state of being – the verb *kuhurira* literally means ‘not make movements’. Informants explained this state generally as “*k’akuna thabu yoyos/*” (there is not any problem), and argued that the verb could be used to reflect a state of being of a person or persons or of 'land'.

In the context of *tsi* (land), situations that are characteristically thought of when thinking of *tsi ihurire* (the land is quiet) are, informants argued: “there is not any conflict”, “there is
no famine”, “there is no funeral”.
Comparing the ‘quietness’ of the land with the
‘quietness’ of a person or persons, we find an interesting semantic connection. When
kuhurira is used in the context of an individual, as in nihurire (I feel settled), his/her state
of mind is one of happiness. This was explained to me by a young woman who said: mut’u
ariye anahurira ana raha (a person who feels settled, is happy). Notably, the same
qualification raha (happiness) was cited by informants in the context of dheri (peace) (see
chapter three).

This means that kuhurira (be quiet) can refer to a (well-)balanced and therefore happy
state of being of an individual as well as to the (well-)balanced and therefore happy state
of being of a society as a whole. It seems likely that the two are connected. However, the
nature of their relationship cannot be argued from the above. In the discussion on ts’i
(land) and kaya (sacred place) a more comprehensive statement can be given on the
meaning dimensions of kuhurira (be quiet), in which the relationship between the states of
being of ts’i (land) and persons is integrated. The ‘missing’ link makes it impossible at this
point to present a description of the semantic component which ihurire (is quiet) adds to
ts’i (land).

III.1.d nguvu (strength, power)

Like kuhurira (be quiet) nguvu (strength, power) refers to a positive state of being of ts’i
(land) as in

1.d. ts’i ina nguvu  
the ‘land’ has strength

This sentence, depending on the context, conveys one of the two senses of ‘having
vitality’, one is the fertility of the soil, the other is the capacity of ‘land’ (i.e. Giryama
society) to stand up for itself. Similar to kuhurira (be quiet) nguvu (strength) can also refer
to an individual’s state of being cf. sina nguvu (I don’t have the physical and/or mental
strength). Also here the references of nguvu (strength) could be argued to be related, but
evidence for this relationship cannot be found in verbal expressions. Again, the
connections are understood only after a discussion of kaya (sacred centre) and ts’i (land).

17 For the negative connotations of a funeral see section II.1.e, and chapter seven, section I.4.
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However, the sense of ‘standing up for oneself’ as a society is part of the linguistic practice of Giryama, and can therefore be explored here. Insight into this meaning aspect of nguvu (strength) can be gained from the words of one informant, who talks about the political backwaters in which the Giryama find themselves (the year is 1999). Phrased in terms of the Giryama people, he clearly refers to Giryama society as a whole:

1.d.i Be Agiryma ka’menzi, takini nguvu k’ama na.
Well, the Giryama do not like it, but they don’t have strength.

1.d.ii Kala Agiryma mana nguvu, be ii ngere ni fujo il.
If the Giryama had strength, there would have been already trouble.

The quotation may seem to suggest, that if the Giryama had felt strong enough they would have sought a physical confrontation with the enemy. Yet, what it really says – and this can only be argued from the wider textual context – is that the awareness of their cultural identity would have made them vocal about the immoral behaviour of the ‘outsider’ group. It can therefore be claimed that with ts’i (land) in the sense of Giryama society, nguvu (strength) is foremost a mental, rather than a physical ability. As will be illustrated in the discussion on the interconnections between ts’i (land) and kaya (sacred place), nguvu (strength) refers more particularly to the moral ‘vitality’ of Giryama society. This vitality is not geared towards aggression; the use of fujo (trouble), in fact, underscores the moral dimension of nguvu (strength). Granted, no evidence has been provided for fujo (trouble)’s highlighting of the moral character of ‘conflict’, but the discussion of fujo (trouble) – in chapter seven – will provide enough evidence to underscore this observation. Thus we may conclude, that nguvu (strength) in the context of Giryama society implies that Giryama norms and values are in place, and that therefore there is peace.

III.1.e *P’eho (cool)* versus *moho (hot)*

Whereas the previous descriptions revealed the relationship between place and people as straightforward: people are part of ts’i (land) and affect ts’i (land) by their actions, p’eho and moho introduce a more complex situation. In fact, with p’eho (cool) and moho (hot) there is a first indication of a metaphysical motivation for the different states of being of ts’i (land).

A first sign of the different status of p’eho (cool) and moho (hot) is their explicit opposition. None of the other collocations shows this feature. This may seem an insignificant
observation, but it gains additional importance when we take into consideration that these two adjectives express bodily sensations that are basic and deeply ingrained in the human experience. This feature is unparalleled by the other collocations, and has quite some impact on its cultural manifestation, as will be seen below.

Cognitive scientists, in fact, have attributed a specific status to metaphors that derive from physical sensations. They argue that concepts derived from physical experience are ‘directly understood’ and “…some of the central concepts in terms of which our bodies function – …warm-cold – are more sharply delineated than others” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 56-57). The reason is that they are grounded in very early physical life experiences. As a result, they are considered by cognitive scientists the first source for the development of meaning structures “…through which our world begins to exhibit a measure of coherence, regularity and intelligibility” (Johnson 1987:13).

Applied to p’eho (cool) and moho (hot), the argument suggests that the adjectives are generators of meaning structures. This idea is supported by their emergence in a wide range of social contexts. Their ‘sharp delineation’ and their being ‘the first source for the development of meaning structures’ additionally underscores my implicit assumption that the observed general occurrence of ts’i p’eho and ts’i moho across the different areas, points to a generally shared Giryama understanding of these phrases.

Similar to the analysis of kuhurira (be quiet) and nguvu (strength), the different contexts of these metaphorical concepts are analysed. And similarly, it is assumed that they refer to a single underlying meaning framework. In line with the above claim of the salience of p’eho (cool) and moho (hot) in generating meaning structures, their contexts are more varied than with the other two. In the following discussion the possible social contexts of p’eho (cool/cooleness) and moho (hot/fire) are studied in their adjectival and noun forms, from the most physical to the least physical.

**Meaning aspects of p’eho (cool/cooleness) and moho (hot/fire)**

In Kigiryama p’eho (cooleness) has different manifestations, which translate as ‘shade’, ‘breeze’, ‘wind’, all implying a pleasant physical sensation. The most acute sensation of coolness is at the beginning of the long rains (vula (April-June)) after the dry and hot spell.

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18 It can have a less positive connotation, but then it is always accompanied by a negative qualifying adjunct, such as ili (bad); p’eho mbiiri (illness, contagious disease, epidemic) and p’eho wa zii (very cold wind during June-July).
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from January up to April. As one informant explained to me: *Wakathi wa vula, kuna p’eho* (During the time of the long rains there is coolness). In the agricultural context people speak of the condition of the land during the time of the rains as *ts’i p’eho* (cool land), indicating that the land is in good shape for agricultural production.

Its opposite, *moho* (hot, heat/fire), refers to an unpleasant physical sensation. It is associated with the unrelenting heat of the sun, and the destructive force of fire. When the condition of ‘land’ is referred to as *ts’i moho*, this implies dryness of the land due to prolonged heat.

Besides in an agricultural context, *p’eho* (coolness) can be used to reflect a certain state of mind. The Giryama idiom: *unapigwa ni p’eho* (lit. you are hit by coolness) means you feel settled, a feeling experienced when you are all by yourself. There is a Giryama saying which seems to attribute to women in particular the capacity to create a relaxed atmosphere: *Ache ni p’eho za mihi* (Women are like the ‘coolness’ (i.e. shade) of a tree). This is in fact one of two interpretations of the saying. The second and more generally accepted interpretation basically contests the first interpretation. Focusing on the shifting position of ‘coolness’ (i.e. shade) during the day, it argues the changeable nature of women.\(^{19}\)

A similar positive mental state can be expressed in *ts’i p’eho* (cool land). It refers to a peaceful Giryama society, where social structures are in place and people live together in an atmosphere of *kuelewana* (understand each other). To indicate the opposite, the Giryama can use the word *moho* (hot), indicating a negative social atmosphere. One informant told me: *Wakathi wa k’ondo, ts’i i moho* (during a time of conflict, the ‘land’ is hot). Clearly there is reference to social unrest and aggression. Different from *p’eho* (cool) the word *moho* (hot) is no longer commonly used to express an individual experience. Among the old Giryama people, however, the phrase *rohoye i moho* (his heart is hot) can still be heard to refer to a person’s anger.

A third possible context of the word *p’eho* is a Giryama funeral (*hanga*). A dead person is associated with the negation of life. The funeral being the means to ward off the dead from invading the world of the living and restore harmony between them, includes rituals

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\(^{19}\) I have not been able to find an explanation for the divergence between these two interpretations. And what is more, none of the women whom I questioned on this proverb seemed to know the first one.
that intend to pacify the dead. On the sixth day of the funeral the body is buried and a black goat slaughtered over the grave. While the blood seeps into the soil, those who are present call out: Hala chakurya chako, fupigwe ni p’eho (lit. take your food, so that we are hit by coolness). It is believed that the blood will be drunk by the deceased who will then be at peace, and therefore will not come back to the family or other relatives in their dreams. The ritual is performed to cool down ts’i moho (reflecting a situation of intrusion of the dead among their living progeny, and the concomitant state of insecurity of the living). A remark by one of the informants who described ts’i peho (cool land) as k’akuna hanga (there is no funeral) illustrates the conceptual link between ts’i moho (hot land) and hanga (funeral).  

Just like in the context of a funeral, p’eho (cool) is the ultimate goal of people’s actions in the Giryama rain-making ritual. Although it is no longer a generally practised ritual, people from the interior and the coastal area asserted that it is still practised. During the ritual homestead elders pray to the ancestors, so as to secure rain. Apart from praying, the elders pour (medicinal) water (kubwaga madzor) over ts’i moho (hot land), so that it may become cool. The heat of the earth is associated with the unhappiness of the ancestors. The pouring of water intends to appease the ancestors.

Pouring of liquid is an important tool for restoring the good relationship between the living and the dead, not only during a funeral or a rain-making ceremony. Whenever men sit together and drink palm wine, the first person to drink may pour some palm wine on the ground to the side of him (it can be done on either side), giving the first sip to the deceased. Yet, a person is only entitled to do so when both his parents have recently died, as they are still close to the living and therefore easily accessible for appeasement.

What can be concluded from the discussion of ts’i peho (cool land) and ts’i moho (hot land) is that ts’i peho (cool land) refers to a positive state of being of the soil, of people as a community or a society and of the ancestors, while ts’i moho (hot land) refers to a...

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20 P’eho (coolness) occurs also in the collocation muhi wa p’eho (tree of coolness). Mihya p’eho (trees of coolness) are marked for their medicinal potential. The leaves of the tree are mixed with water, which is then used for appeasement with spirits/demons (p’epo), which are believed to inhabit these trees, or with the spirits of ancestors (k’omut). In case of a ‘bad’ death (i.e. an accident or suicide), the water mixed with medicinal leaves is thrown against the tree, to avert bad luck from the relatives or a whole community. Thus muhi wa p’eho (tree of coolness) is a means of ‘cooling down’ the spirits, so as to make the people live in peace.
negative state of being. It appears that the ancestors are believed to be able to assist the living, but also to intrude their lives and affect them adversely. Because of this the living want to live in harmony with their forefathers, and they express this explicitly in rituals.

III.2 Provisional cultural semantic description of *tsi*

On the basis of the newly found aspect of 'ancestors' as a meaning component of *tsi* (land), I would propose the following provisional extension of the previous semantic description of *tsi* (land):

1. It is a big place
2. people who speak Kigirama have lived here for a long time
3. I am part of this place all the time
   because my father is part of it
   and because I will be buried here
4. there are many people like me, because their fathers are part of the same place
5. *there are also people who lived here long ago*
6. *we think that these people are part of this place and look after the people who live here now*
7. *they feel good when the people who live here now do good things*
8. *when some or all of the people do not do good things they feel bad*
9. *then the people who live here now want to do good things*
10. *because they want to make the people who lived long ago feel good again*
11. they can only do this when they all do good things.

The components in italics partly include and replace the descriptive elements of the potential bad condition of *tsi* (land) that were given before:

5. this place is in a bad state when some or all of the people do not do good things
6. when this happens they can make it to be in a good state again

Although these components are superfluous in the present proposition, it would be premature to assume that they are fully incorporated in the understanding of the ancestors. In this proposition the role of the ancestors in the well-being of the living Giryama is described. The semantic description also indicates that the Giryama want to
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restore their Giryama identity (i.e. Giryama norms and values) because of the ancestors. Thus it adds a sense of ‘obligation’ to the previous semantic description of the Giryama ability to construct and deconstruct ‘Giryamaness’. However, as will be seen in the discussion on the relationship between tsī (land) and kaya (sacred centre), this sense of obligation relates to an existential consciousness rather than to the ancestors. The ancestors are there to keep that conscience alive.

Having come to the end of the discussion of collocations and expressions featuring tsī (land) we are confronted with the question whether, and if so, how these different states of being of tsī (land) create a unified understanding. While the collocations were collected in the entire fieldwork area, I did not seem to be able to find any indications of a ‘holistic’ understanding of tsī (land) in the coastal areas of Tuzo and Kilifi. This situation changed with the specific articulation of the interrelationship between land, Giryama society and ancestors in the interior parts of Giryamaland through the combination of the concepts of tsī (land), and kaya (sacred centre).

IV The connection between tsī (land) and kaya (sacred centre)

Tsī (land) was often talked about in terms of the presence or the lack of rain (vula). This was not very surprising I found, considering the Giryama dependence on agriculture as a means of living. However, discussions with Giryama informants from the interior parts of Giryamaland revealed that kaya (sacred centre) was considered to be the prime mover of vula (rain). 21 Obviously there was some kind of relationship between kaya (sacred centre) and tsī (land). This could be of some consequence for the meaning dimensions of tsī (land), I supposed, and therefore it seemed an interesting area of exploration. In fact, I temporarily ignored the fact that the connection between kaya (sacred centre) and tsī (land) is not a generally shared understanding, hoping that the relationship between the two would shed a new light on the collocations with tsī (land) that have been discussed before. After all, on the basis of the collocations with tsī (land) some impaired conclusions could be reached that seemed to lack meaningful connections as well as meaningful grounding.

21 Generally Giryama use the word kaya (sacred centre) as a short form for kaya Giryama or kaya Fungo as it is also called.
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IV.1 Kaya (sacred centre) 22

It may be remembered that kaya (sacred centre) was one major reason for raising my interest in the Giryama understandings of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ (Introduction). In the Likoni clashes of 1997, as well as in the British-Giryama conflict of 1914, it appeared to be the centre of defiance against the encroachment of outsiders. 23 Obviously, kaya (sacred centre) is of some consequence in the Giryama discourse of continued existence. This is borne out in the following discussion too. However, the focus will not be on the political articulation of the continued existence of the Giryama, but rather on the existential articulation of it in the context of kaya (sacred centre). The following description presents a picture of kaya (sacred centre), which is based on a combination of information that was given to me by informants and data from scholarly literature.

Although not explicitly argued by Giryama, but certainly implied in the uneven contemporary history of kaya (sacred centre) – from neglect to present-day heightened interest – 24 it has two existential modes: one absolute and the other relational. Kaya (sacred centre) as absolute sacred centre is not dependent on its surroundings, nor on caretakers. It possesses the absolute power of lingoi/hiryama (charm/witness), symbolising Giryama knowledge from the beginning of time. As such it is the ultimate reference of Giryama identity and traditions and the eternal source and affirmation of the ritual power of kaya elders. (Thomas Spear 1978, Cynthia Brantley 1981, David Parkin 1991).

In its relational mode kaya (sacred centre) is affected by and affects the living (Giryama). In this mode the key quality of kaya (sacred centre) is considered to be its control over yula (rain). Its power to produce rain implies that the fertility of the land and the procreation of the Giryama is ultimately dependent on kaya (sacred centre). Kaya (sacred centre) has this power because of its purity and its secret knowledge. ‘Purity’ in the kaya

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22 Information on the geographical and historical dimensions of kaya (sacred centre) is given in chapter two.
23 In 1997 kaya Bombo (in Digoland) had replaced kaya Giryama as a centre of defiance. For the young Giryama who went there, this cannot have been of much consequence. All Mijikenda sub-groups have one or more makaya (sacred centres). It is generally accepted among the Mijikenda that they represent the same thing. At the same time, it is known that some makaya (sacred centres) are more powerful than others, and that this can change over time.
24 Recently there has been quite some media attention to kaya Giryama. Also politically kaya has gained some importance considering the blessing ceremony of the late Minister for Local Government, the Giryama Karisa Maitha, after being elected.
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(sacred centre) context does not refer to pristine beginnings or a virgin state, but rather to an ideal state that needs to be continually negotiated by the Giryama. The weight of the responsibility lies with the elders. It is their duty to pass on Giryama norms and values to the younger generation, thus promoting Giryama identity. The kaya elders, in their capacity as enye tsī (owners of the land) have the overall responsibility to look after the relationship between kaya (sacred centre) and tsī (land). Continual watch-dogs are the ancestors. It is believed that they show their bitterness (utsungu) to the whole of Giryama society when the living Giryama stain the purity of kaya (sacred centre) by defying Giryama norms and values. One such sign of their anger is lack of rain (vula). Other signs are cattle diseases, and infertility in humans. These signs should prompt the Giryama to cleanse kaya (sacred centre). This ritual marks a new start in the relationship between tsī (land) and kaya (sacred centre).

The ideal state of kaya (sacred centre) is referred to as mudzi mueri (clean village), highlighting its quality as a blueprint for Giryama society. It is the ideal community which contains pure Giryama knowledge in the shape of fingo (charm) This magic charm, presented before as being part of the absolute mode of kaya (sacred centre), is believed to affect the ground (tsī) of kaya (sacred centre) in which it is buried. Fingo/ngiryama (charm/witness) symbolising knowledge from the beginning of time permeates the earth with this knowledge and is its ultimate life giving force.

Reading the description of kaya (sacred centre), we may be struck by a certain familiarity. In fact, quite a few details reverberate the discussion of the collocations with tsī (land).

For instance, fertility and vitality (of norms and values) occur in both contexts as essential

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25 It is not surprising in view of the strong emphasis on the power of the gerontocracy, that only the more remote and traditional areas have this understanding of kaya. In the areas close to the coast, where land was distributed in free titles, power has been devolved to individual homesteads.

26 An illustration of the bitterness of the ancestors as a salient entailment of the Giryama understanding of tsī (land) are the headlines from the Kenyan newspaper (The Standard, 25th September 2006). It tells the story of the recovery of a Giryama kigango (effigy of a prominent Giryama ancestor) after 20 years of being exhibited in a museum in Illinois, Canada. The village from which it was taken was suffering from the wrath of the spirits during all these years. One disaster that struck the village was cattle disease. With the return of the kigango the villagers hope to restore their good relationship with the spirits. As one of the sons of the late kigango owner is reported to have said: "they pray that the return of the kigango will be the beginning of peace, love, unity and success, which have eluded them over the years. He also hopes that mysterious deaths will stop."

27 During a field trip in February 2001, I heard that preparations were on their way for the ritual.
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elements of well-being. Moreover, *tsi* (land) as well as *kaya* (sacred centre) include the meaning dimension of a social construction, which suffers from decay when Giryama norms and values are not generally observed, and which can be ‘healed’ with medicine. These similarities are so basic to the understanding of both *tsi* (land) and *kaya* (sacred centre), that we could argue that *tsi* (land) and its entailments have provided a cognitive framework for the Giryama understanding of the metaphysical dimensions of *kaya* (sacred centre).

Actually, this is underscored by *tsi* (land) as an alternative name for *kaya* (sacred centre) (see: Parkin 1991:8). As was indicated in the introduction of the metaphoric theory (chapter one, section 1.1), Lakoff and Johnson (1980) attribute symbolic metonymy a salient role in structuring religious and cultural notions. Symbolic metonymy provides “… critical (italics added) links between everyday experience and the coherent metaphorical system that characterize religions and cultures” (1980: 40). Therefore, we may conclude that *tsi* (land) indeed offers a meaningful framework for understanding the metaphysical dimensions of *kaya* (sacred centre).

More central to the present discussion, however, is how *kaya* (sacred centre) reflects on *tsi* (land). The following analysis focuses on this question. The texts were collected from among Giryama from areas close to *kaya* (sacred centre).

IV.2 Tsì and kaya (sacred centre)

In the discussion of *kilongozi* (leader) (chapter four, section III.4) a passage from the life-story of Simba Wanjie articulates the cosmological context of *tsi* (land). Using the collocation *tsi ihunire* (the land is quiet), Simba argues that Philip Jimbe, his friend and personification of modern leadership, once said to him:

1.c.i  *Ni baha humale maingu ga kala*  It is better we seek the clouds,  
    *tsi indahurira.*  as the ‘land’ will be quiet then.

This line suggests that there is a drought, and that the drought can only be absolved by going in search of the rain-clouds. From the context it becomes clear that the search involves looking for medicine. The medicine is used in the cleansing ritual of *kaya* (sacred centre). In this way the disturbed relationship between *kaya* (sacred centre) and the living,
and the living and the ancestors can be cleared. The ritual also brings back the rain (clouds) and, by extension, the fertility of the land.

Once ts'į (land) is in harmony with kaya (sacred centre) again, its state of being is typically one of quietness (kuhurira (to be quiet)). This was characterised before as a (well-)balanced and therefore happy state of an individual, as well as a (well-)balanced and therefore happy state of being of a society as a whole (section III.1.c). We may conclude that in the context of kaya (sacred place) the states of being of the individual and society can be an integrated understanding, i.e. one can not be (well-)balanced and happy without the other. Indeed, ts’į ihuire (the ‘land’ is quiet) expresses the equilibrium of all parts (‘land’, ancestors and living Giryama), in which Giryama norms and values effect their equal suspension. What is more, the equilibrium is the source of vitality (nguva) of the ‘land’.

This argument exposes the interconnected Giryama understanding of kuhurira (be quiet) and nguva (strength), which could be reflected in a semantic proposition as:

When this place and all its parts are like one thing, one can feel this place is strong.

and its opposite:

When this place and all its parts are not like one thing, one can feel this place is not strong.

Other statements about the deterioration of Giryama society with implicit reference to kaya (sacred centre) – and rather poetic ones – are the following sentences from the life story of Simba Wanjie, cited before:

1.f  Ni baha fuuye ts’į, fulole ts’į irizho.  It is better we return to the ‘land’, we should see how the ‘land’ is.
1.g  Vikara ts’į idzakwacha kuhenza kuuya.  Now the ‘land’ has started to want to return.

The speaker expresses his concern about the state of ts’į (land). He presents ts’į (land) as if it were a sick or disabled person, who can only come back to the people to whom
he/she belongs with the help of people. Apparently the people have become estranged from this living being that ts’i (land) is, they have not looked after him/her for some time. Especially [1.g] makes clear that ts’i (land) is intrinsically connected to the people who have abandoned it.

Although not stated explicitly, the image of ts’i (land) as a sick or disabled person personifies the loss of strength of kaya (sacred centre) due to the negligence of Giryama norms and values. Through this image Simba Wanje calls upon his fellow Giryama to go back to their Giryama life, towards which they have moral obligations.

Other remarks from conversations more explicitly express the impact of the alienation between ts’i (land) and the Giryama people:

1.h Kwa vizho uma utsungu wa te’i yehu. So we have the bitterness of our ‘land’.
1.j Munalonga ts’i zho? Is this how you take care of the ‘land’?

Here the estrangement between the people and ts’i (land) is presented as a lack of care on the part of the living Giryama for keeping ts’i (land) in a happy [1.c] and good [1.d] condition. In [1.h] this lack of care results in a feeling of bitterness on the part of ts’i (land). The word utsungu (bitterness) is used, as was pointed out before, in the context of the ancestors (p.163). The present collocation of utsungu (bitterness) with ts’i (land) clearly calls up the emotions of the ancestors. We could therefore argue that ts’i (land) is a metonym for ancestors.

A similar metonymic use of ts’i (land) can be noted in a remark from another conversation that I had with a forty-year old man in Kinarani (map II):

1.k Ts’i idzahushinda. The ‘land’ has defeated us.

From the context it is clear that the speaker refers to Giryama youths, who by their rejection of Giryama norms and values, undermine Giryama society. The figure of speech is so characteristic of the use of ts’i (land), that I would argue that ts’i (land) cannot exist without being identifiable with each of its parts. As was pointed out before, the vitality of ts’i (land) is ensured by the balance of all of its parts, which means that each of its parts has a vitality that reflects the vitality of kaya (sacred centre) This is confirmed explicitly by the following statement from a speaker, who points out the mental estrangement of
Ts’i: the substance of peace and conflict

Giryama youths from Giryama identity by means of the collocation *ts’i ina nguvu* (the land has strength) [1.d]:

1.d.iii *Fudzhokwa ana, ino ts’i indahenda nguvu namuna yani?* If our children get snatched from us, how can the ‘land’ become strong?

The word *nguvu* (strength), as was pointed out in *ts’i ina nguvu* (the land has strength), refers not so much to the physical capacity to oppose or attack inimical forces, but rather to the vitality of Giryama society where Giryama norms and values prevail. In the context of *kaya* (sacred centre) the strength of Giryama society is a reflection of the strength of *kaya* (sacred centre). The latter’s strength is reflected in its capacity of being, in David Parkin’s expressive words, “the procreative powerhouse of the Giryama” (1991, 42).

Obviously, children are an essential prerequisite for the continued existence of the Giryama. Their loss of Giryama identity makes *ts’i* (land) weak and vulnerable and peace-negating. Moreover, it jeopardizes the continued existence of the Giryama in terms of *kaya* (sacred centre).

The missing part (as, for instance, the children) brings home that *ts’i* (land) is ideally the sum of all its parts, *kaya* (sacred centre) facilitating the existential integration of these parts. When *ts’i* (land) is its ideal self, then it is most appropriately described in terms of the different collocations with *ts’i* (land) that are found throughout Giryamaland: ‘cool’ (implying fertility, well-being, peace with the ancestors), ‘strong’ (implying fertility, vitality, continued existence) and ‘quiet’ (equilibrium of its parts). Indeed, the same goes for the opposite condition of *ts’i* (land), characterised as ‘hot’ (implying infertility, disturbance, anger of ancestors), ‘weak’ (infertility, lack of vitality, discontinuity) and ‘the object of destruction’ (the undoing of the equilibrium of its parts).

V Cultural semantic description of *ts’i*

The discussion of the relationship between *kaya* (sacred centre) and *ts’i* (land) has demonstrated a metaphysical framework for ‘land’, Giryama society, and the ancestors in the context of *kaya* (sacred centre). As was argued before, the Giryama from areas closer to the Kenyan coast do not share the understanding of *ts’i* (land) and *kaya* (sacred centre) as existentially connected. In view of this missing element we might argue that these Giryama lack the existential motivation for looking after *ts’i* (land). However, the earlier
discussion of collocations with *tsʼi* (land), collected from across different areas, illustrate that caring for *tsʼi* (land) is an essential component in the understanding of people’s relationship with *tsʼi* (land) across Giryamaland. Moreover, this ‘caring for’ is understood in these different areas in terms of observing Giryama norms and values, which are considered a prerequisite for a peaceful society. Additionally, throughout Giryamaland the ancestors play a persuasive role in conveying the importance of observing Giryama norms and values. Lastly, the people in the areas nearer to the Kenyan coast express *tsʼi* (land)’s peace-enhancing and peace–negating aspects in similar terms as the Giryama from the interior parts. From this we may conclude I think, that every Giryama has a certain notion of *tsʼi* (land) as an existential phenomenon, in which physical and mental, moral and emotional, individual and collective elements constitute an integrated understanding.

Asking myself how is it possible that without reference to *kaya* (sacred centre) *tsʼi* (land) has existential dimensions, I came to the conclusion that the role of *tsʼi* (land) as a symbolic metonym for *kaya* (sacred centre) must have been instrumental in keeping strands of its metaphysical context alive. I would explain it as a process in time, when people gradually moved further away from *kaya* (sacred centre), yet remembering the metaphysical metonym which *tsʼi* (land) included. Nowadays, tangible remnants of this consciousness are the collocations in which *tsʼi* (land) features. This argument is supported by our categorisation of collocations as belonging with the domain of cultural discourse, which are elements of *sites of collective memory*.

The above arguments validate, I would argue, a semantic description of *tsʼi* (land) which reflects a shared Giryama understanding of *tsʼi* (land) as an existential phenomenon. Focusing on the general Giryama understanding of their relationship with *tsʼi* (land) in terms of ‘caring for’, we leave room for area specific articulations.

*Tsʼi*

People think like this:

1. It is a big place
2. people who speak Kigiryama have lived here for a long time
3. I am part of this place all the time
   because my father is part of it
   and because I will be buried here
4. there are many people like me, because their fathers are part of the same place
5. there are also people who lived here long ago
6. we think that these people are part of this place and look after the people who live here now
7. when this place and all its parts are like one thing, one can feel this place is strong
8. when this happens, good things happen in this place
9. this makes all the people feel good
10. people must do good things to keep it like that

11. when this place and all its parts are not like one thing, one can feel this place is not strong
12. when this happens, good things cannot happen
13. this makes all the people feel bad
14. they want to make good things happen again
15. they can only do this when all of them do good things.

This description makes clear that *tsi* (land) is first of all an identifiable physical area [1,2]. Then there is the cultural manifestation of *tsi* (land) as a social structure [3-6] and as an entity with different states of being [7-13]. The Giryama existential consciousness of *tsi* (land) is expressed in [7-9] and [11-13]. When the connection between ‘this place’ and ‘those who are part of it’ is in a perfect equilibrium, ‘i’ and ‘those like me’ experience happiness [7-9], reflecting the earlier description of the peaceful state of *tsi* (land) as *ihunire* (it is quiet). It is also experienced as a sign of strength (*nguvu*) which emphasises the vitality of *tsi* (land) [7]. The imbalance and the peace-negating state of *tsi* (land) is brought out in [11-13]. The responsibility the Giryama feel for *tsi* (land)’s well-being is expressed in [14-15].

Additionally, it was argued that the Giryama consider the vitality of Giryama norms and values the corner-stone of their peaceful society. This comes out in [10] where they are presented as ‘good things’, which can safeguard the integrity of Giryama society. In [15] the necessary condition of a general observation of Giryama norms and values for the continued (peaceful) existence of Giryama society is pointed out.
Chapter five

VI Conclusion

In the discussion ‘caring for’ rather than possession has marked the Giryama understanding of their relationship to ts’i (land). It is a general understanding among the Giryama, including those who ‘own’ land as private property according to the formal standards of the government administration. Indeed, it has become clear that in spite of the different discourses in Giryamaland there is enough common ground to be able to define ts’i (land) in terms of a shared understanding.

For all parts of Giryamaland, it may be concluded that in the articulation of ts’i (land) the geographic dimension is downplayed to the advantage of cultural and livelihood dimensions. These three dimensions were found to characterise the explications of Giryama informants. The renewed interest in kaya (sacred centre) these days, no doubt, boosts the salience of the latter two dimensions even more. Whatever way this revival of kaya (sacred centre) is interpreted, political or social, outsiders are made aware of the hidden ‘strength’ of Giryama society.

Clearly, the Giryama understanding of ts’i (land) as a subject that takes care of people and that people care for, by adhering to accepted norms and values, does not coincide with the formal administrative understanding, nor the general Western understanding of ‘land’ as an object. They are inspired by different ideologies. Guided by capitalistic principles, the Kenyan administration emphasises that ‘land’ is a socio-cultural as well as an economic entity, which is protected legally and if necessary by force, to ensure peace for its occupants. In stark contrast is the Giryama emphasis on the states of being of ts’i (land) as the result of people’s (i.e. Giryama) (lack of) observance of shared norms and values. This implies that the Giryama understanding of ‘land’ as individually owned is continuous with ‘land’ as a communal property, as well as ‘land’ comprising the whole of Giryamaland. In the formal Kenyan perspective of ‘land’, however, there is a clear cognitive break between ‘land’ which is the property of an individual and ‘country’, with ‘responsibility domains’ being clearly defined.

This marked dissonance between Giryama and Kenyan national ideological dimensions of ‘land’ cannot be dismissed as a minor – albeit interesting – observation. Since the national understanding of ‘land’ prevails as the more powerful, the Giryama experience is marked by frustration, by feelings of impairment with respect to livelihood, social security, and the expression of norms and values that go with being a Giryama. This situation suggests, in
fact, a condition that was described in the introduction to this study as cross-ideological structural violence, visible among other things in the structural and institutionalised negation of socio-cultural variety, as in the area of education, administration and of the judiciary. In this context we can do no more than point to the situation as profoundly frustrating for the Giryama. A longitudinal study would be able to observe the consequences of this situation.

As a general conclusion relating the contribution of *ts'ii* (land) to the Giryama ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ we may argue, that the analysis has demonstrated that *ts'ii* (land) creates an existential context for the social dimensions of peace that were expressed in *kuelewana* (understand each other) and *kilongozi* (leader). Moreover, it has been seen to operate as a barometer, reflecting the different states of being of Giryama society, ranging from peaceful to being afflicted by conflict and/or disintegration. In this respect *ts'ii* (land) takes a unique position among the key words, feeding into the Giryama ideology of ‘peace’ as well as into the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’.
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PART III

GIRYAMA IDEOLOGY OF CONFLICT
6 K’ondo – conflict as a communal experience

Introduction

With the introduction of k’ondo (conflict) the discussion of the Giryama ideology of peace seems to be definitely over. However, Giryama reality demands a discussion of k’ondo (conflict) which includes an exploration of the relationship between Giryama understandings of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. A first hint of some relationship between ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ in the Giryama understanding, is the Giryama collective word for ‘conflict’, kutscoelewana (not understand each other). Referring to anything from back-biting to a major (armed) conflict, it has a striking linguistic appearance. Tso- being a negation marker,¹ the verb is the negative form of kuelewana (understand each other), which was demonstrated to highlight the social aspects of the Giryama ideology of peace. In other words, kuelewana (understand each other) is instrumental in giving linguistic expression to the conceptualisation of ‘conflict’ at the superordinate level of knowledge organisation. This cannot be without significance, I concluded, even though k’ondo (conflict) and kuelewana (understand each other) are an oppositional pair in the Giryama understanding. The discussions of k’ondo (conflict) and, more particularly, kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) reflect this specific interest.

I Analytical outlines

The subject of the present discussion is k’ondo (conflict), rather than fujo (trouble) or viha (war).² All three were defined by lack of kuelewana (understand each other), but most informants defined fujo (trouble) and viha (war) in terms of k’ondo (conflict).³ Thus we could argue that k’ondo (conflict) is the most comprehensive concept of ‘conflict’. K’ondo (conflict) is analysed according to the same pattern of analysis as the previous key words.

¹ Tso is derived from the verb tsowa, which means to lack, ‘not have’.
² Other ‘conflict’ terms are kusengenya (back-biting), nyoko (a minor dispute between two people) and kukosana (having a dispute). The first is a manifestation of fujo (trouble). For an example see the case-study of kuelewana (understand each other), in which the former treasurer of the Muungano Water Project displays kusengenya (back-biting) relating to Mr. Kingi. Nyoko (minor dispute) and kukosana (having a dispute) are instances of k’ondo (conflict). An instance of kukosana (having a dispute) is recounted by Kalama Nzaro (this chapter).
³ As was discussed in the chapter on dheri the ‘complete the sentence’ exercise features all three in opposition to dheri (peace).
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The analysis begins with an exploration of the explications that Giryama informants gave of the term k’ondo (conflict). These explications are a first introduction to the semantic outlines of k’ondo (conflict). The exploration is rounded off with a brief comparative discussion of British and Dutch definitions of ‘conflict’. Then the discussion continues with the less conscious expressions of k’ondo (conflict). They are taken among others from the domain of everyday communication, like conversations with Giryama about k’ondo ((pl) conflicts). Also the domain of sites of collective memory – such as sayings and folklore – present a variety of k’ondo (conflict) cases.

In the course of the discussion new meaning dimensions of k’ondo (conflict) will manifest themselves. As with the analysis of the other terms, each new meaning dimension will be described in terms of a semantic component. At the end of the analysis these semantic components are brought together in a comprehensive description of the meaning of k’ondo (conflict).

One striking feature of the discussion of the less conscious expressions of k’ondo (conflict) is that mediation, arbitration or transformation is introduced along with them. This could imply that the Giryama attribute a certain salience to the connection between k’ondo (conflict) and kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict), which goes beyond thinking of kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) in terms of a potential outcome of k’ondo (conflict). In fact, an area of transition is of particular interest for the exploration of conceptual links between the Giryama understandings of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. Since the transition from kuelewana (understand each other) to k’ondo (conflict) lacks cultural salience – demonstrating a notable asymmetry in the Giryama understanding of the areas of transition – kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) will be the single focus of our attention.

In section two the conceptual dimensions of kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) are explored with the help of two case-studies of arbitration by a council of elders (athumia a magogoni). This requires a slightly different descriptive format from the usual one, as we enter a different domain of cultural description. Rather than a salient socio-cultural concept, we are studying a salient cultural rule-governed interaction. A cultural script, which is geared to capture implicitly rule governed interactions, is therefore the preferred descriptive format (see: Ameka and Breedveld 2004; Wierzbicka 2002b).

The third and last part of this chapter is different in character from all the previous discussions. It is an exercise in cultural analysis in the context of intercultural peace-
making. Its contribution to the overall argument could best be described as a practical application of insights that have been gained in the previous chapters. It presents the historical case of the Anglo-Giryama peace negotiations of 1914, recounted by the historian Cynthia Brantley (1981). It is the only recorded instance of intercultural peace negotiations in which Giryama were involved. However that may be, the negotiations are of quite some interest in the present context. Intended to end the violent conflict between the British and the Giryama, described in section one, they are characterised by Brantley as a fiasco, leaving both the Giryama and the British as losers.

An interesting question in the context of this study is whether ideological aspects accounted for the lack of success of the peace negotiations. An analysis with the help of present-day Giryama understandings of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ could render some insights into the salience of conflicting ideologies in the Anglo-Giryama peace talks. Indeed, if the explanatory power of such an analysis can be demonstrated, it would underscore the relevance of a socio-cognitive analysis of cultural discourse in the area of intercultural conflict and peace-making.

II. *K’ondo* (conflict)

As was mentioned in the discussion of *kuelewana* (understand each other) (chapter three: note 4) few people, beside the older generation, are familiar with the saying *Herye dheri, k’ondo ihaho* (in time of peace, there is conflict). Most people argued that it was not a Giryama saying and that it should be: *Haribo dheri, k’akuna k’ondo*. (Where there is peace, there is no conflict). The ‘complete the sentence’ exercise with *dheri* (peace) demonstrated a similar feature. Some informants explicitly mentioned the opposition in: *Kuna dheri, k’akuna k’ondo* (There is peace, there is no conflict). These reactions, with the exception of those of the older Giryama, illustrate that there is a clear ‘one or the other’ discourse. However, as the following discussion demonstrates, in the less conscious articulations of *k’ondo* (conflict), the relationship is not as straightforward as the discourse suggests.
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II.1 Explications of *k’ondo*

The first exploration is an analysis of the explications given by the same group of Girrama informants that were introduced before. The question they were asked, is “*K’ondo ni noni?*” (What is conflict). The responses are listed in descending order of frequency.

*K’ondo*

a. *manapigana*  they are fighting each other
b. *kutselewana*  to not understand each other
c. *manaheha na milomo/ managombana na maneno*  they are fighting with mouths/
   they are quarrelling with words
d. *manakosana*  they have a dispute
e. *inaanza na maneno*  it starts with words
f. *manaheha*  they are fighting

A striking characteristic of this list is the two types of definition that are given. One group is defined in terms of a physical fight [a. and f.], the other group in terms of a verbal fight [c. and d.], while [b.] and [e.] may be argued to refer to either. Taking also into account the responses that have not been presented here, I found that 51% define *k’ondo* (conflict) as some kind of physical fight, while 49% define it as a verbal fight.

The finding suggests that the double interpretation is a pervasive aspect of the Girrama understanding of *k’ondo* (conflict), which probably means that both emerge from the same underlying meaning structure. Assuming that this is the case, we could reflect this feature in a provisional semantic description as follows:

1. two persons do bad things to each other
   a. they can say bad things to each other
   b. they can do bad things to each other’s body

The same double interpretation can be noted in the English translations of *k’ondo* (conflict) in the *Girrama-English Dictionary* (1964), citing ‘quarrel, dispute, fight’.

Obviously, *k’ondo* (conflict) includes a great number of situations of animosity. Some of the explications that Girrama informants gave of *fujo* (trouble) and *viha* (war) go to
illustrate this. One of the explications of fujo (trouble) is chanzo cha k’ondo (the beginning of a conflict), fujo (trouble) clearly including a more restricted area of application than k’ondo (conflict) (see chapter seven for a full discussion of fujo). At the other end there is the equation of viha (war) with k’ondo (conflict) in a statement such as: k’ondo na viha ni vimwenga (conflict and ‘war’ are the same), where k’ondo (conflict) is claimed to be able to replace the word viha (war) (see chapter seven for a full discussion of viha).

If we compare these observations with semantic features of the English word ‘conflict’, we find that the same duality is reflected in it.

The first two definitions that LDCE (2003) cites are:

i. a state of disagreement or argument between people, groups, countries etc.

ii. fighting or a war

These English definitions of ‘conflict’ are close to the definitions of k’ondo (conflict). That this duality is not a ‘universal’ phenomenon is demonstrated by the Dutch understanding of conflict. The Van Dale dictionary (2005) explicates conflict as: verschil van mening, botsing, strijd (disagreement, confrontation, fight). The latter two terms are ambiguous, they can refer to both physical and verbal fights. Words that clearly refer to a physical aspect of a fight, such as gevecht (fight) or oorlog (war), characteristically do not occur in the Van Dale definition of conflict. When referring to a conflict that includes the aspect of fighting, the Dutch add an adjective such as gewelddadig (violent) or gewapend (armed) to the word conflict.

The translation of k’ondo by English ‘conflict’ is definitely not inappropriate. Moreover, it has an advantage over the three more specific translations of the Giryama-English Dictionary. Using the word ‘conflict’ suggests a single, if probably complex, concept. This reflects my assumption that k’ondo (conflict) is a comprehensive concept. At the same time the translation of k’ondo by ‘conflict’ does not fit every context, as the cited texts will illustrate. This helps us to underline the socio-cultural divergence between ‘conflict’ and k’ondo (conflict), serving additionally as a clear signal of the precariousness of the practice of cross-cultural translation.

The following exploration of the less conscious meaning constructions of k’ondo (conflict) expands the perspective on the topic to include its socio-cultural contexts. Within the domain of sites of collective memory an oral historical account, sayings and a folk-tale
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are explored to gain insight into k’ondo (conflict); in the domain of public events some
parts of different discussions are the object of analysis. Conclusions that are drawn from
these analyses, are additionally illustrated by snippets from conversations with Giryama
men and women.

II.2 K’ondo (conflict) in sayings

If we compare the number of sayings on kuelewana (understand each other) with those
on k’ondo (conflict) we find a very uneven distribution. While there is a proliferation of
‘kuelewana’ sayings the number of ‘k’ondo’ sayings is restricted to those few below.
Reflecting on this striking feature, one might argue that the reason for this great
discrepancy is ideological. The Giryama were noted before to highly appreciate
kuelewana (understand each other) as a foundational building block of Giryama society. In
the discussion of the sayings the inconveniences that kuelewana (understand each other)
brings along, were demonstrated to be appreciated and considered to be unpleasant but
‘natural’, thus smothering criticism within the ideological boundaries of kuelewana
(understand each other). Hypothetically we could then argue that k’ondo (conflict) had
been profiled more extensively in sayings if it had fitted into the ideological circle of
kuelewana (understand each other). In fact, the general unfamiliarity among the younger
generations of Giryama with the saying Hariho dheri, k’ondo ihaho (Where there is peace,
there is conflict) underlines two strictly separate domains of experience.

These observations demonstrate the opposition of k’ondo (conflict) and kuelewana
(understand each other) in terms of strictly bounded and unrelated areas of experience.
Still, in view of the – albeit fading – knowledge of the saying Hariho dheri, k’ondo ihaho
(Where there is peace, there is conflict) and the above mentioned collective for all sorts of
conflict in terms of non-kuelewana (understand each other) I have not taken these
observations as the final say on the nature of the opposition of the two concepts.
Therefore, I would argue that at this point we restrict ourselves to observing that the sheer
difference in numbers of sayings, k’ondo (conflict) is down-played to the advantage of
kuelewana (understand each other).

The first saying reflects an explanation that one of the informants gave of k’ondo (conflict)
[e.], arguing that it may start with words: Chaho cha k’ondo ni madhe (the beginning of
conflict is jokes). It can be used either as a warning to someone to be careful about his
language, or as an evaluation of a situation of k’ondo (conflict). Joking is a general and

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highly appraised feature of communication among age-mates and family members of the same generation, sons can joke with their father, youngsters with their teacher. Yet, it is realised at the same time that jokes can be misunderstood and turn against the speaker.

Thus, *k’ondo* (conflict) has a beginning in things that went wrong before. Another saying clearly expresses it as a gradual process. The process starts from a situation that has the potential to give rise to *k’ondo* (conflict) as it has the same organic features, if less pronounced:

*Chaho cha kironda ni katswetswe* The beginning of a sore is a small wound.

The metaphor for *k’ondo* (conflict) is a sore. Indeed, ‘ailment’ imagery is often used among the Giryama to express a disturbance of peaceful living. *Kironda* (sore) implies that it is not only a serious situation, but also one that cannot be resolved quickly. A sore takes time to heal, and so does *k’ondo* (conflict), it is suggested. That this is an essential element in the conceptualisation of peace-making processes among the Giryama, is illustrated by the case-studies below.

Another saying refers to *k’ondo* (conflict) as ‘eyeless’: *K’ondo k’aina matso* (conflict has not eyes). Traditionally, the Giryama consider the eyes the medium through which man acquires knowledge about good and bad. Qualifying *k’ondo* (conflict) as not having eyes, implies therefore that the lack of moral awareness lies in the very nature of *k’ondo* (conflict).

From these sayings some general observations can be made as to how the Giryama think about the nature of *k’ondo* (conflict). First, *k’ondo* (conflict) is a phenomenon that may occur unexpectedly to one of the parties, who unknowingly has offended the other party (*k’ondo inaanza na madhe* (conflict starts with jokes)). It may also be the climax of a process of growing resentment of one of the parties (*chaho cha kiron da ni katswetswe* (the beginning of a sore is a small wound)). Once it is there it is very difficult to handle, because of its sore-like character and its lack of sense (*k’ondo k’aina matso* (conflict has

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4 Examples are: *muganga* (traditional doctor) as peace-maker, and *kira ho* (ordeal). In case of an insoluble dispute the parties go to *kira ho* (ordeal); they have to eat a piece of paw-paw to which medicine is applied. The one who gets a swelling is judged to be the culprit.

5Cf. *Kung’atwa ni mato* (lit. to be shone upon by the eyes) is a Kigiryama idiom, which means ‘to be of a certain age’ (at which one can distinguish between good and evil).
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no eyes)). The overall impression that the sayings make is that the Giryama evaluate 
*k’ondo* (conflict) as bad.

This feature can be added to the component proposed earlier:

1. two persons do bad things to each other
   a. they can say bad things to each other
   b. they can do bad things to each other’s body

2. *people think this is bad.*

I would argue that this notion of ‘badness’ is part and parcel of the Giryama understanding 
of *k’ondo* (conflict) whether it is a verbal or a physical conflict. In the following section, 
which discusses *k’ondo* (conflict) in a variety of socio-cultural contexts more detailed 
articulation is given to the moral and socio-emotional contours of this sensibility.

II.3 *K’ondo* (conflict) in the Giryama social context

In line with the character of this study, the present discussion is organised according to 
the principle of most frequent experience to least frequent experience. In the context of 
this study the manifestations of *k’ondo* (conflict) that are within the experience of most 
Giryama, are of the greatest analytical interest and therefore the primary object of socio- 
cognitive exploration. In the course of the discussion, the question of the continuity of 
understanding between conflicts that are as different as those between married couples 
and Giryama and outsiders will be a specific area of attention.

II.3.a *K’ondo ya nyumbani* (a domestic conflict)

The type of *k’ondo* (conflict) that is within the experience of every Giryama is *k’ondo ya 
nyumbani* (domestic conflict). In fact, the vast majority of instances that Giryama 
informants cited to me, belong in this category. Characteristically, it has well-defined sub- 
categories with precise descriptions of the characteristics of *k’ondo* (conflict) and the 
appropriate way of ending it. In the discussion below I have spelled out this common 
knowledge in quite some detail, to illustrate the explicit understanding that Giryama 
generally have of *k’ondo* (conflict) in the area of domestic conflicts. Also they offer an 
opportunity to explore references to underlying socio-cultural understandings.
The kind of k’ondo (conflict) that was cited most in this category was k’ondo ya muf’u na muchewe (a conflict of husband and wife). In the meeting of the seven elders and the two older women at Gotani, which was discussed in chapter three, it is the first topic of discussion. The following passage has been taken from it. In it the discussion leader Anthony Kazungu (AK) and two elders paint a picture of a marital dispute and its aftermath. Being elders they focus on their own role in the dispute, or rather in ending it.

1.

SW: Mut’u na muchewe madzaiheha nyumbani. A husband and his wife have been fighting in the home.
AK: Mhu. Mumudzi mumwenga; yuya ana nyumbaye. yuya ana nyumbaye. Usiku yuya adzapiga muchewe. Hmm. In one homestead; this one has his house, that one has his house. In the night this one beat up his wife.
SW: Kukicha madzachma mino nikamuza... Early morning I ask him....
KD: Ro kosa. That which is awry.
SW: Mucheo adzakuhendadze, mbona huzasikira munwehe? What has your wife done to you, why have we heard you fighting?

Most probably the dispute between husband and wife has started before this particular occasion. Still, it is only k’ondo (conflict) from this night onwards. The criterion is obviously one that has to do with involvement of people who live in that place. The reason for this involvement is still unclear at this point. Therefore other people’s involvement can not yet be translated into a semantic component.

Although the physical aspect of marital conflict has not been mentioned, it is certainly an accepted part of it, that is in the case of the husband. As a rule, the wife is not supposed to beat her husband, not even in reaction to the beating of her husband. If she does, she is transgressing a vital Giryaama norm, thus loading the cause of k’ondo (conflict) onto her own shoulders. The only way she can defend herself, according to Giryaama custom, is by running into the house of her father-in-law, in whose mudzi (homestead) the couple lives traditionally. His house is a temporary sanctuary, to which the husband has no access until k’ondo (conflict) is resolved.

Giryaama informants were telling me that marital conflict can drag on for a long time, as there are so many ways of postponing a final outcome. That this is a realistic rendering of the situation is confirmed by the following description, and the case-study of an adulterous wife (cf. case-study I, section III.1).
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A fight between husband and wife is characteristically due to one of a distinct set of causes. These were defined by Giryama informants as disobedience of the wife to her husband, the husband’s jealousy or alcoholism and his consequent misbehaviour towards his wife, the wife’s refusal to satisfy her husband’s sexual desires, or adultery of the wife (adultery of the husband is an accepted phenomenon). In fact, all these causes qualify as acts that flout Giryama norms relating to being husband and wife.

If the couple lives in a persistent condition of k’ondo (conflict), it is generally accepted that the wife packs up and goes back to her parents. She will always take her children with her, and may even be escorted to her parental home by her husband. The husband only does so when he seeks mediation from her parents, in other words when he puts the blame of the quarrel on his wife.

The parents can decide to refer the wife to her mother’s sisters or her grandmother for mediation. The older ladies are supposed to teach the wife what good spousal behaviour is like. The teaching is directed at resolving the conflict; the particularities of the conflict are the starting point for a discussion on ‘how to be a good wife’. Another characteristic of their teaching is that it is strewn with (rhetorical) questions to the wife, such as “How do you think your husband can take care of you, if you make trouble every day?” This is how the older ladies try to effect a change of mind in the misbehaving wife. If the wife accepts their advice, and agrees to improve, the ladies will publicly announce that everything has been discussed, that all is clear and that the wife can return home. If the latter disagrees with the accusations and does not accept the teachings of the older women, the matter has to be taken up outside the homestead, in a council of elders. In preparation for the council the wife stays at her parents’ homestead.

In case the wife leaves her husband because of him treating her badly, there will be a council of elders meeting at the wife’s parental home. These elders are family members (uncles). At the meeting both husband and wife are heard, then the council withdraws for a private consultation (njamta) and after that pronounces its verdict. In case the husband has been found guilty, he is told to pay a fine to the wife’s family. In case the wife has been found guilty, she will be sent back to her husband’s homestead. This should be the end of the problem. If the wife elopes again to her parents, accusing her husband of beating her, he will be told by her parents that she will not come back. This is not an easy decision, as the husband has usually paid a considerable bride price for his wife to his
conflict as a communal experience

father-in-law, and will demand it back. In case the parents of the wife do not solve the *k’ondo* (conflict) adequately, the husband can take the case to the chief and his council of elders (*athumia a magogo*) (cf. case-study I).

As the discussion has demonstrated, the resolution process of the marital conflict involves members of the homestead and the wider community. Their active part in trying to restore the marriage underlines the public affair that *k’ondo ya mut’u na muchewe* (a conflict between husband and wife) is. Clearly, a marital conflict is not evaluated in terms of a clash of characters, and therefore the affair of two individuals. This is consistent with the Giryama understanding of the marriage act, which is not considered as being between two partners but between two families. Additionally, the list of causes demonstrates that marital conflict is not a conflict between characters, but rather a breaking of the marriage norms by one or both partners.

The following words from a male informant, who was explaining to me the dilemma that adultery (of the wife) puts on the husband, is a clear illustration of the Giryama understanding of marital conflict as a breaking of norms. It also demonstrates the dramatic consequences, in this case for the husband:

2.

*Na ni wako kamare, wamugula kila kitu la gonya, akahalifu (Kisw) sharia kuko na munaelwana. Na gonya akifika muno nyumbani, k’andakwambira thiri. Tha ni ukadulukize na mato. Kwa kukala, akikwambira iyo ni k’ondo. Ukimpesa ni k’ondo.*

And she is yours completely, you bought her completely (to the end), she breaks the law there, while you understand each other (i.e. you share basic marital principles). And then she comes inside the house, and she does not tell you at all. Until you find out by chance. Because (In fact), if she tells you it is conflict. If you get a glimpse of her it is conflict.

The passage illustrates once again that *k’ondo* (conflict) is associated with public awareness. As soon as the wife’s adultery has become officially public (i.e. the husband knows about it (although the community may secretly have been aware of it) there is a situation of *k’ondo* (conflict). The speaker argues that the husband and wife had a shared

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6 The word *thiri* is accompanied by a gesture of pulling at a tooth, emphasising that she is not at all inclined to tell anything.
understanding of their marital status before, which he expresses significantly by the verb *kuelewana* (understand each other). In the discussion of *kuelewana* (understand each other) in chapter three, moral dimensions were demonstrated to be salient meaning aspects of its understanding. Thus we may infer that these moral aspects are also included in the speaker’s use of the verb in the present context. This assumption is in fact underscored by his characterising adultery as a breaking of *sharia* (customary law).7

We may therefore conclude that adultery undermines *kuelewana* (understand each other) between husband and wife. Since their conflict automatically includes a wider circle of family members and by extension community members, we could tentatively argue that a marital conflict affects *kuclewana* (understand each other) in the wider community. It is not clear yet from the findings presented so far why, apart from husband and wife, other Girama should feel that there is not *kuelewana* (understand each other). All we can say so far, is that the picture which emerges is one that highlights the community as an integral part of *k’ondo* (conflict).

Although *k’ondo ya mut’u na muchewe* (a conflict between husband and wife) is considered the most common conflict in the homestead, it is not the only one. Another type that Girama identify is the *k’ondo ya ana* (the conflict of children). Unlike what it seems to convey, this is not typically a fight among children. More often it refers to male youths and adult sons. In this case *k’ondo* (conflict) may refer to different players. One is a physical fight among brothers (or cousins). Although these fights can be pretty rough (where the combatants might end up in hospital), they are generally considered to have little impact on the social fabric of the homestead. This is illustrated nicely in a Girama saying: *K’ondo ya ndugu ni chauv cha madzini, k’aiina kigalogalo* (the conflict of relatives is like a splash in the water, it has no fierce rolling on the ground (i.e. wrestling)).

*K’ondo ya ana* (conflict of children) can also refer to a conflict between a son and his father, or paternal uncles, or his mother. These conflicts are rare and when they occur, they are usually resolved within the homestead. When the conflict continues the son will be told by a council of elders to move out of the homestead. The elders may express their verdict by way of the saying that was discussed in the context of *ts’i* (land): *Ts’i k’aiangwa songerako* (the land cannot be told: “move up”). It is a last means of solving a conflict and a very drastic one, for the son is not allowed to visit the homestead anymore, not even in

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7 This is a Girama borrowing ultimately from Arabic via Kiswahili. It refers to Girama customary law and does not include reference to Islamic law.
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case of the death of one of his parents. A curse will follow him the rest of his life, and it will hit him if he returns to his parental home. Only in very serious cases will the chief and his council of elders be consulted. The second case-study in the section of kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) illustrates how a son-mother conflict is handled by the council of elders.

The following story features a son and his father in a k’ondo ya ana (conflict of children), which is resolved in the homestead. ‘Ngonyo na Babeye Ngonyo’ (‘Ngonyo and Ngonyo’s father’) was narrated to me by an old man, Kalama wa Nzaro (KN), from Kaloleni (picture 2). His respondent was my field assistant at the time, a Chonyi speaking person in his late twenties.¹

3.

KN: Ngonyo waamba: “Nahugazhe atumwa.”
KN: Hiyo?
N: Yo ya Ngonyo na babaye Ngonyo.
KN: Ni mut’u na babaye
N: Ni mut’u na babaye.
KN: Ao ni mut’u na babaye ao.
N: Mhu.
KN: Vikara makikala managazha...yuyu mwana.
N: Yuyu mwana nde anyeamba: “Nahugazhe aa atu.” It was this child who said: “Let us divide these people.”
Kila mut’u ahalo adame.
Mut’u na babaye.
Vikara marokala manapiga mulolongo vikara,
yani musithari. Manapiga musithari. Yuyu babeye
Ngonyo achenda mugwira muyahu mwana,
achamba: “Mino dzaanza kukutsola uwe ndiwe
mwanga.”
N: Mhu. Nde mudamu wa kwakwe.
KN: Eeh ndiwe mudamu wa kwanza.

KN: Ngonyo said: “Let us divide the slaves.”
N: OK. Let us tell the whole story.
How does it start?
KN: Which one?
N: The one of Ngonyo and of Ngonyo’s father.
KN: It is a person (son) and his father.
N: It is a person (son) and his father.
KN: They are a person (son) and his father.
N: Hmm.
KN: Now if they divide...this child...
Each person gets his people
The man and his father.
Now those present were standing in
a row, which is a line. They were
making a line. This father of Ngonyo
goes and takes that child, and says: “I
have started to choose you, my child.”
N: Hmm. The son belongs to his home.
KN: Yes...you are the first man. Now

¹ The Chonyi are one of the Mijikenda peoples.
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_Haya vikara arya at’u mandagazhika zho?_ how are those people divided?
N: (laughter).
N: (laughter)
KN: _Osimi pia makikira..._ KN: They all went too...
N. _Mhü._
N: Hmm.
KN: _Makikira na ko kwa babaye._ N: They all went to his father.
N: _Eeh._
N: Yes.
KN: _Mana adzaanzwa kuhalwa iye. Eeh._ KN: Because he was got first.
Yakala ni sharia.
That was the law.
N: _Yakala ni sharia._ N: That was the law.9

The narrative is short and straightforward. One striking element is that _k’ondo_ (conflict) is not a physical fight. A more fundamental aspect of _k’ondo_ (conflict), as it is presented here, is that it is not a conflict between two people, but rather a conflict between the son’s ‘unnatural’ ideas and the Giryama norms and values that his father adheres to. The son’s demand for his share of the inheritance is contrary to Giryama tradition, and therefore a serious breach of Giryama norms.10 It creates a very tense situation, because the consequences, in case the matter is not resolved adequately, are dramatic. The story is in fact about this ‘unnatural’ (i.e. un-Giryama like) situation (often considered by Giryama a sign of bad omen) and its resolution.

Strictly speaking therefore, the father is not a party in the conflict. This is in fact a general feature of _k’ondo ya ana_ (conflict of children) and explains at the same time why the Giryama label it as such. Since the father is not involved in the conflict, he is entitled to assume the role of arbitrator. His status as head of a peaceful homestead, wise elder, and loyal adherent to Giryama traditions, is at risk. Moreover, an inadequate resolution of the conflict will result in a complete break-up of the social fabric of the homestead and loss of respect in the wide neighbourhood. It is indeed thanks to the father’s ingenuity that the conflict is resolved without any harm to his interests and those of the homestead.

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9 Although the story echoes the Biblical parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), ‘Ngonyo na Babeye Ngonyo’ is inspired by a historical figure of great wealth, called Ngonyo. When asked by the respondent whether the story had actually happened, the narrator stated that it had actually happened, yet before his time.
10 His father may decide to give his share of the inheritance while he is alive, but the son must never ask for it. One informant told me of a similar case with his neighbours (a family who came originally from Malawi). The three sons demanded their share, and the father granted each of them an equal piece of land. Each son built a house on it and then sold it. At present they live as beggars, having squandered all the money. The informant concluded that since they did not follow the (Giryama) norms, they were bound to end up in trouble.
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In fact, this story dramatises a dimension of *k’ondo* (conflict) that has been tentatively suggested as an interpretation in the analysis of *k’ondo ya mut’u na muchewe* (conflict between husband and wife). It highlights *k’ondo* ’s destructive force on social networks and its underlying norms and values, in short it is a direct threat to *kuelewana* (understand each other) among all homestead members. Adding this as another meaning component in the semantic description, we must therefore include the basic sense of *kuelewana* (understand each other) as 'everybody being like parts of the same thing'. The following description reflects this:

1. two persons do bad things to each other
2. *because one of them does not want to do things in a way that everybody can feel that they are part of the same thing*
   a. they can say bad things to each other
   b. they can do bad things to each other’s body
3. *when this happens people feel that they are not like parts of one thing.*
4. people think this is bad.

Where in the discussion of the sayings 'bad' could not yet be qualified other than of major impact, the semantic description signals that 'bad' is a moral evaluation that goes beyond a disapproval of verbal or physical fights. It is an expression of the social harm that *k’ondo* (conflict) inflicts on *kuelewana* (understand each other).

**II.3.b K’ondo ya mbari na mbari** (a conflict between members from different families)

Conflicts among children are of course not restricted to the homestead members. Age mates from different homesteads can have fights as well. Causes may vary tremendously, they may be jealousy (e.g. with another boy who impresses one’s girlfriend on the dancing floor), drunkenness, false accusations. These fights are not considered detrimental to peaceful co-existence among the different homesteads. They are solved within the homestead of one of the families by a council of male elders, who may ask assistance from neighbouring homesteads as witnesses.11

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11 One informant told me that in the case of smaller boys fighting with each other, the father at whose homestead they are, may take a blanket or a piece of cloth, put the boys on either side, and tell them not to cross for some time. The boys have to cool down and then the matter will be discussed with the father and
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The major conflict in this category is *k'ondo ya mihaka* (the conflict of boundaries). This may vary between a conflict over one’s neighbour’s cattle grazing in one’s field to a conflict over the exact demarcation line between the field of one owner and the field of another. Minor conflicts are dealt with at the sub-chief’s office by a council of elders. Cases including boundary disputes are taken to the chief, who will send for a surveyor of land to measure the exact boundaries of the land that was acquired by title deed. If it is communal land or Trust Land, then the elders of the sub-chief will send a representative to make enquiries among witnesses to fix the exact dividing line. Once it has been established, he will also express in the presence of witnesses that this tree or that stone is the sign of the boundary. A distance of three metres is observed on either side of the line, which is marked as no man’s land. In case of further transgression the transgressor will be fined by the council of elders of the sub-chief. These cases are usually easily solved. Moreover, with private property being promoted in Giryamaland, this kind of *k'ondo ya mihaka* (conflict of boundaries) will gradually fade out completely.

II.3.c *K'ondo ya mut'u na mut'u* (a conflict between people)

The Giryama oral historical chronicle cites two *k'ondo* (conflicts) in which non-Giryama are a party. The first one is *k'ondo ya Chembe* (the conflict of Champion (the British-Giryama conflict)) in 1914. The second one is also in 1914: *k'ondo ya Azungu* (World War I). In the following discussion passages from oral history are the main object of analysis. Operating within the domain of sites of collective memory, they claim to represent generally accepted Giryama interpretations. Thus, even if the speaker, Rueben Kombe (RK), dissociates himself from generally shared knowledge, he cannot do so without explaining why he does so.

In the following passage *k'ondo ya Chembe* (the Anglo-Giryama conflict) is the topic of a discussion between Rueben Kombe, an old and respected Giryama historian, and his friend Joseph Charo (JC), who assumes the role of a –rather ignorant – student. Kombe explains to Charo that the correct term for the Anglo-Giryama conflict is *k'ondo ya Muzungu* (conflict of the European). He strongly rejects any suggestion on the part of

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12 Arthur Champion was Assistant District Commissioner (ADC) of Rabai (south Giryamaland) at the time. A year later he went back to Mwangea (north Giryamaland), where he had served before as ADC.
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Charo that it is another name for *k'ondo ya Chembe* (conflict of Champion). As a result of Kombe’s renaming of the events of 1914, Charo gets confused about the names of other conflicts during that period. In trying to sort out the dates and names of the Anglo-Giryama conflict, World War I and World War II, Kombe and Charo shed a new light on the nature of *k'ondo* (conflict).

4.

R.K: *Iyo iliwayo k’ondo ya Muzungu*.…
R.K: This one is called the conflict of the European…

JC: *K’ondo ya Muzungu ni iryahu*.
JC: The conflict of the European is that one.

R.K: *Be ni Mugiryama na Muzungu*.
R.K: It is (the one of) the Giryama and the European.

JC: *Mugiryama na Muzungu*.

*Ndó ya iryahu...ndó ya iryahu ya Chembe.*
That is that one….that is that one of Champion.

R.K: *Ndó iýo muhusu Chembe*…
R.K: That is the one concerning Champion.

JC: *Eeh.*
JC: Yes.

R.K: *...na ndó iýo muhusu Mikatili*.
R.K:…and it is the one concerning Mikatili.13

JC: *Mikatili*.
JC: Mikatili.

R.K: *Eia ino ya Mujeremani na Mungereza be***…
R.K: But that one between the German and the British, well…

JC: *Be ino ni 37 na 38*.
JC: Well, that one is 37 and 38

R.K: *Iyo...iyo siswi k’ahuyiha k’ondo... kwa jumula ii yehu yaanza mbere li...*
R.K: This one we don’t call conflict."
In an addition (calculating), this ours (i.e. our conflict) started before this one...

12 hedu 13. *Hatha 1914 inagwa ino ya Azungu; ni nyuma.*
[19]12 or 13. Indeed in 1914 the one of the Europeans starts; it is later.

This discussion on the appropriate terms demonstrates one typical characteristic of how Giryama label an instance of *k’ondo ya mut’u na mut’u* (a conflict between people). When

13 Mikatili is considered the leader of a cultural self-awareness movement. The movement was a reaction to the increasingly restrictive measures of the British colonial government in 1913-1914. She was caught by the British together with her co-leader Wanje, and they were sent to a prison in Kisii (Western Kenya). Her renown among the Giryama took on almost epic forms when she, an old woman, and her equally aged companion Wanje, managed to escape from prison and walk the 600kms back home.
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the Giryama are a party in the conflict, the conflict is named after the enemy. In case the Giryama are not a party in the conflict, the two parties of a conflict are mentioned, as in k’ondo ya Azungu (the conflict of the Europeans i.e. the Anglo-German conflict (World War I)). This is not a feature that is unique to the Giryama. Similar principles are used in other cultures e.g. English.¹⁴

Another salient detail is Kombes’s reaction to Charo, who suggests including World War II in the list of historical k’ondo (conflicts). Rueben Kombes retorts that that war does not qualify as k’ondo (conflict): lyo... ivo k’ahuiha k’ondo (This one... this one we don’t call conflict). His clear rejection of the term seems to be all the more puzzling when he does agree to using the word k’ondo (conflict) for World War I: “…1914 inagwa ino ya Azungu” (…in 1914 was the conflict of the Europeans).

It is true that the second World War is generally called viha ya hiri (lit. second war) among the Giryama.¹⁵ Yet, why is it then that the first World War is termed k’ondo (conflict)? To complicate matters even more the first World War seems to belong in the same category with the Anglo-Giryama conflict, and of necessity their semantic description should coincide with the semantic description that has been developed from k’ondo ya mbari na mbari (conflict between families) and k’ondo ya nyumbani (homestead conflict).

In short, Rueben Kombes’s remark offers an analytical challenge. One thing that cannot be ignored is the obvious conceptual continuity in the Giryama understanding between the local conflict among the Giryama, the violent conflict between the Giryama and the British, and a conflict in which the Giryama were no party. I assumed that Rueben Kombes disqualified World War II as a k’ondo (conflict), as it took place faraway from the Giryama. World War I was different, for one of the war scenes was right across the border in Tanzania. Yet, was this close enough to argue Giryama involvement, I wondered. In fact, the answer to this question was found in an account by the historian Cynthia Brantley (1981) of the Giryama-British relations in year 1914.¹⁶

¹⁴ A striking example is the English term for k’ondo ya Chembe (conflict of Champion), which is ‘Giryama Rising’.
¹⁵ This phenomenon is discussed in detail in chapter seven.
¹⁶ Cynthia Brantley (1981) carried out a detailed research on the course of events that led to the armed conflict between the colonial administration and the Giryama, and on its aftermath. She argues that armed conflict was not a positive decision on the part of either party, but ‘more likely it was a case of [British] administrative bungling’(112).
conflict as a communal experience

Brantley indicates that by the year 1914 the British-Giryama animosity had developed into violent conflict. At the same time German-British fighting was going on in the Tanzanian border area. In order to oppose the British colonial regime, the Giryama thought they might benefit from the support of the Germans. Thus, contacts were established with them. Yet, as Brantley claims, the plight of the German military was so precarious that their support to the Giryama never materialised (1981:111-112).  

This account gives evidence of the Giryama ‘link’ with World War I. Even though they were not actively participating, the Giryama clearly felt that they would benefit from a German victory. They probably also believed that they could free themselves from British oppression with the help of the Germans. As regards the use of k’ondo (conflict) we may conclude that it is used because the Anglo-German fighting was near Giryamaland, and because the Giryama felt that their well-being was tied up with the well-being of the Germans.

The k’ondo ya Azungu (Anglo-German conflict/World War I) in fact brings to the fore a pervasive dimension of every manifestation of k’ondo (conflict), which is that even if Giryama are not physically part of the conflict, they feel they are part of it. This has to do with the underlying notion that one of the parties does things that impairs the moral universe – and by extension the existence – of the community. Looking back at the instances of husband-wife and son-father conflict we find a similar communal experience. In fact, this experiential aspect rather than physical proximity determines the relationship between k’ondo (conflict) and the community. This is obvious from the present discussion of k’ondo ya Azungu (conflict of the Europeans), which involves people that are not in a place that the Giryama experience as ‘our place’. Another element that the example has demonstrated is that k’ondo (conflict) can be between groups.

II.4 Cultural semantic description of k’ondo

As a result of these last findings the semantic description of k’ondo (conflict) needs to be slightly adapted in the final version. I have added the new meaning components in italics. Another notable element of the description is the linking up of the evaluation ‘bad’ with ‘it is as if it happens to them’. In other words, because Giryama feel as if it happens to them

17 The term viha ya kwanza (first World War) tends to replace k’ondo ya Azungu in Giryama everyday language. This phenomenon is analysed in the description of viha (war) in chapter seven.
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they cannot feel like a proper community and this is what they experience as bad. Thus ‘bad’ has a socio-emotional charging, rather than a moral one.

*K’ondo*

People think like this:

Two persons or groups do bad things to each other
because one of them does not want to do things in a way that everybody can feel that they are part of the same thing
they can say bad things to each other
they can do bad things to each other’s body
When this happens people think it is as if it happens to them
Because of this they feel that they are not like parts of one thing
People think this is bad.

In the following section this semantic information is used as a basis to elaborate on the particular dimensions of kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict).

III *Kuthanya k’ondo* (end a conflict)

Ending k’ondo (conflict) requires a third party, as the discussions of k’ondo ya nyumbani (a domestic conflict) and k’ondo ya mbari na mbari (a conflict between families) have illustrated. This is also reflected in the general Giryama term for the reconciliation of two conflicting parties, kugwizanya18 (reconcile), and the frequently used Kiswahili term kupatanisha (reconclite). Both terms bring out that reconciliation is a reciprocal process between the two disputing parties (-n(a) – indicating reciprocity), and its causation by an outside force (-ya/-sha – indicating causation).

The literal translation of kuthanya in kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) is ‘to separate’, and ‘separating’ is indeed considered by the Giryama to be the beginning of any solution to a dispute or a fight. The following text, spoken by a male informant, around 50 years old, confirms this reality. Participating in a community discussion at Mtsengo (map II) about ways of solving a conflict in the community, the man gives an example of what he would

18 It is derived from kugwira – to hold, n(a) – suffix indicating reciprocity, -ya is a causative suffix.
do if he saw two people fighting. Phrased in a mixture of Kigirama and Kiswahili, the text actually summarizes in a nut-shell the basics of any peace-making process among the Giryama:

7.

.....nitzakwenda thekeza at'u manaheha, mimi rangu ni ningire kahikahi. Kuthanya kwangu, namuhala yyu, adziyekosana na yyu...mimi nina amani nao osini a.
Nangira kahikahi na nimuthanye...yuw nimwike bala ii, na yyuw nimwike vivi bala ii. (...) Hasa wale nitawalisha amani. Wote nitawaiiza. Huyu, nimjue wamekosana kivipi.
Vilianzaje mpaka wakakosana. Mimi nikipata hiyo, nasuhulisha hiyo.

... I have gone to find people fighting, it is my responsibility that I enter in the middle. (What) my separating (is about), I take him, who has started a dispute with him....I have peace with all (i.e. both) of them. I enter in the middle and I separate him....this one I put on this side and that one I put like this, on the other side. (....) I especially feed those peace (i.e.teach peaceful living). I ask them all (i.e. both). This one, I should know how they had a dispute (i.e. what made them have a dispute). How did it begin until they were having a dispute. When I find this (fight), I solve it.

The speaker features himself as a peacemaker. It is a role that women can also adopt (for an example see chapter three, section III.1). One essential quality of a peace-maker, is that he has to be on kuelewana (understand each other) terms with both parties – or as the speaker has it, one has to be at peace (aman) with the two parties. Only then can he successfully separate the disputing parties, get to know the background of the dispute, and ‘feed them peace’. This ‘feeding of peace’ is integrated in the process of recovering the course of events that led to the dispute or fight, and aims at making the two parties aware of Giryama values that have been neglected by them.

Although the speaker does not mention age as a distinctive aspect of the peacemaker, Giryama argue that only a person with life experience can be a good mediator. In practice, people from 40 and over fit into this category. Another important detail that has been left out by the speaker, is the final handshake of the two parties to confirm that what has been said to them is what they will adhere to (see also case-study I, section II.1). The handshake symbolizes what in Kigirama is expressed as: madzaelewana/

The man switched to Kiswahili, when he was interrupted by a person who was speaking Kiswahili.
20 The words are Kiswahili, but the idiom does not exist in Kiswahili. They are a direct translation of Kigirama kunisa dheni (feed peace i.e. teach peaceful living).
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Madzaskizana (they have understood each other), reflecting that they consider themselves ‘part of the same thing’ again. The expression: fudzagwa madheri (lit. we have fallen a draw) can be used by the two reconciled parties to highlight that they consider each other of an equal status.

Village and formal (i.e. being integrated in the local government judicial system) Giryama peace-making practices are based on the same principles as the spontaneous peace-making activity described in [7]. In the earlier section on the types of k’ondo (conflict) peace-making at the village level was already discussed. The following case-studies are examples of formal peace-making practice, which is the domain of the councils of elders of the sub-chief and the chief.

Both case-studies are taken from a meeting that was presided over by the council of elders of the chief of Tezo location, and held under a tree next to the chief’s office (picture 9). All players were present, complainants, defendants, the council of elders and an audience. Only the chief was not there. Since he is the one who lends administrative validation to the meeting, the meeting cannot proceed without him. People started to grumble that this was the second time that he failed to attend. The sub-chief, who has his office next to that of the chief, then decided to replace the chief, even though case number two was strictly speaking beyond his authority. Besides the sub-chief there were six elders, of whom two were female. The audience varied between 15 and 20 people.

III.1 Case-Study I: K’ondo ya mut’u na muchewe (a conflict between husband and wife)

This is a case of kuuyirana (lit. return to each other), a term that is used specifically for a reunification of husband and wife. Three elders sit behind a narrow table-like structure in

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21 As was argued in chapter three, kuelewana and kusikizana are considered to mean the same thing by the Giryama in general. Only in the context of friendship they can adopt slightly different meaning dimensions.
22 The phrase madzaryya dheri (lit. they have eaten peace), indicating the end of a reconciliation process, has largely gone out of use.
23 For a description of the Giryama institution of the council of elders, see chapter two.
24 A location is one level in the administrative hierarchy of the country. The head of administration is the chief. A location consists of a number of sub-locations, headed by sub-chiefs. which in turn consist of vhidzidzi (villages), each village headed by a village headman. The next level up from the location is the division, headed by the district officer (D.O.). Several divisions then make up a district, headed by a district commissioner (D.C.). The last level before the central administration is the provincial level, headed by the P.C. (provincial commissioner).
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front of the audience. The other elders are seated in the audience. The parties are an old husband and his young wife. The husband is the complainant. Seated on a tree-stump opposite the three council elders, he tells the elders that his wife committed adultery with a younger man in 2002. When he found out, he sent his wife to this person to tell him that she was his, and that he owed him, the ex-husband, the dowry that had been paid to the wife’s father at the time of their wedding. The man replied that he did not want to marry the woman. So she came back to live with her husband. Shortly afterwards, however, she moved out again. This time she went to stay at her parents’ home, where she has been ever since. All this time he has been providing food and clothing for her and the children. Now he wants them to return to him, but his wife refuses to come back. That is the reason, he explains, why he seeks the intervention of the council of elders. During the complainant’s speech the audience is silent. The only one that can be heard is one of the presiding elders, making sounds of disbelief, surprise and agreement.

Then the wife is invited to take the seat in front of the elders. The elders ask her why she refuses to go back. She accuses her husband of too much sexual appetite, and of using bhang (cannabis). She also tells the elders that her husband and some of his younger friends beat her up severely, when they found out that she had committed adultery. During her speech the same elder as before makes sounds that suggest agreement and puzzlement. However, this time his reactions are less expressive.

The old husband admits that he uses bhang at times to forget the hardships of life. He adds in his defence, that he has always taken good care of her and her three children, who were born from previous alliances. He also says that his friends incited him to beat up his wife, when they had found out about her adulterous behaviour.

Then the father of the wife, who came with her as a stake-holder in the case (having been given the dowry by the husband) is heard. He remains seated in his place. He says he was informed of the adultery by his son-in-law. After his daughter had been refused by her lover he took her into his home. When asked by the elders if he has any problems with the son-in-law, the father says he has not. He agrees with his son-in-law that his daughter should go back to him. Yet, he says, he cannot force his daughter to go.

As a first reaction, the elders say they have the impression that the wife is holding back some information. They tell her to realise the consequences of her behaviour for her father (who will have to pay back the bride-price). The woman looks at them defiantly.
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Then a female elder asks her whose is the baby on her back. She answers it is her husband’s. The husband denies it, and says that they have not shared a bed since she left him in 2002 (at the time of the case it was February 2004).

After this, the meeting is unanimous about the wife’s bad behaviour. Everybody seems to agree with the elders’ verdict, which is that she goes back to her husband. The wife, however, does not agree. Her reaction causes a stir among the women in the audience. They start discussing the possibility of a women’s-only consultation with the wife for 10 minutes. The elders and the sub-chief agree with the suggestion, and four women, among whom is one female elder, move to the side, counselling the woman out of earshot from the rest of the audience. The consultation lasts for about half an hour. When they come back, the women report that they tried to advise the woman on the way a good wife behaves, but she turned a deaf ear to their words.

All the elders regret this state of affairs. However, they stick to their decision of reunification of husband and wife as the best way out of this impasse. There is some discussion about how to put this decision into operation. In the end the sub-chief indicates the course of action: the wife can stay another ten days with her father to organise herself for the return to her husband. After these ten days the husband will come and collect her and the children.

After the sub-chief’s words the husband is asked to pay *kadzama* (allowance). Since he appears to have come without money, he is asked to pay in three days time. The sub-chief then asks the husband and wife to shake hands as a confirmation of their commitment to these terms. The wife seems to be unwilling to shake her husband’s hand at first, but then reluctantly gives him a weak handshake. The agreement is not recorded in a written document by the sub-chief.

As a parting shot, the sub-chief adds a piece of advice for the wife on good spousal behaviour. After that the meeting breaks up. The elders are not satisfied about the outcome. They fear the two will break up again, because the wife is not following Giryama ways. *Kigiryama kicho?* (Is this the Giryama way?), one elder asks rhetorically.

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25 *Kadzama* is a calabash filled with palm wine. In former days the allowance of the elders was measured in numbers of *kadzama*. Since money has replaced palm-wine the word *themo* (inducement) is more generally used.
III.1.a Analysis

Like any case of kuthanya k’ondo (ending a conflict), this case of kuuyirana (reunification between husband and wife) is considered by the Giryama an intermediary state between k’ondo (conflict), from which it has sprung, and kuelewana (understand each other), the condition it aims for. Therefore, it seems logical that it shows elements from both.

The following analysis aims to demonstrate the close links between certain details of this particular case of arbitration and the key words k’ondo (conflict) and kuelewana (understand each other), both as a general concept and in its specific form of decision-making. In this way we can gain insight into the ideological impact of the two key words on the process of reconciliation.

A meeting of (a council of) elders is generally considered a guarantee for the solution of problems and conflict, as the saying Haniho athumia k’ahagwa kimba (Where there are elders, a carcass cannot fall) illustrates. Still, it cannot be denied that the beginning of this meeting is best characterised by an atmosphere of k’ondo (conflict) between husband and wife. The council of elders and the audience consider it their task to transform the situation, and restore the relationship of husband and wife to the ‘normal’ one of kuelewana (understand each other). Their commitment comes out in several ways. One clear instance is the verdict of the elders. It does not aim at punishing the wife for her previous misbehaviour nor for her present bad behaviour. Indeed, the verdict is guided by the ultimate goal of the council of elders, which is to restore kuelewana (understand each other) between husband and wife.

Another illustration of the positive intentions of the council of elders are the regular wordless comments of one elder to the speeches of both husband and wife. His reactions at particular intervals basically signal his agreement with the point raised at that moment by the speaker. In this way the elder highlights statements that are expressive of or negating Giryama norms. For instance, the elder shows a strong reaction of disbelief when the husband first tells the meeting that he has provided for his wife and children (from a different father) ever since she left, and then goes on to say that his wife refuses to come back to him.
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Still, the elder’s comments do not all express ‘thinking along the same lines as the speaker’, a characteristic feature of kuelewana (understand each other) as a decision-making process. There is a subtle difference between his reactions to the husband and to the wife. Using a softer voice during the speech of the wife, he already signals a certain reservation with respect to his thinking along the same lines as the wife.

Another indication of the positive intentions of the meeting is the atmosphere of concentration among the elders and the audience. During the individual speeches no word was spoken; people listened attentively. As was argued in chapter four, this is a salient component of the kuelewana (understand each other) of a leader with his people.

Lastly, there is the women’s only consultation. Clearly, it echoes the consultations of the mother’s sisters and the grandmother in case of a marital conflict that is solved at the homestead level (cf. section II.3.a). Its proven value in that context probably incites the elders to agree with the suggestion of the women. Also, it illustrates the lengths to which a council of elders is prepared to go to achieve kuelewana (understand each other).

The flexibility of organisation and of time, which characterises the meeting of the council of elders, is expressive of the way Giryama think about complex processes such as peace-making.26 Although these processes have some formal characteristics, they are essentially ‘organically’ constituted. The peace-making process is integrative of the elements that manifest themselves during the meeting, and therefore should be conducted carefully and pragmatically, while all the time reflecting the norms and values that are included in kuelewana (understand each other). The emphasis on kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) as a gradual process is, in fact, part of the understanding of any decision making on difficult topics. The salience of this understanding is reflected in the saying: Banzu banzu gogo rinenda (slowly, slowly (lit. chop, chop) the block goes). It is indeed the quality that a gradual process lends to the final decision that Giryama think contributes to the durability of its outcome.27

26 Another (physical) instance of the flexibility of organisation is the way the elders are seated. Some are presiding over the meeting, while others are seated among the audience.

27 The Giryama ‘organic’ understanding of how to end a conflict is also the major reason why I have opted for the term peace-making rather than conflict resolution, thus highlighting besides the social also the psychological restoration of peace among those involved in the conflict.
One particular value that comes out in this meeting as essential to the process, is ‘openness’ in the sense of being honest. Lack of ‘openness’, of which the elders and the audience suspect the wife, is considered to be detrimental to a successful conclusion of the process. As was pointed out in the discussion of kuelewana (understand each other) as a decision-making process, openness expresses the spirit of kuelewana (understand each other). By holding back information and lying about the identity of the baby’s father, the wife shows behaviour that contradicts this spirit.

From this discussion we may conclude that kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) proceeds according to the decision-making principles of kuelewana (understand each other), and aims at transforming a situation of k’ondo (conflict) into one that facilitates kuelewana (understand each other) as a general principle of peaceful living. The present meeting has clearly failed in achieving this condition. The elders (and the audience) consider the chances of a restoration of kuelewana (understand each other) very meagre. This is openly expressed at the end of the case by one of the elders: Kigirama kicho? (Is this the Giryama way?). The elders know that not everybody is ‘thinking the same good things’, although ‘they want everybody to feel that they are part of the same thing again’ (both components of kuelewana as a decision-making process). Illustrative of the failed attempt too, are the wife’s weak handshake and the sub-chief’s lecture on good spousal behaviour after the conclusion of the case. The latter can be seen as a last desperate attempt to change the situation for the better.

III.2 Case-Study II: K’ondo ya ana (a conflict of children)\(^{28}\)

This is an example of a case of kugwiranya (reconcile) that should lead to the reconciliation of mother and son, which is referred to as kugwirana (unite) in Kigirama.\(^{29}\) The same procedure is followed as in the former case. First the complainant is heard and then the defendant.

The son is in his early thirties, the mother in her sixties. The mother accuses her son of wrongly calling her mutsai (sorceress). She is very embittered, as three years ago her younger son (who is also in the audience) had called her already mutsai (sorceress).

\(^{28}\) As was explained before k’ondo ya ana (a conflict of children) can be a conflict between children (or rather youths), or a child and his/her parent.

\(^{29}\) For a discussion of the meaning of kugwirana see chapter three, section III.1.
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Recently he has stopped saying it, but now his older brother has started using this word for her.

Charo, the son and defendant, is then called forward. He tells the elders that his mother has bewitched him. As a result, he was down with fever for a long time. He went to the out-patient department of Kilifi Hospital, but his health has not improved. He even developed boils and was admitted to the hospital, but again could not be cured.

Then the mother is asked to react. She says, she is definitely not a witch, and has always taken good care of the family, providing food and a home for them. She adds that she has always protected her home with fingo (protective medicine). In spite of all this, there has not been any motherly respect. She now wants to take her son to kiraho (ordeal), where they will both be tested for lying.30 To make clear that she is serious about this, she tells the elders that she has sold already all her bricks, worth Kesh 13,000 (approx. €130), in case anything happens to her during kiraho (ordeal) and she won’t be able to reimburse the witnesses and the representatives of the chief’s office.

Charo then tells the elders that he has not called his mother mutsai (sorceress) for the last three years, but his younger brother, Garama, has. The sub-chief cuts in, that the case that is pursued here is between him and his mother. He adds that the audience wants to hear his apologies, and that the case between Garama and his mother has to be dealt with on a different occasion. Charo answers, that since his mother wants kiraho (ordeal), it is OK with him. He adds that he is the stronger of the two anyway, even if she is a mutsai (sorceress).

The mother repeats that she is ready for kiraho (ordeal). One of the elders responds that he thinks kiraho (ordeal) should be organised as quickly as possible, and he offers his presence as a witness. Charo tells the elders he is ready to go to kiraho (ordeal) with his brother Garama, as this is the wish of the elders (this is a slight contortion of reality, as the elders had pointed out that Garama’s case was another one).

One of the elders sums up the names of the people who participate in kiraho (ordeal): Charo and his brother Garama, their mother and two representatives from the chief’s office as witnesses. Here the case ends.

30 At kiraho the complainant and the defendant have to eat a piece of unripe pawpaw, which has been prepared with a special medicine. When a person has been lying, it is assumed that a swelling will appear on his cheek.
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Some weeks after, I received the following piece of information about the conclusion of the process from my field assistant at the time, the late Mr. Kingi. He said that the three of them went to *kiraho* ( ordeal) and added:

Much as you would have expected Micharo (the mother of Charo) mixed up in witchcraft, she successfully cleared herself. Her two sons, Charo and Garama, were very much ashamed. Their mother sympathised with them, but it is believed that if their mother had been a witch, it would have been fatal.

III.2.a Analysis

As the description makes clear the atmosphere of the present case is very different from the one of the husband and wife. There was a great sense of urgency among the elders. This may have been felt by the audience, who hardly participated in the discussion. First the elders try to persuade the son to apologise to his mother. When this fails they swiftly adopt the mother’s suggestion of *kiraho* ( ordeal). The need of dealing with the matter quickly and conclusively is manifested most dramatically by one of the elders, who offers to be a witness at *kiraho* ( ordeal). The elders know that a *mutsai* (sorceress) can destabilise whole areas of Giryamaland. Especially these days witchcraft has come to be associated with Aids. One major reason for this association is that Aids is widely spread among the Giryama, and that people cannot be cured from it. Thus, the mother denying that she is a *mutsai* (sorceress) needs to undergo *kiraho* ( ordeal) to prove her innocence. In the meantime her life is in danger, as it is now public knowledge that she is suspected of witchcraft. If she is proved to be a *mutsai* (sorceress), she can cure her son and will be certain of her own violent death. If she is not, then something else is the matter with her son, and she is relieved from any blame.

Clearly, the case cannot be concluded by the council of elders. This is underscored by the lack of handshaking at the end of hearing the case. Thus a decision that could contribute to *kuelewana* (understand each other) is temporarily postponed, in other words the endeavour for *kuelewana* (understand each other) is suspended. This is considered by the Giryama a highly volatile situation, which requires careful supervision by the elders.

This is the state of affairs at which the analysis of the case of *k’ondo ya ana* (conflict of children) ends. Yet a brief look at the aftermath reveals that the process did not stop there. The temporary suspension of the endeavour of *kuelewana* (understand each other)
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is ended through *kiraho* (ordeal). As Mr. Kingi writes, the mother and sons are reconciled afterwards. Although written in English, his description is a very close representation of what the Giryama think that the end of a *k’ondo ya ana* (conflict of children) should be like: feeling of shame on the part of the child(ren) (*haya*) and sympathy on the part of the parent (*mbazi*).\(^{31}\) In this way *kuelewana* (understand each other) between mother and sons can be restored.

III.3 Cultural script for *kuthanya k’ondo*

From the two case-studies it can be concluded that elders have a key-role in the interaction that *kuthanya k’ondo* (end a conflict) entails. They have the responsibility over the organisation of the meeting and make the final decisions. As peacemakers, they exhibit *kuelewana* (understand each other) with both parties. This is most dramatically manifested in the behaviour of one of the elders of case-study one, who shows agreement with both husband and wife at certain points in their speeches. Additionally, they have a keen sense of what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’ according to the norms and values of the Giryama. It is knowledge about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ that qualifies them to teach the parties ‘peace’, as was demonstrated already by [7]. The second case-study reveals another quality which the elders are assumed to have. It is the propensity to think beyond the restricted context of a specific *k’ondo* (conflict), which makes them true peacemakers. These qualities should be reflected in a cultural script for *kuthanya k’ondo* (end a conflict). Furthermore, since *kuthanya k’ondo* (end a conflict) is essentially an interaction between the elders, the people in conflict and the community, the rules of behaviour that guide each of the actors are a necessary ingredient of the cultural script too.

Summing up the main characteristics of *kuthanya k’ondo* (end a conflict) with an eye to the above elements, we could argue that it is an interaction which is enacted in a public context, and which is framed by specific Giryama norms of behaviour. More specifically, it is a process in which a condition of *k’ondo* (conflict) between two people is ideally transformed by the elders and representatives from the community to one that facilitates *kuelewana* (understand each other) between the parties in conflict, and by extension the community. This process cannot be conducted without the guidance of peacemakers,

\(^{31}\) For a discussion of the Giryama value of *mbazi* (compassion/sympathy) see chapter four, section III.4. *Mbazi* (compassion/sympathy) was also cited by informants as an explication of *kuelewana* (understand each other) in: *maonerana na mbazi* (they show compassion to each other) (chapter three, section III.2).
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whose commitment to *kuelewana* (understand each other) as a principle of peaceful living
(and decision-making) and whose wisdom is generally appraised.

These conclusions can be represented in a *cultural script* as follows:

Giryama cultural script for *kuthanya k'ondo* behaviour:

When other people know about the bad things that two persons or groups have done to
one another, it is good if they do something to make these two people/groups not to do
bad things to each other.
It is good if one kind of people do this (they are people who look after us). These people
know many things. These people can say many things that make others to know good
things.
People think this is good.

Distributed across the whole of Giryama society and not tied to any particular institution
nor to any particular social unit, it cannot be denied that *kuthanya k'ondo* (end a conflict) is
part of the ideological Giryama universe of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’.

IV The Anglo-Giryama peace talks of 1914

The *k'ondo ya Chembe* (the conflict of Champion) of 1914 – or as it is recorded in British
historiography, the ‘Giryama Rising’ – was the violent climax of a prolonged period of
animosity between the British colonial administration and the Giryama.32 As was
discussed in the section of *k'ondo ya mut'u na mut'u* (a conflict between people), the
animosity developed as a result of the general unwillingness among the Giryama to
comply with British rules and regulations (described in some detail in chapter two). In the
conflict the Giryama suffered bitterly under the military force of the British. Whole areas of
Giryamaland were ravaged, huts burnt down and crops destroyed. The Giryama slowly
realised that they did not stand a chance of ousting the British from their land. The first
ones to come with a peace offer were the Giryama from the south, who had been least
affected by the British atrocities.

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At that time the British were not very eager to come to a peace agreement. They delayed the process by demanding a peace request from all Giryama elders, rather than a particular section. The reason was, as Brantley indicates:

A conclusive settlement that would ensure peace was not, however, all that the British were seeking. They were also concerned with punishing the Giryama (sic); that could be accomplished more easily by continuing hostilities. They were still planning for a conclusive defeat and the capture of the ringleaders. (1981:118)

However, the British insistence on a united peace offer was given up, when the KAR companies (King’s African Rifles) were needed for the First World War effort on the German East African border. The British accepted the Giryama peace offer in the south. The southern Giryama were charged a fine and a levy of men to serve as porters in the war against the Germans. Brantley does not say whether the peace terms were fulfilled. Probably the British were not very strict in observing their fulfilment, as the area was far away from the British administrative centres and police stations of Mwangea and Jilore (northern Giryamaland).

Of critical importance for the British was the peace offer from northern Giryamaland. The Giryama from the north had borne the brunt of British demands for labourers and hut tax. Additionally, they had been threatened with evacuation from the land across the Sabaki river (called Trans-Sabaki). As a result they were far more reluctant than the southerners to give up the fight against the British. When they finally did make a peace offer, the British were wary of signs that would betray their real intentions, as the following recording of the peace talks by Cynthia Brantley, illustrates:

A meeting was held at Jilore on 5 October and the terms were announced. Who was present remains a mystery, but evidently a sufficient number of village elders were there to convince the officials that the Giryama were serious about ending hostilities. These elders agreed to the terms proposed by the British, despite their inability to fulfil the terms. The five specific conditions were: one, all persons wanted on capital charges for two years prior to the beginning of punitive measures were to be handed over to the administration; two, the Giryama (sic) were to secure the formal submission of the heads of tribe and the leaders of the rebellion; three, one thousand men were to be handed over as porters in the Carrier Corps, four, the Giryama were to pay a fine of 100,000 rupees as damages, with the whole fine
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to be paid in cash (this equalled 6 rupees per head per adult):33 and five, the Giriama were to agree to the evacuation of the Trans-Sabaki (although none of those negotiators lived there). The Giriama agreed that all the conditions were to be complied with within seven days, failing which the British hostilities would recommence. (1981:120-121)

The overriding impression that one gets from this text is that the British wanted to punish the Giryama severely. As was noted in the section of kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) punishment is not an aspect of the Giryama understanding of making peace, while a fine that is paid as a compensation can be. Here we can see already cultural friction between the perspectives of the British and the Giryama. Indeed, in many ways cross-cultural communication failed. As has become clear from the discussions of the previous sections and the previous chapters, kuelewana (understand each other) is the most pervasive and characteristic element for the Giryama understanding of (the restoration of) peaceful social relationships. This and other salient elements of the Giryama ideology of peace(-making) will be analysed in the context of Brantley’s description of the 1914 Anglo-Giryama peace talks. For convenience I have divided the discussion under the headings of ‘peacemakers’ and ‘peace terms’, which are salient aspects in the Western/ British as well as in the Giryama understanding of ending a conflict.

IV.1 The peacemakers

From the text it is not clear who the peacemakers are on either side. On the British side they are probably representatives from the colonial administration. However, the more interesting group in the present context is the Giryama representation. Some paragraphs before the above description of the Jilore peace talks, Brantley writes:

Since the British were willing to recognize as peacemakers only their appointed headmen, or those whom Champion34 had mentioned as leaders in his report on the first attack on Mangea [sic i.e. Mwangea],... [they]...were totally distrusted by the Giriama. (1981:119-120)

From these lines it can be concluded that the Giryama leaders who are present at the peace talks are colonial appointees, who have remained loyal to the British during the k’ondo ya Chembe (conflict of Champion). When considered against the background of

33 Cf. a chief’s salary was 5 rupees per month under the British administration.
34 Arthur Champion was Assistant District Commissioner (ADC) of Mwangea at the time.
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the Giryama understanding of *kilongozi* (leader), there is a dramatic dissonance between these historical figures and the Giryama understanding of a leader. Recalling the semantic description of *kilongozi* (leader), we find that the description that Brantley gives of the Giryama peace-makers does not reflect any of the attributes that are salient to the Giryama understanding of them:

A *kilongozi* is someone people think of like this:
This person is a good person.
He/she is part of the same thing as us
Because of him we can think that we are one
He/she is not like us, he/she is above us.
He/she knows many things, like someone who has lived for a long time.

He/she does many good things for us
He/she does many good things with us
not because he/she is the same as us.

He/she makes all of us feel like parts of the same thing.
Because of this, we feel something good towards him/her.
This is good for us.

Besides the obvious lack of trust of the Giryama grassroots for their representatives at the 1914 peace talks, there is also distrust between the Giryama leaders and their British counterparts. In the discussion of *kilongozi* (leader) it was noted that *kuelewana* (understand each other) between a Giryama and a non-Giryama leader is possible, even if it is not of the same kind as that among Giryama. The Giryama consider ‘respect’ more than any other element salient in cross-cultural *kuelewana* (understand each other). As can be concluded from Brantley’s description of the Anglo-Giryama peace talks this was not a distinctive aspect of the behaviour of the British. In fact, conducting the peace talks in the spirit that the Giryama should be punished (for their wrong-doings), the British also flouted *kuelewana* (understand each other) as a decision-making process. They used their superior position to impose punishment, while in the Giryama understanding of peace-making, viewed as a particular form of decision-making, one of the essential aspects is reaching a consensus through deliberation.
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Considering the British reservations as to the trustworthiness of the Giryama peacemakers, we find one revealing detail in Brantley’s description: “...evidently a sufficient number of village elders were there to convince the officials that the Giryama (sic) were serious about ending hostilities”. Clearly this line suggests that the British considered their fears of the trustworthiness of the Giryama leaders as unfounded. Yet in reality the numbers were revealing for the untrustworthiness of the leaders, at least from the Giryama perspective. In their understanding ratification of the peace agreement can only be valid on the condition of the presence of all Giryama leaders.

Besides the importance of representation from each area, the Giryama consider a high number of elders in itself a contributing factor to the successful implementation of decisions. Indeed, in the Giryama judicial practice the presence of many elders is considered to underscore the correctness of the verdict. This is nicely reflected in the saying: *Apigwaye ni anji ni kulwama* (The one who gets beaten by many, gets wet i.e. the guilty party cannot but obey the decisions of the elders, when they are many).

Summarising, we could say that the Giryama peacemakers lacked trustworthiness in the eyes of the common people, because they were not on *kuelewana* (understand each other) terms with them. Their decisions could therefore not be trusted, which did not have any validity anyway, because they were not ratified by all Giryama leaders. The Giryama peacemakers themselves did not trust the British for their lack of respect for them. The discussion of the peace terms in fact only underscores what has been argued here, namely the pervasive lack of trust among all the parties involved in the peace process.

**IV.2 The peace terms**

Even without knowing about the Giryama understanding of ending a conflict, one can see that the peace terms are extreme. Not only the number of terms that have to be complied with, but also the period in which they have to be fulfilled, are totally unrealistic. At the same time, they show the complete powerlessness of the Giryama peacemakers. Looking at the separate terms in a Giryama context, we can see that they are strikingly incompatible with the Giryama understanding of restoring peace.

The term that seems to be most in line with Giryama practice is the fine of 10,000 rupees. Still, on closer examination this amount equals 6 rupees per adult male (a chief earning a salary of 5 rupees per month at the time). The fine clearly exceeds the financial means of
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the average Giryama adult male. This is contrary to Giryama peace making practice, where the fine is set as a compensation for losses rather than as a punishment.

Two terms involved the handing over of Giryama males (and one female) to the British colonial regime. First, those who had been the instigators of the resistance against the British were demanded for capital punishment, and second 1,000 able bodied Giryama males were wanted for the war effort against the Germans. The cause of *k’ondo ya Chembe* (the conflict of Champion) was the Giryama rejection to the British demand for young Giryama men as labourers for jobs that put their lives at risk. The same demand is now a peace term, which from the Giryama perspective is a complete negation of the profound feelings Giryama have about sending off their sons into dangerous circumstances for the benefit of strangers. In the end, the British seem to have realised that these feelings were very strong. In any case, three weeks after the peace agreement, the Assistant District Commissioner of Mwangea (northern Giryamaland) at the time, Francis Traill, notes: “Government should be realistic. If this is the Giryama attitude, attempts to get labour are self-defeating….Since August things have been upset, the Giriama have lived in the bush like animals, lost huts, stock and friends. Still they refuse to work” (Brantley 1981:123).

The case of those who were wanted for capital punishment is slightly different, because they were symbols of Giryamaness. It was unacceptable to the grassroots that Giryama heroes like Mikatili and her partner Wanje, both old yet unbroken after escaping from British confinement in Kisii (western Kenya), should be handed over to the British.35

The other two terms, the formal submission of the heads of tribe and the leaders of the rebellion, and the evacuation from the Trans Sabaki area, were of a different nature but equally impossible from the Giryama perspective. With respect to the formal submission of the Giryama leaders, the British themselves had contributed to the unrealistic nature of the demand. Before *k’ondo ya Chembe* (conflict of Champion) they had blown up *kaya Giryama* (sacred centre) as a punitive measure. Before its destruction *kaya Giryama* was the central meeting point for all Giryama leaders. Based on a non-hierarchical social system, Giryama society had developed a very decentralised power structure at the time. So *kaya* (sacred centre) was invaluable as a social binding force, and the only means of getting all the leaders of Giryamaland together. Its sacred nature additionally grants

35 On the persons of Mikatili and Wanje see also note 13.
decisions a metaphysical dimension, thus putting on all the leaders that are present the moral obligation to abide by them.

The historical reality being that kaya (sacred centre) was not operational, the institution of leaders of the tribe could be argued to be non-existent, and what is more no power could be granted to any Giryama leader relating to regional matters for lack of the confirmation at kaya (sacred centre). Still the Giryama village elders agreed to all of these terms, as unacceptable as they were to any Giryama. The main reason was no doubt that they knew the British would open hostilities if they did not agree. Brantley relates what came of the peace agreement:

Almost three months had passed since the Giryama (sic) elders at Jilore had agreed to the terms, but scarcely any of the conditions had been fulfilled. Only 141 laborers out of the quota of 1,000 had been produced, and of these 43 had run away. Of a fine of 100,000 rupees only 30,000 had been collected. (…) As always, the Giryama were resisting the evacuation of the Trans Sabaki.36

(1981:124)

Exploring a historical situation of (failed) peace-making between the Giryama and the British colonial administration may have at first sight seemed rather far-fetched. As I noted before, it is the only case of Giryama and outsiders’ peace-making that is known among the Giryama and in writing. However, that is not precisely what validates its presence in this study. Exploring the peace-making event against the present-day background of the Giryama ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ understandings as reflected in kondo (conflict), kuthanya kondo (end a conflict), kuelewana (understand each other) and kilongozi (leader), we find Giryama perceptions on peace-making and peaceful co-existence were fundamentally thwarted. Indeed, the historical case of Anglo-Giryama peace talks demonstrates that a peace-making process can only be effective if all the parties involved respect each other’s key notions about peace-making and peaceful co-existence. In this particular case the formal characteristics of Giryama peace-making were seemingly observed by the British, but at the level of the Giryama socio-cultural experience they were manifestations of profound disrespect on the part of the British. As a result of the fake peace-making framework, cross-cultural communication was thwarted from the very start.

36 She goes on to note that some moved south, some moved even further north, and some north-west and some had moved to the coast.
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V Conclusion

The above analysis is an illustration of a situational analysis. It demonstrates the relevance of cultural factors that come to play in peace and conflict negotiations. The present conclusion reiterates some general observations relating to the Giryama understandings of kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) and k’ondo (conflict) against a cross-cultural background.

The discussion of kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) has made it abundantly clear that Giryama understand k’ondo (conflict) and kuelewana (understand each other) as social forces that cannot exist simultaneously. Clearly, kuthanya K’ondo (end a conflict) is an ideological statement on kuelewana (understand each other) as the stronger force. Adding to its ideological impact is the asymmetry with the transition in the other direction, from kuelewana (understand each other) to k’ondo (conflict). 37 In this respect the Giryama are not unique. It would be tempting to say that asymmetry between the two transitions is a universal phenomenon due to a general human aversion to conflict. In the Giryama context, however, the ideological statement of this aversion is articulated in terms of kuelewana (understand each other).

Reflecting on the Giryama understanding of k’ondo (conflict) against the cross-cultural background, we may argue that its most characteristic aspects are ‘un-Western’. Its fundamental conceptualisation in terms of a communal phenomenon, seems a far cry from Western understandings of ‘conflict’. Still, I would argue that their difference is to a great degree a matter of scale and culture-specific expression. For instance, in Dutch and British societies the precariousness of the community and its involvement, is a salient aspect of the understanding of ‘conflict’. Different from Giryama society, the community is not reflected as a group of people at the local level, but gets its expression in the institutional system. This system is set up on the basis of protecting the well-being of its citizens. Also Dutch and British societies, and this applies for a great number of other Western countries, clearly perceive themselves as part of a world community. There is a general involvement with ‘world conflicts’, both among the general public and as an institutional effort. The most prominent symbol of communal involvement at a world level, including besides Western also non-Western societies, is no doubt the UN.

37 One example of the socio-cultural articulation of this process is the saying: Chaho cha k’ondo ni madhe (the beginning of conflict is jokes), discussed in section II.2.
These examples indicate a great possibility for cross-cultural identification between Western and Giryama understandings of ‘conflict’. After all the core of the understandings is very similar, which is the communal involvement with a ‘conflict’ between people within the community. Departing from this core, cross-cultural manifestations lose their guise of incompatibility, and can be understood as culture-specific expressions of a similar underlying understanding. In the conclusion of this study a graphic example will be given of successful cross-cultural identification in a situation of potential intercultural ‘conflict’.

Lastly, throughout the discussion the Giryama have manifested themselves as people who are strongly committed to promoting peace. Still, they clearly assess the situation as to whether and how it affects peaceful existence of the wider community. The socio-cultural salience of this assessment is demonstrated in the following discussion of *fujio* (trouble) and *viha* (war).
7  *Fujo* (trouble) and *viha* (war): personal versus imposed conflict

Introduction

It may seem quite inappropriate to discuss two phenomena as widely apart as ‘trouble’ and ‘war’ within the framework of one chapter. Putting them together suggests, after all, that we are now dealing with two less significant reflections of the Giryama *ideology* of ‘conflict’. In a way this is true, but the analysis hopes to demonstrate that *fujo* (trouble) and *viha* (war) make a distinct contribution to the overall picture of the Giryama understanding of ‘conflict’. Although they are very different articulations of ‘conflict’, each in their particular articulation fills in conceptual gaps, highlighting at the same time details of *k'ondo* (conflict) that were not very explicit in the previous discussion. In fact, their contribution to the discussion of the Giryama *ideology* of ‘conflict’ may best be described as that of complementary *key words*.

In the assessment process of Giryama words as *key words* in the context of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ *fujo* (trouble) did not meet the criteria of a *key word*, in that it did not appear to be a focal point around which the cultural domain of ‘conflict’ was organised. Still, it was selected for further study. This was done on the grounds that it is a very common word among the Giryama, and a social phenomenon that every Giryama is familiar with, either from their own experience or from people close to them. In fact, it is much more common than the most salient ‘conflict’ word, *k'ondo* (conflict). This paradoxical situation was considered of analytical interest, as it might throw a new light on *k'ondo* (conflict).

Like *fujo* (trouble) *viha* (war) does not qualify as a Giryama *key word* in the domain of ‘conflict’. Both have been included in the analysis for its potential usefulness in the context of *k'ondo* (conflict). Still, in other respects *viha* (war) is different from *fujo* (trouble). It was chosen as a category head by 44% of the sixty informants from among the 30 potential *key words*. It was explained by Giryama informants as a synonym of *k'ondo* (conflict), and it was noted that it is not a word that is often used in everyday and public Giryama discourse. These observations presented an analytical challenge. I argued that in the process of finding answers, we might well draw a more refined picture of the Giryama understanding of ‘conflict’. Also, it was suggested the analysis of *viha* (war) helps to bring home the danger of tacitly assuming that a ‘universal’ concept like ‘war’ means the same
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thing all over the globe. In these two ways it is a complementary key word. Due to its more marginal everyday occurrence compared to fujo (trouble), viha (war) is discussed last.

I Fujo (trouble)

I.1 Analytical outlines

As with every Giryama key word, the semantic analysis of fujo (trouble) starts with the explications of Giryama men and women. The discussion proceeds with the less conscious articulations of fujo (trouble). It draws instances of fujo (trouble) from verbal expressions in the domains of everyday communication (open interview), of public events (a youth meeting), and of sites of collective memory (oral history, life story). Although fujo (trouble) is a phenomenon that features in all kinds of social contexts, Giryama informants often explicitly cited the occasion of a funeral as a site of fujo (trouble). I felt hesitant about exploring a highly ritualised event as a source of information on the Giryama understanding of fujo (trouble). At the same time I could not ignore the signals that were given by Giryama informants. I became curious. Combining my own observations with the detailed description of the Giryama funeral and burial ceremony by David Parkin (1991), I analysed the occasion as a potential site of fujo (trouble). In fact, the exercise turned out to be much more productive than I had expected. In addition to bringing out the continuity of understanding between non-ritualised and ritualised manifestations of fujo (trouble), it reveals an elementary psychological aspect of fujo (trouble), which would otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Similar to k’ondo (conflict) a salient entailment of fujo (trouble) is ending it. Therefore the discussion of fujo (trouble) includes a separate section on kuzinya fujo (end trouble). As was argued in the context of kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict), the analysis of a rule-governed interaction requires a slightly different descriptive format from the one that is used in the context of cultural concepts. To this end, the format of cultural script was introduced, which is specifically geared to capturing cultural norms of interaction (see: Ameka and Breedveld 2004; Wierzbicka 2002b). Throughout the analysis there will be cross-references to k’ondo (conflict) and kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict), which aim to

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1 For more details on the group of informants see chapter one, section II.1.

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shed more light on differences and overlap between the understandings of them and those of fujo (trouble) and kuzinya fujo (end trouble) respectively.

I.2 Explanations of fujo (trouble)

All of the approximately one hundred informants were asked the same question: Mana ya fujo ni noni? (What is the meaning of fujo?). With response [a.] representing approximately 35%, [b.] 25% and [c.] 25%, the first three explications represent the bulk of the answers that were given ([b.] was always given as a second explication after [a.]). The following list presents the explications in decreasing order of frequency.

a. Kafusikizana we do not understand each other  
b. Kuheha na milomo fight with mouths  
c. Chanzo cha k’ondo the beginning of a conflict  
d. Kafuelwana we do not understand each other  
e. Kamagita nyungu mwenga they do not cook in one pot  
f. K’ondo conflict  
g. Kutschendzana not love each other  
h. Huwohuwo2 commotion

The list shows that people define fujo (trouble) in different ways. Four explanations define fujo (trouble) as the opposite of peaceful living [a., d., g.], with [e.] being a metaphoric rendering of non-peaceful living.3 They do not feature fujo (trouble) any different from the Giryama understanding of k’ondo (conflict), of which the second most cited explanation given by Giryama informants was kutsoelewana (not understand each other).

Two other explications define fujo (trouble) as a certain kind of ‘conflict’ [c., f.]. In this group fujo (trouble) is again presented as conceptually very similar to k’ondo (conflict). Lastly, explications [b.] and [h.] refer to vocal loudness as characteristic of a ‘conflict’ called fujo (trouble). Qualifying fujo (trouble) as a verbal/vocal fight, [b.] and [h.] are a first indication of a conceptual difference between fujo (trouble) and k’ondo (conflict), the latter referring to either a verbal or a physical fight.

2 It is an onomatopoecic word suggesting the chaotic mixing of people and voices.
3 The sharing of a meal is discussed in chapter three (section III.1) as a characteristic aspect of peaceful living.
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From these observations an initial provisional semantic description could be proposed that is similar to components of \textit{k'ondo} (conflict). It reads as follows:

1. Two persons or groups say bad things to each other
   a. they can speak in a way that people do not speak when they are with one another
2. because of this people cannot feel that they are part of the same thing.

The major distinction between the descriptions of \textit{k'ondo} (conflict) and \textit{fujo} (trouble) is that \textit{fujo} (trouble) specifically refers to a verbal ‘conflict’ of which speaking loudly is a common feature.

This semantic description seems to allow for the English translation of \textit{fujo} (trouble) as ‘quarrel’. Indeed, I think the British word ‘quarrel’ – and for that matter the Dutch word \textit{ruzie} (quarrel) – would be an adequate counterpart for semantic component [1]. However, component [2] is not captured by the British and Dutch terms, which indicate that the ‘conflict’ involves clearly defined parties, and not an entity as diffuse as ‘everybody’. Suggesting a situation of ‘conflict’ with undefined boundaries, the word ‘trouble’ (Du. \textit{onrust}) has been selected as a more adequate counterpart. In fact, with the introduction of textual instances of \textit{fujo} (trouble) British ‘quarrel’ and Dutch \textit{ruzie} (quarrel) can be seen to be increasingly inadequate counterparts.

\section*{1.3 The social contexts of \textit{fujo} (trouble)}

As was mentioned before, verbal and non-verbal expressions of \textit{fujo} (trouble) can be found in each domain of Giryama life under study. Instances are cited in the following discussion. Since the focus is on \textit{fujo} (trouble) as a social phenomenon, one would expect that social categories like \textit{mudzi} (homestead), \textit{kidzidzi} (village), and \textit{Giryama} (Giryamaland) offer specific insights into \textit{fujo} (trouble). After all, they were meaningful in the contexts of \textit{kuelewana} (understand each other) and \textit{k'ondo} (conflict). In the course of my exploration of \textit{fujo} (trouble) I found that social contexts are quite immaterial to the Giryama understanding of \textit{fujo} (trouble), which is essentially understood in terms of individual behaviour. As a result, the discussion focuses on the individual in his/her social context as expressive of \textit{fujo} (conflict). Questions like when, why and how do individuals
make *fujo* (trouble) underlie the analysis. Other questions present themselves in due course, such as how can *fujo* (trouble) be solved, or discouraged.

By way of an introduction to the meaning dimensions of *fujo* (trouble), the following passage has been selected. Taken from a discussion among Giryama youths, it presents the general conceptual context in which *fujo* (trouble) defines itself. The youth meeting was the result of a request that I had made to the sub-chief of Tsangats'ini for a discussion among youngsters on the topic of their experiences of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’.

One Saturday afternoon in the year 2000 twenty youngsters between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one assembled next to the sub-chief’s office for a discussion. The chair is the fifty year-old Anderson Yeri, a well-educated Giryama hailing from Tsangats’ini and living and working in Mombasa. The youngsters exchange ideas about the present socio-political climate in Giryamaland. Mr. Yeri asks them to evaluate the present situation as peaceful or not peaceful, and motivate their choice. Also he asks the youngsters to indicate what should be done to promote or maintain peace. At the end of the discussion he summarises their views:

1.  
   
   *Kushirkiana ni kitu cha mana sana.*  
   Co-operation is something very important.  
   *Mana hakidzakala hana umwenga*  
   Because if there has been unity and love  
   *na uhendzo na kushirkiana, manji*  
   and co-operation, then we won’t see  
   *garyahu ga fujo mudzini k’ahundagaona.*  
   many of those instances of trouble in the homestead.

Anderson Yeri describes a situation at the level of the homestead. His use of the words *kushirkiana* (co-operation) and *umwenga* (unity) clearly echo the discussion of *kuelewana* (understand each other), in which these elements were demonstrated to be closely associated with *kuelewana* (understand each other). Thus, we may conclude that *fujo* (trouble) defines itself against and is the opposite of *kuelewana* (understand each other), more particularly of *kuelewana* (understand each other) at the homestead (*mudzv*) level.

This is not a major discovery, as the explications of Giryama informants had already indicated that. These lines, however, make an additional point. They argue that as long as people ‘live in the same place’ adhere to the three values of *kushirkiana* (co-operation), *umwenga* (unity) and *uhendzo* (love), *fujo* (trouble) will not happen. Thus we may conclude that the youth meeting, in the person of Mr. Yeri, does not consider these values primarily abstract concepts. They refer to a practice, a kind of interactive behaviour
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which prevents the practice of fujo (trouble). Indeed, all the following instances illustrate that the individual’s enactment of these values, translated and fragmented in the practice of everyday life into norms of interactive behaviour, prevent fujo (trouble).

The following piece of text, taken from a life story is a graphic illustration of what has been argued so far, the understanding of fujo (trouble) in terms of the individual, and the power of the individual to avoid causing fujo (trouble) by enacting accepted norms of behaviour. Expressing his ideas within the framework of a life story, which belongs within the domain of sites of collective memory, the speaker places himself and his audience within the wider historical context of the Giryama. In doing so he appeals to understandings that he assumes are shared by his audience.

The speaker, Mwadori wa Ngowa wa Kagujo, is a forty-year old man. He volunteers to tell his life story at the story-telling session that was presented in chapter four (section III). His story is about his life as a child in the homestead. In the following passage he illustrates this with the kind of behaviour that a child was expected to display towards an elder:

2.

Na hat’u hariho athumia, dza vizho ahoho
makuryahu k’amahenda fujo.
And in a place where there are elders,

Muhoho ahenda kuifwa: ‘nganya nzo’;
(dif the children act) this way the
akadza humwa. Naadze kwa ngira ya upore.
children there don’t cause trouble.

Akifika analazha mikono t’ot’ot’o, kwa ishima,
When he comes in, he shakes hands well,
na anakeresi. Unamuhuma.
respectfully, and sits down. You send him.

The passage clearly exposes fujo (trouble) as the result of bad behaviour of one of the actors in an interaction. In this instance the child is presented as the potential cause of fujo (trouble). However, as long as s/he behaves according to the norms of interaction between elder and child, fujo (trouble) cannot happen. Apparently the other actor evaluates the child’s behaviour as ‘good’ and this is underscored by the speaker. After all, Mwadori cites the child’s behaviour as an instance of ‘good’ interactive behaviour. He is very explicit about his evaluation when he comments ‘....analazha mikono t’ot’ot’o’ (he shakes hands well).
Fujo and viha: personal versus imposed conflict

From the above passage it can be concluded that the reason for calling a situation fujo (trouble), is the normative assessment of an individual’s interactive behaviour as bad. Implied in this conclusion, is that fujo (trouble) is basically understood in terms of the individual rather than in terms of a group. Additionally, this passage brings out that fujo (trouble) is caused as a result of the behaviour of one person. The earlier semantic description presenting a situation of two people or groups saying bad things to each other is therefore misleading, and needs to be revised. I would suggest the following rephrasing:

1. A person X does something bad to someone Y
   a. he/she can say things in a way that people do not speak when they are with one another
   2. because of this people cannot feel that they are part of the same thing.

One last example, indicating the great variety of situations in which fujo (trouble) can occur, is taken from an open interview that I conducted with the seventy-two year old Mr. Joseph Charo. We were talking of Giryama cultural practices that he still remembered, but which were no longer performed in Giryamaland. Mr. Charo mentions the instance of the Nambu dance, which was very popular when he was young.

3. Na manenda. Manathawala – And they go. They reign – which is going
   yani kwenda porepore here ashikari slowly, like policemen/women who have
   maro madzaamunshwa kwenda been ordered to go slow like this.
   porepore namuna ii. K’akuna mut’u There is not a person who moves quickly,
   aukaye malo, k’akuna mut’u ahendaye there is no-one who makes trouble….it is
   fujo, …ni kwenda thu porepore, just a slow movement, stepping slowly and
   kuzhoga porepore na kudzilola… carefully…..

Timing and pace are obviously essential aesthetic aspects of the dance. If performed correctly, Mr. Charo comments, it is something of great joy (yani ni k’il’u cha kufwaha kabisa). He indicates too that a person who disturbs the rhythm, as moving quickly would, is causing fujo (trouble). Indeed, because of that person the fellow dancers would not ‘feel that they are part of the same thing’. Here again, the other’s disruptive behaviour is their reason for calling the situation one of fujo (trouble).

All the above examples feature fujo (trouble) as a disturbance of a status quo that is considered ‘good’ according to the Giryama norms of interactive behaviour. However, fujo
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(trouble) is not only a disturbance of a situation that is considered ‘good’. Student riots and labour disputes are for instance qualified by Giryama as fujo (trouble). Does this imply that fujo (trouble) has two distinct meanings? In the following discussion two examples of cases of fujo (trouble) – in a context that cannot but be evaluated as ‘bad’ by the Giryama – should be able to answer this question.

The first instance is a passage that was cited before in the context of ts’i(land) (chapter five, section III.1.d). In his life story Mr. Simba Wanjie explains one incident that has contributed to the economic backwaters that the Giryama find themselves in nowadays (the year is 1999). He tells his audience about Giryama workers being massively laid off at the port of Mombasa, and being replaced by up-country people. He goes on to tell them that the situation would have been different if the Giryama had nguvu (strength):

4.

SW: Kala Agiryama mana nguvu be ii ngere ni fujo ii. Kwapante sino enye k’afwandikhwana, mandikhwana haki yao? Yo si fujo?

PJ: Ni fujo

If the Giryama were strong, this would have been trouble already. Why are we not employed, why are they only employed? Is this not trouble? PJ: This is trouble.

As was argued in the previous discussion of these lines, nguvu (strength) refers to moral ‘vitality’. What could not be argued in that context yet, although it was indicated, is that nguvu (strength) is continuous with the concept of fujo (trouble) as essentially understood in terms of morality. Yet, saying that moral vitality causes fujo (trouble) seems incompatible with meaning elements of fujo (trouble) that have been argued so far. After all, it was concluded to imply a violation of Giryama norms of interactive behaviour.

Looking more closely at the above passage, we find that there are two uses of the word fujo (trouble). The first one marks the Giryama as instigators of fujo (trouble). The second instance of fujo (trouble) refers to the situation of the Giryama workers being laid off. The evaluation of this situation as fujo (trouble) is confirmed as correct by Simba’s friend, Philip Jimbo. This implies that the fujo (trouble) of the Giryama in line [2] is a reaction to the fujo (trouble) created by the employers at Mombasa port. We may therefore conclude that fujo (trouble), as a reaction to a situation that is experienced as fujo (trouble), is acceptable. Yet it remains fujo (trouble) and is therefore also evaluated as ‘bad’.
The additional semantic information that the second use of *fujo* (trouble) includes also affects the earlier description. We could therefore propose the following revision:

1. A person X does something bad to someone Y
   a. he/she can say things in a way that people do not speak when they are with one another
2. because of this people cannot feel that they are part of the same thing.
3. People think this is bad
4. when this happens
5. the other person Y feels something bad towards this person X
6. because of this
   a. he/she can do bad things to him
   b. he/she can say things in a way that people do not speak when they are with one another.

Before going on to another instance of *fujo* (trouble) as a reaction to *fujo* (trouble), I would like indicate that passage [4.] is a very unusual piece of Giryama public discourse. It is not common practice for Giryama to openly describe a situation of political *fujo* (trouble) as one of *fujo* (trouble). By calling the situation one of *fujo* (trouble), Simba not only indicates that the Giryama experience the situation that way, but also highlights the instigators. In this way he cleverly manages to effect that his audience appreciates his suggestion that the Giryama should have made *fujo* (trouble). Inciting people to oppose a status quo is not altogether without danger to one’s own security, as every Giryama knows. This may be the reason why Simba Wanje asks his friend and government official, Philip Jimbi, to confirm his qualification of the situation as one of *fujo* (trouble).

Although *fujo* (trouble) is basically understood in terms of the individual, the above passage has demonstrated that it may include many people, even people from outside Giryamaland. Thus *fujo* (trouble) does not entail a restriction on numbers of people nor on place. As the following passage indicates, it can be used to reflect the same size of ‘conflict’ as *k’ondo* (conflict):
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5.

...at’u manaiha k’ondo ya Chembe
Hatha ii fujo ya Agiryama inanza kukala
manadzihehera, ela kwa Muzungu – akikala
kwakwe – ni fujo.

...people called it the conflict of
Champion.

Well, this trouble of the Giryama started,
because they were defending themselves,
but for the European – he stayed in his
own land – it was trouble.

The words are taken from the oral history told by Rueben Kombe (cf. chapter six, section
II.3.c). The former history teacher, who manifested himself as a very sensitive analyst of
the meaning differences between k’ondo (conflict) and viha (war), here again exhibits his
keen awareness of the meaning dimensions of fujo (conflict). This results in a description
that is at first rather puzzling to the outsider.

To unravel the shifts of meaning between the two occurrences of fujo (trouble) and their
replacement by the word k’ondo (conflict), we need some historical contextualisation. The
description refers to the socio-political situation in Giryamaland in the year 1914 and the
years before.⁵ The passage focuses on the disparate views between the Giryama and the
British colonial administration on who is in authority in the coastal area, and in particular
who is in charge in Giryamaland.

As the text makes clear, from the Giryama perspective the British created a situation that
flouted Giryama norms on interactive behaviour. This is a situation of fujo (trouble) to
which the Giryama reacted in similar terms, by way of fujo (trouble). The second fujo
(trouble) is of a defensive nature, Rueben Kombe argues: “... fujo ya Agiryama inanza
kukala manadzihehera” (the trouble of the Giryama started because they were defending
themselves...). Clearly Rueben Kombe gives this type of fujo (trouble) some credit,
because it is a response to a situation of fujo (trouble), but essentially the moral evaluation
is the same: fujo (trouble) is ‘bad’.

⁴ Arthur Champion was Assistant DO of Rabai at the time of the Anglo-Giryama conflict. He was very
interested in Giryama culture, and wrote the booklet The Agiryama of Kenya (1967). The Giryama people
respected him until the British King’s Army Rifles (KAR) invaded Giryamaland.

⁵ In chapter six the causes and the end of the Giryama-British conflict were highlighted.
Kombe’s second mention of *fujo* (trouble) reflects the perspective of the British on the situation. He argues that they consider the coastal area theirs. Implied is also the rule over its inhabitants. This means that the Giryama are expected to abide by the British colonial rules and regulations. When the Giryama display behaviour that flouts their norms of good citizenship, the British administrators evaluate the situation as one of *fujo* (trouble), Mr. Kombe argues. This is in fact a Giryama interpretation of the situation. A moral evaluation has most probably not contributed to the British decision to start a military offensive against the Giryama. As a matter of fact, the reason for the British to send troops into Giryamaland in 1914 was their fear of a massive Giryama rebellion (Brantley 1981:115ff.). Interestingly, the Giryama perspective is based on a similar evaluation. Like the British, the Giryama consider *fujo* (trouble) a potential beginning of a physical conflict. However, in their view the instigators are the British. This is underscored by the words of the same Rueben Kombe:

6.  
*Ela kiriya chandikwa ni ye mut'u arehenda fujo mwenye. Hatha k'ondo ikigwa.*  
But that (book) was written by the man (i.e. Champion) who made the trouble himself. Until the conflict fell (broke out).

Implied in the word *ela* (but) is the British view on *fujo* (trouble) as being caused by the Giryama, which consequently resulted in *k’ondo* (conflict). Yet, Kombe makes clear that this is not a correct reflection of the historical situation. It was the D.O. Arthur Champion, the author of a book on the Giryama, who caused *fujo* (trouble) that resulted in *k’ondo* (conflict).

Besides demonstrating the potential development from *fujo* (trouble) into *k’ondo* (conflict), this line also expresses graphically the essential difference in the understandings of the two concepts. Paraphrasing the line, we could argue that the situation of *fujo* (trouble) was caused by an individual, called Arthur Champion, symbol of the British colonial administration. This situation was responded to by *fujo* (trouble) on the part of the Giryama, until they became two parties that started fighting physically. Then the situation became one of *k’ondo* (conflict). In this situation the individual as an instigator is lost as a salient dimension of ‘conflict’. This may lead us to conclude that *k’ondo* (conflict) rises above the level of the individual. Indeed, although this was not explicitly stated in the discussion of *k’ondo* (conflict), it was presented as a phenomenon that features general Giryama taboos like adultery (of the wife) and witchcraft. These have an impact that
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reaches far beyond the individual, in fact jeopardising not only the lives of Giryama but the fundamental *ideologies* of Giryama society.

I.4 *Fujo* (trouble) and *hangga* (funeral and burial ceremony)

As was mentioned before, Giryama informants often explicitly stated a funeral and burial ceremony as a locus of *fujo* (trouble). In the following discussion this theme will be further explored. The conclusions that have been reached so far on the meaning dimensions of *fujo* (trouble) are the guiding lines for the analysis.

A Giryama funeral, which lasts for seven days, is a major event in the life of a Giryama person. Close and distant relatives, and affines from all over Giryamaland come to attend the funeral at some point. David Parkin comments on this phenomenon:

> By coming together at one funeral, different and sometimes distant areas of Giryamaland are represented. Each major funeral, attended by hundreds, thus provides a temporary and partial focus of Giryama unity. (1991:111)

As Parkin suggests, a funeral gathering is a miniature manifestation of the Giryama understanding of Giryamaland as *umwenga* (unity). During the youth meeting cited in example [1], the same concept was argued for to be preventing *fujo* (trouble) and reflecting salient elements of *kuelewana* (understand each other). Thus we may assume that there is a strong sense of ‘being part of the same thing’ among the participants of the funeral. In fact, in the context of the Giryama funeral and burial practice *umwenga* (unity) is understood to have the particular connotation of all participants having the shared intention of being one with the deceased.

Paradoxically, the funeral does not proceed in a spirit of *kuelewana* (understand each other) during the first four days. Uncertainty and ambivalence characterise the situation. There is always talk about whether the deceased was the victim of witchcraft, and if so, who could have been the witch. Also feelings of grief and anger mix during these first days. Anger is directed at the deceased for leaving the living to cope with the problems that he/she left behind; accusations are made in songs during funeral dances. Although these songs also express grief for the dead person, their biting tone puts a strain on the good relations with the deceased. This conscious seeking of a confrontation with the
deceased is one way, David Parkin argues, in which the living challenge “notions of mortal capacity and capability: the dead can harm their living relatives while the latter can be hurtfully negligent.” (1991:121).

This is a highly volatile phase of the funeral. One might conclude that it is a situation of *fujo* (trouble), people accusing the dead (and the living) of bad behaviour in songs. However, the funeral is a socially sanctioned context of *fujo* (trouble). In fact, the first four days of the funeral are a generally accepted framework in which the living Giryama can vent their frustrations with death (*kiito* freely. Thus *fujo* (trouble) is a ritualised element within the larger framework of the funeral, thereby losing its characteristic disruption of *kuelewana* (understand each other) among the participants. Different from its manifestation in everyday life, *fujo* (trouble) here serves a psychological purpose, as David Parkin (1991) argues with respect to the common practice of singing abusive songs at funerals:

Minimising grief, causing the bereaved to forget, and banishing death itself through abuse of the deceased….come across as the principal themes in the burial and the funeral. (126)

As appeasement with the deceased is the ultimate aim, the funeral ceremony firmly puts an end to this situation of ritualised *fujo* (trouble) with a festive occasion on day six. Cattle are slaughtered for a joint meal and palm wine served. Also a goat is slaughtered on the grave to appease the deceased. During this ritual the blood of the goat seeps into the ground. When this happens, those who stand around call out: *Hala chakunya chako, fupigwe ni peho* (take your food, so that we are hit by coolness (i.e. so that we stay in peace)). As was pointed out in the discussion of the *key word* *tsi’* (land) (chapter five, III.1.e), it is believed that the blood will satisfy the thirst of the deceased. Then he will be at peace, and the family and other relatives will not suffer from his appearance in their dreams. In the discussion on *tsi’* (land) the meaning of slaughtering a goat over the grave was given in more general terms, which in fact are a meaningful addition to this restricted interpretation. It was argued there that the blood of the goat cools down *tsi’* *mo ho* (hot land), which reflects a situation of intrusion of the dead among their living progeny, and the concomitant state of insecurity of the living. It is implied that with the death of each Giryama, the community at large is affected in the way that *k’ondo* (conflict) also extends

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6 See also Janet McIntosh (2005a) on Giryama funerary songs.
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the boundaries of the conflicting parties. Thus, when the goat is slaughtered it is not only the family, the relatives and funeral participants that benefit from the ritual, but the Giryama community at large.

By day six, when food and drink is plentiful, men get drunk and may start disputing with each other in an uncivilised way. The tone can change from jocular to accusatory and the situation may result in one of ‘non-ritualised’ fujo (trouble). Themes that were brought up in the ritualised manifestation of fujo (trouble), such as adultery and witchcraft, can now be heard as accusations to particular persons. It is essential to the well-being of all to end fujo (trouble). Manifesting itself at a moment when the dead are still considered close enough to intrude upon the living, the living should enact kuelewana (understand each other) among themselves. Thus ending fujo (trouble) is of immediate importance.

Two things can be done by the accused. One is letting the accusation pass, thus promoting the ending of fujo (trouble). Yet, if the accused is angered, he may respond to the accusation in similar terms, thus perpetuating fujo (trouble). In the latter case a third party comes in to separate the two. He will ask the instigator of fujo (trouble) to offer his apologies to the accused and shake hands. Thus kuelewana (understand each other) is restored and the threat of death (kifo) on the living averted. If the instigator refuses to apologise he will be removed from the funeral ceremony. The seventh and last day of the funeral ceremony is used for sweeping the compound, thus clearing the place and its inhabitants definitely from death (kifo).

From this general description of a Giryama funeral and burial ceremony we may conclude that it is a locus of ritualised ‘everyday’ fujo (trouble), at which the living show bad behaviour towards the dead, engaging with them in a direct confrontation. Although central Giryama values are transgressed, the situation cannot develop into kond o (conflict) because taboos are temporarily suspended. In fact, this ritualised fujo (trouble) is firmly bounded by enactments of kuelewana (understand each other), such as the coming together from all Giryama directions before and the sharing of a meal after the event. Additionally ‘non-ritualised’ fujo (trouble) may be caused by one of the participants.

From the above description, we may conclude that the Giryama funeral and burial ceremony manifests both fujo (trouble) and kuelewana (understand each other). This

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7 Both instigator and victim of fujo (trouble) may be male or female. In line with the convention that has been adopted throughout this study, only the male variant is reflected in the text.
Alternation between *fujo* (trouble) and *kuelewana* (understand each other) is enacted within the overarching understanding of a funeral and burial ceremony, as expelling the influence of the dead on the living and restoring *kuelewana* (understand each other) among the living ones. Paradoxically, ritualised *fujo* (trouble) makes a distinct contribution to effecting *kuelewana* (understand each other) among the living. It is a therapeutic instrument, facilitating the release of frustrations and other pent-up emotions. Thus *fujo* (trouble) can be a means of opening the minds of the mourning to the spirit of *kuelewana* (understand each other). Although the ‘cleansing’ function of *fujo* (trouble) cannot be claimed for its everyday manifestations, the psycho-emotional element is definitely a salient element in the understanding of it. With hindsight, we find that this goes especially for those manifestations of *fujo* (trouble) that are a reaction to another *fujo* (trouble). I would therefore suggest a small extension of the first line of the semantic description:

People think like this:

A person X does something bad to someone Y, because he/she thinks and feels something bad

### 1.5 Cultural semantic description of *fujo*

On the basis of the discussion of *fujo* (trouble), we can claim an essentially unified understanding of *fujo* (trouble). Being initiated in a situation that is considered morally ‘good’ or morally ‘not good’, *fujo* (trouble) does not display differences that indicate two separate meanings for the word. This implies too, that ending *fujo* (trouble) is done along the same lines in both of its manifestations. A ritualised articulation of *fujo* (trouble) has been discussed in the context of a Giryama funeral and burial ceremony. In it the final moral evaluation is suspended, because the funeral participants are enacting *fujo* (trouble) as a shared act embedded in a context of *kuelewana* (understand each other). At the same time the psycho-emotional aspect of *fujo* (trouble) is highlighted. This is a constituting element of any *fujo* (trouble).

The following semantic description reflects the most general and mostly shared Giryama understanding of *fujo* (trouble). As it has been fully argued already, it will be given without any further comments:
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Fujo

People think like this:

A person X does something bad to someone Y, because he/she thinks and feels something bad

he/she can say things in a way that people do not speak when they are with one another

because of this people cannot feel that they are part of the same thing

when this happens

the other person Y feels something bad towards this person X

because of this

he/she can do bad things to him

he/she can say things in a way that people do not speak when they are with one another.

In the following section this description is used as a basis for describing the Giryama understanding of how to end fujo (trouble).

1.6 Kuzinya fujo (end trouble)

Unlike kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) kuzinya fujo (end trouble) has not got formal manifestations. Thus, it is mostly from informants relating their own experience of fujo (trouble) and its ending, that I have derived salient elements of the Giryama understanding of kuzinya fujo (end trouble). Additionally, my own and only one observation of fujo (trouble) has been included, and a metaphorical rendering of kuzinya fujo (end trouble) from Simba Wanje’s life story.

To start with, kuzinya fujo (end trouble) has a marked linguistic appearance. It is an idiomatic expression based on the same verb as the idiomatic phrase kuzinya t’aa (extinguish a light). The shared conceptual entailment that can be argued from a

8 Kuzinya t’aa (extinguish a light) was mentioned before in the context of the Giryama leader, Ronald Ngala (chapter four, section III.2).
comparison between the two is the conclusiveness of *kuzinya* (end). *Kuzinya* (end) puts a definitive end to whatever activity that is suggested in the noun that is juxtaposed to it.

The following discussion focuses on the actions that facilitate this outcome. The first example is an experience of *fujo* (trouble) that I had myself. It occurred during the story-telling session at Simba Wanje’s homestead, organised in September 1999. The audience consisted of approximately 30 clansmen and women, and some other people who were temporarily watching the scene. Simba Wanje was explaining to the audience what the idea of this meeting was, when a young woman suddenly interrupted his speech. She was shouting that one of the members of the homestead had stolen maize cobs from her field. Simba Wanje stopped talking, and asked her what the problem was. She repeated loudly what she had said before. Then the old man said that since there was a meeting at the moment, he wished to talk to her about it another time. She turned round and went. The old man continued his story, while some women started whispering among themselves. Later the event was explained to me as one of *fujo* (trouble).

Analysing the incident in terms of *fujo* (trouble) and *kuelewana* (understand each other), we find that the young woman makes it momentarily impossible for the others to feel being together in a spirit of *kuelewana* (understand each other). Even if she is right in accusing members of the homestead – and consequently the instigators of *fujo* (trouble) in the first place – she is considered the one who causes *fujo* (trouble). Simba Wanje could perpetuate the situation of *fujo* (trouble) by responding in a similar vein. He refrains from doing so, by suggesting to talk it over and in this way manages to take out the bite from *fujo* (trouble), which then ‘passes’ (*fujo inakira*).

Therefore we may conclude that one way of ending *fujo* (trouble) is by talking over the grievance in a spirit of *kuelewana* (understand each other). Other possibilities of *kuzinya* *fujo* (end trouble) were mentioned already in the context of a Giryama funeral and burial ceremony. I argued that a way of ending *fujo* (trouble) was that the offended does not respond to *fujo* (trouble). Another one was that there is a third party who asks the instigator of *fujo* (trouble) to apologise to the offended. Then as a last resort, if the instigator persists in his behaviour, he can be expelled from the occasion by the people who have the power to do so, the elders.

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9 The story-telling session was described in chapter four, section III.
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There is still another way of ending fujo (trouble), which can be illustrated with a passage from the life story of Simba Wanje. In the discussion of fujo (trouble) Wanje’s description of the unfair employment situation at the port in Mombasa was already introduced. He said that fujo (trouble) was caused by the port authorities, because they had created an unequal situation between the Giryama workers and workers from western Kenya. Simba Wanje describes how this fujo (trouble) could be ended:

7.  
Machandikwa a bara, mandikhwe a haha.  
At'u manamba, kala una ana apatsa  
aamwise mahombo mairi.  

If the people from up-country are given a contract, the people from here should also be contracted. People say, if you have twins, she [the mother] should suckle them [from] two breasts.

With the imagery of the mother and the twins, Simba Wanje wants to make clear that it is possible to supply both the up-country people and the Giryama with employment at Mombasa port. Rather than showing that both groups have equal rights, the image conveys the satisfaction that all three parties can enjoy when the dependants are treated equally. Indeed, the image shows a solution in terms of kuelewana (understand each other).

All the instances of kuzinya fujo (end trouble) refer to kuelewana (understand each other) as its conclusion. We could therefore make the observation that there are various accepted ways of kuzinya fujo (end trouble), but there is one outcome: all the people involved feel good at the end. This can be represented in a cultural script as follows:

Giryama cultural script for kuzinya fujo behaviour:

When something bad happens between two or more persons (because one of them did something bad to the other), people think it is good, if the persons say things to one another about it for some time. If they cannot do this, it is good if someone else says things to them about it for some time. After this they can feel good towards each other again.

A quick restoring of kuelewana (understand each other) appears to be a salient aspect of kuzinya fujo (end trouble). In this way the process differs from kuthanya k’ondo (end a
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conflict), which is marked as a careful and slow process. This is one distinctive difference between the two processes of reconciliation, which is vividly illustrated, together with its underlying cause, in the next section.

1.7 Fujo (trouble) and k'ondo (conflict) compared

Considering the Giryama understanding of fujo (trouble) against the background of k'ondo (conflict), we find that some salient aspects clearly belong with one or the other of the two concepts. Using them as a guide, we may be able to explain how they relate to each other. Throughout the discussion it was clear that fujo (trouble) does not affect the community as profoundly as k'ondo (conflict). One could take this argument further by saying that since fujo (trouble) is less serious, it can be solved quickly. Still, both are considered destructive social forces. How can one measure then the seriousness of the event? A striking difference between the two is that fujo (trouble) is a verbal 'conflict', while k'ondo (conflict) can be a verbal but also a physical conflict. But then, if there is a case of verbal k'ondo (conflict), can we still distinguish it from fujo (trouble)? Is the degree of seriousness still a salient parameter for assessing the situation as one of fujo (trouble) or k'ondo (conflict)? And which are salient determinants? I would like to discuss these questions with the help of the folk tale Katsungula na Mutsara (the hare and the dam), which was discussed in the context of the key word, kilongozi (leader) (chapter four, section III.1). First, a brief résumé of the events is given.

The story is about a community of animals. One day one of its members, the hare, proposes to dig a water pan, so that when the rain comes, the community can collect water for the dry season. This will ensure everybody's well-being during the dry season. The other animals think it is a good idea and start digging. Yet, the hare does not join them. The others tell him that, if he does not dig he will not enjoy the benefits of the water pan. Yet, once the waterpan is full of water, the hare secretly drinks from the water and even takes baths in it. This is unacceptable behaviour in the eyes of the others, and they decide to catch him red-handed. When they finally do, the hare is punished by the community in the shape of the elephant who sends him off into the air with his trunk (pulling off the hare's tale by accident, but this explains why hares nowadays have short tails).

The story is told within the framework of collective memory, and therefore can be argued to refer to shared Giryama norms and values. In fact, the hare can be seen as the
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personification of ‘conflict’. In the discussion of kilongozi (leader) he was already demonstrated to flout Giryama values relating to leadership. Considering the hare in the contexts of k’ondo (conflict) and fujo (trouble) we can see that his behaviour can be qualified in terms of both these concepts. In fact, paraphrasing his behaviour we can clearly see how Giryama distinguish between fujo (trouble) and k’ondo (conflict).

Expressing his unwillingness to accompany the others in digging, the hare flouts one essential Giryama value, which is that once something has been agreed upon by everybody, the agreement should be carried out like that. Ignoring this value implies an assault on one salient aspect of the Giryama ideology of ‘peace’, which articulates communal decision making as an integral part of ‘peaceful living’. In other words, this is a very serious situation. It is evaluated therefore as one of k’ondo (conflict).

In the following scenes the hare continues to exhibit bad behaviour. However, this is bad behaviour on a different level. Considered separate from his previous flouting of one essential Giryama value, we could argue that his present bad behaviour is evaluated by the others in terms of Giryama norms on interactive behaviour. The reasoning of the others goes as follows: if the community tells you with good reason that you cannot drink from the water, nor bathe in it, you should not do it. If you do, you cause fujo (trouble). This can easily be solved, for only the act needs to be punished.

Indeed, this is what happens when the elephant sends the hare off into the air. Not surprisingly k’ondo (conflict) is not resolved. A folk story is not an appropriate narrative framework in which kuthanya k’ondo (end a conflict) is featured. The discussion of k’ondo (conflict) has demonstrated that it is a process that includes a gradual undoing of k’ondo (conflict) by experts. This is a complex and serious matter, which exceeds the straightforward tale that a Giryama trickster tale is. In general, a Giryama folk tale teaches Giryama norms and values in a light tone, and always ends on a happy note.

What we may conclude from Katsungula na Mutsara (the hare and the dam) is that fujo (trouble) is less serious than verbal or physical k’ondo (conflict), because it occurs at the level of interactive behaviour. People can still be rather easily corrected at that level, it is assumed. This also explains why kuzinya fujo (to end trouble) can be a quick and relatively easy process. Although Giryama norms of interactive behaviour are inspired by the overarching system of Giryama values, breaking them does not mean a direct threat to Giryama peaceful living.
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II  Viha (war)

II.1 Analytical outlines

In the introduction to this chapter viha (war) was described as a synonym for k’ondo (conflict). Additionally, it was noted to be an uncommon word in Giryama discourse. This suggests already that viha (war) is the less salient articulation of the Giryama understanding of ‘conflict’. This is underscored by the scarcity of viha (war) data in my corpus. The comments of some informants on the word, saying k’afudzaona (we have not seen i.e. experienced it), are also a sign of viha (war)’s lack of cultural salience. Additionally, in the course of my fieldwork I noted a marked difference between the local illiterate or low-educated and the educated Giryama in the degree of familiarity with the word viha (war). When I asked people how they would qualify the fighting in countries like Sudan or Somalia, the educated Giryama, who are generally well-informed about the political situation of other African countries, immediately responded with the description, viha (war), while those who had no access to the media were at a loss. They appeared not to know about conflict situations abroad. When I explained the situation to them, they would come up with the word viha (war) in a concerted effort. In fact, this last point demonstrates clearly that viha (war) does not reflect knowledge that is generally shared. In other words viha (war) is a particular kind of k’ondo (war). This observation seems to ignore the category head status that was attributed to viha (war) by 44% of the informants. Still, the analysis will bear out the same. Still, the informants of the pile-sort task were alliterate, and therefore belong with the group of people who have enjoyed some education. As I found out later, viha (war) featured as a category head because it was considered to be the opposite of the category head amani (peace). This may have been due to the fact that amani (peace) is a Swahili word, and that viha (war) is related to the Swahili opposite of amani (peace), vita (war).

The following discussion follows the same pattern of analysis as that of fujo (trouble). The discussion proceeds from conscious articulations of viha (war), such as the explications, to less conscious ones. Since ‘viha (war) resolution’ is not a salient entailment of viha (war), it is not included in the discussion.
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II.2 Explanations of *viha* (war)

In the introduction to the chapter on *k’ondo* (conflict), both *fujo* (trouble) and *viha* (war) were presented as being defined in terms of *k’ondo* (conflict) and *kutsoelewana* (not understand each other). In the case of *viha* (war) there is an overriding agreement on *k’ondo* (conflict) (65%) as a definition, while only 10% of the informants respond with *kutsoelewana* (not understand each other); the second largest number of responses is *ni vibomu* (it is big) (25%). The latter is never given as a first explanation, but always follows the explanation of *viha* (war) as *k’ondo* (conflict). Additionally, two explications have been included which were hardly given at all ([d] three times, and [e] once). Paradoxically, they go to illustrate that explications cannot be the only source for a description of socio-cultural understandings. For, in spite of their low numbers, they help to underscore certain salient meaning aspects of *viha* (war) that would otherwise have stayed unnoticed. In decreasing order of frequency, the explanations are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Viha</em></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. <strong>ni k’ondo</strong></td>
<td>it is conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. <strong>ni vibomu</strong></td>
<td>(war) is big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. <em>(ts’i)</em> k’aina uelewano</td>
<td>it (the land) has not ‘understand each other’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. <strong>ni kuheha na mwiri</strong></td>
<td>it is fighting with the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. <strong>kupigana, kwa mufano mudzi na mudzi</strong></td>
<td>fighting, e.g. between homesteads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of the prominence of *k’ondo* (conflict) as an explication for *viha* (war) and the additional distinction between the two in terms of size – the plural grammatical form of *viha* (war) grammatically underscoring its ‘bigness’ –, we could suggest an initial provisional semantic description for *viha* (war):

1. two *groups* do bad things to each other,
2. because one of them feels that the other has done something bad to them.

Phrased in terms of the semantic description of *k’ondo* (conflict) *viha* (war) distinguishes itself from *k’ondo* (conflict) by referring to ‘groups’ rather than to ‘persons or groups’.

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Provisionally assuming that these aspects constitute the core meaning of viha (war), we find that the English word ‘war’ and the Dutch word ‘oorlog’ are highly compatible. The LDCE (2003) explanation of ‘war’ is:

1. when there is fighting between two or more countries or between opposing groups within a country, involving large numbers of soldiers and weapons.

The Van Dale dictionary (2005) has almost the same explication for ‘oorlog’:

1. strijd tussen twee of meer volken, vorsten of staten; toestand dat er zo’n strijd gaande is; toestand van vijandigheid zonder gevechtshandelingen. (fight between two or more peoples, monarchs or states, a situation of actual fighting between them; a situation of hostility without combat).

The difference with the LDCE (2003), and one that appears to coincide with an aspect of viha (war) which will be discussed later, is the explanation of ‘hostility without actual fighting’ (incidentally, I would argue that this aspect is included in the British understanding of ‘war’ too). On the basis of the explications we cannot but conclude that there is a close resemblance between British, Dutch and Giryama understandings of a situation that is called ‘war’, oorlog and viha respectively. This conclusion is reinforced by the following collocations with viha (war):

f. Viha zha kwanza World War I/ Eerste Wereldoorlog10

g. Viha zha hiri World War II/ Tweede Wereldoorlog

h. Viha zha enye na enye a civil war / een burgeroorlog

i. Viha zha mbari an ethnic conflict/ een ethnisch conflict

j. Viha zha siasa a revolution/ een revolutie

Yet, in spite of the overriding similarity in the use of the words viha/war/ oorlog, instances [i.] and [j.] are a first indication that there are underlying conceptual properties that give rise to differences of understandings of war/oorlog on the one side and viha (war) on the other.

10 In the discussion of k’ondo (conflict) viha zha kwanza (first World War) features under its alternative name k’ondo ya Azungu (war of the Europeans) (chapter six, section II.3.c).
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II.3 The social contexts of viha (war)

As was mentioned before, there are very few occurrences of viha (war) in my fieldwork data. Apart from occurring in historical terminology such as viha zha kwanza (WWII) and viha zha hiri (WWII), the word viha (war) refers only once to a different ‘war’ in the texts that I recorded. It is a passage from Rueben Kombe’s history-telling of the Giryama. The former history teacher and expert on Giryama history, who was introduced in chapter six (section II.3.c), tells us:

8.

RK: Ela viha zha Arabu aryahu ani Mubaruku, uyoru wa kapindi kare. But the Arab ‘war’, those of the Mbaruk lineage, is history from very long ago. He
Yuyu k’avielezere sana, kwa kukala (Thomas Spear) did not explain very well, lengeore ni Kaya Complex. because his aim was Kaya Complex. 11
JC: Mhu J C: Hmm.
RK: Mau’u ga Mitzi Chenda. RK: The things of the Mijikenda. 12

Rueben Kombe who has already manifested himself as a language purist, exhibits a keen awareness of the meaning dimensions of viha (war). If we look at his words more closely, we find that Mr. Kombe says that there was a viha zha Arabu (war of the Arabs) in the very distant past. The Giryama were not involved, other than that individual men were recruited to fight for Mbaruk. 13 By adding that this war took place in the distant past, Kombe suggests that he does not think his audience has heard of this war. He also disqualifies it as part of Giryama history, by saying that it is not in Kaya Complex (1978), which, he adds, is only about the Mijikenda (the collective name of the nine peoples, of which the Giryama are one). From this we may conclude that viha zha Arabu (war of the Arabs) did not have any impact on Giryama peaceful living. This is a striking observation,

12 The Mitzi Chenda (Mijikenda: lit. nine towns) is a name that was introduced in the early 20th century for the nine peoples of the Kenyan Coastal hinterland: Giryama, Kauma, Jibana, Chonyi, Kambe Rabai, Ribe, Duruma, and Digo.
13 Brantley (1981) notes that in 1895 the coastal Mazrui Afro-Arabs (whose leader was Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gaz) rebelled against the Busaidi Sultan of Zanzibar and the British, along the entire Kenyan coastal strip from Shamba Hills in the south to Malindi in the north. Long-term allies of the Mazruis, the Giryama, living in the coastal hinterland, were pulled into the war. However, when British supremacy became undeniable, they changed sides to the British. (p.43-49)
for it means that *viha* (war) is a violent conflict in which the Giryama are not involved, nor do they identify themselves with it.

Reflecting this in the semantic description of *viha* (war) we could suggest:

1. two groups do bad things to each other
2. people think this is bad
3. *if people think about it*
4. *it is as if it happens far away*
5. *because of this it cannot make people not feel part of the same thing.*

In the description the lack of involvement of the Giryama is expressed in [4.] and [5.] in terms of remoteness. More importantly, the potential disruption of *kuelewana* (understand each other) among the Giryama because of *viha* (war) is explicitly denied in [5.].

Assuming that lack of identification is a salient element of *viha* (war), we could argue from Rueben Kombe’s words, that also temporal remoteness could be a reason for calling a violent conflict *viha* (war). Although Mr. Kombe does not explicitly state that because it took place in the far past that the ‘conflict’ is called *viha* (war), we may be tempted to infer that from his words.

Let’s briefly retrace our steps to find out more about the salience of geographical and temporal remoteness in the meaning of *viha* (war). In the chapter on *k’ondo* (conflict) the collocation, *k’ondo ya Azungu* (the war of the Europeans, i.e. first World War), raised some doubts on the salience of the meaning aspect of ‘it is as if it happens to them [i.e. the Giryama]’, as it was essentially a European war. Still, it appeared that the Giryama did feel involved in the German-British fighting during the first World war in neighbouring Tanzania (cf. chapter six, section II.3.c). Also a sharp distinction was noted between the terms that are used by the Giryama to refer to the first World War and the second. In that context geographical remoteness was demonstrated to determine the use of the word *viha* (war).

Indeed, if temporal remoteness had been a salient determinant then it would have been appropriate to call the first World War a *viha* (war). As a matter of fact, the first World War is known, as was demonstrated above, as *viha zha kwanza*. So is temporal remoteness after all a salient aspect of the meaning of *viha* (war)? I found that the use of *k’ondo*
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(conflict) or viha (war) to refer to the first World war is highly determined by the degree of identification with it, which in turn is largely decided by age and level of education. When I asked older people whether k’ondo ya Azungu (fight of the Europeans) can qualify as viha (war) they would say ‘no’. Others would say both is possible, while the younger people who had or had had formal education said that viha (war) is the correct term. This suggests that temporal remoteness is a salient consideration in qualifying a ‘conflict’ as viha (war). Apart from that, also formal education is a likely factor in the viha (war) preference; history lessons are given in Kiswahili, and the Kiswahili term for first World War is vita ya kwanza (first World War).

Although the qualification of viha (war) as a conflict that is remote in time and/or place seems valid, three collocations that were mentioned before do not match this description. Viha zha enye na enye (civil war), viha zha siasa (revolution) and viha zha mbari (ethnic conflict) could be argued to be close enough for the Giryama to feel involved. However, the motivation for labelling them as ‘remote’ springs from a different source. This can best be illustrated from an informant’s explication of the difference between k’ondo (conflict) and viha (war). This description indicates in fact that viha’s remoteness, be it temporal or geographical, is essentially defined in terms of lack of experiential potential.

The informant explained:

2.

*Viha na k’ondo ni vimwanga, viha*

*ni vibomu, sirikali na sirikali, k’ondo*

*ni mut’u na mut’u.*

‘War’ and ‘conflict’ are the same, a ‘war’ is big, government against government, a conflict is person against person.

In other words, viha (war) and k’ondo (conflict) are considered equivalents with respect to the kind of violent conflict they represent. The difference between them, the informant seems to indicate is one of size (viha ni vibomu (war is big)), defined in terms of numbers of people involved. Yet, as we saw before, k’ondo (conflict) and viha (war) may describe the same ‘conflict’, their only difference is one of perspective (cf. World War I). To really grasp the meaning of the informants’ words, I should add that the word mut’u (man) can reflect a group of people as in k’ondo ya muzungu na muzungu (conflict between a European and a European, another name for World War I). The difference that is implied is therefore not one of numbers, but rather one of ‘governments’ versus ‘people’.
Pointing this out as a manifest difference, the informant implies that ‘governments’ are structures that lack a human element. This ‘lack of the human element’ is reinforced by the word *vibomu*. Besides its meaning of ‘big’, it has the additional meaning of ‘influential, important’ as in *ni mubomu* (he is a big shot). Thus, the informant suggests *viha* (war) is something that takes place between governments, is caused by high-level decisions and is about high-level issues. This is an area which is not within the common domain of people. It is remote and does not offer a possibility of identification. Remoteness in terms of lack of the human factor, reflects best, I think, what the informant intends to say about the character of *viha* (war).

Comparing *viha* (war) with *k’ondo* (conflict) we may therefore conclude that ‘big’ is a distinctive aspect of *viha* (war) in the sense of supra-human magnitude, and non-distinctive in the sense of ‘involving many people’. Yet both senses are salient elements of its meaning (as reflected already in its plural form). I would therefore suggest a thorough revision of the semantic description:

1. *It is a big bad thing*
2. *groups of people do things to each other’s bodies*
3. people think this is bad
4. if people think about it
5. it is as if it happens far away
6. because of this people cannot feel that they are not part of the same thing.

Having arrived at this definition, we may experience the explication of *viha* (war) as *kupigana, kwa mufano mudzi na mudzi* (fighting, for instance between homestead and homestead) [e.], as somewhat misplaced. It does not fit the picture of *viha* (war) as remote, nor ‘big’ (in either sense). As was mentioned before this explication does not ‘officially’ belong in the list of explications of *viha* (war) as it was given only by one person. Also it does not seem to reflect an everyday reality, judging from the reaction of several informants to my question whether they had experienced *viha* (war): *k’afudzaona* (we have not experienced it). Still, the explication immediately jumped to my mind when Mr. Mbura, a retired post office official, was telling his family history. Although his description presents a different and not very common type of *viha* (war), it is fascinating to see that it includes all the components of the semantic description and moreover highlights a meaning aspect that has not been explicitly demonstrated until now.
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During the years of fieldwork *viha* (war) was not a very salient topic for discussions with Giryama. When one day the word *viha* (war) did come up in a conversation I was completely taken by surprise. Mr. Mbura, whom I had asked for the sort-pile task of key words, spontaneously started telling his family history. While I was busy preparing the cards, he explained that the Giryama used to have a decoration of great honour, called *luyoo*. This was given to a male person, who had proved to be capable of living a good life (i.e. keeping a large herd of cattle, having a healthy family, and having good harvests for consecutive years). Mr. Mbura’s great-grandfather had been given this title by the *athumia a luyoo* (elders of the *luyoo*). Since it is a title that one can pass on, Mbura’s great-grandfather wanted to pass it on to his oldest son, when he was getting old. Theoretically the sons of his oldest brother also had a right to its inheritance, but no-one expected them to have any interest in *luyoo*. It came as a big surprise when these sons did show their reservations to the passing on of *luyoo* to the great-grandfather’s son. They disputed the legitimacy of the great-grandfather’s act (*mahenda fujo* (they made trouble)) and would not give in. Since then, Mr. Mbura concluded, *ni viha* (it is ‘war’). When I asked him how *viha* (war) could be ended, he said he did not know.

In fact, Mr. Mbura describes the kind of situation which the informant probably had in mind when he explained *viha* (war) as *kupigana, kwa mufano mudzi na mudzi* (fighting, for instance between homesteads). The homestead of the great-grandfather of Mr. Mbura is ‘at war’ with that of his great-grandfather’s brother, *kupigana* referring both to actual fighting and to ‘a situation of hostility without combat’ (like Van Dale (2005) defines ‘oorlog’).

Analysing the events that Mr. Mbura describes, we can make the following observations. One is that the cause of the conflict occurred a long time ago (three generations removed from Mr. Mbura). Another striking feature is that the ‘war’ still lasts. Mr. Mbura’s animosity towards the offspring of his great-grandfather’s brother is expressed by non-communication. The third observation is that Mr. Mbura does not think of his family’s *viha* (war) in terms of a process with an end. In the following argument these three features will be demonstrated to be defined by the same aspect of ‘remoteness’, that was argued above to be salient of *viha* (war).

For one thing, the distance in time between the actual conflict and those who live now is a sign of remoteness. Although time has not been a factor in solving the conflict, it has obscured the initial cause. It is as if to express their loyalty to their ancestors that the
great-grandchildren of both parties are ‘at war’ with one another. There even can be the odd physical fight. These physical encounters are not viewed, however, as attempts at settling the scores once and for all, but rather as confirmations of a situation of viha (war). This would argue for viha (war) as being experienced as a status quo, rather than as a disruptive social force which can be undone. This argument gains persuasiveness with Mr. Mbura’s statement that he does not know how to end his family’s viha (war). Also in the Giryama traditional judiciary system, there is not a mechanism for ending viha (war).

Standing out from Mr. Mbura’s description of homestead viha (war) is the incapacity of those who are in ‘conflict’ with each other to resolve the conflict. Until now this aspect of viha (war) has not been as explicitly stated as it is here. Surely, the informant who argued that viha (war) is between governments rather than people, must have implied that in his explication. Since it is not of people’s own doing, it cannot be solved by people; in Mr. Mbura’s case this is certainly true. In fact, this is what makes viha (war) so bad.

II.4 Cultural semantic description of viha

Obviously people evaluate viha (war) as ‘bad’ on different grounds than k’ondo (conflict). Whereas k’ondo (conflict) is ‘bad’ because it affects an entire community, viha (war) is ‘bad’ because it does not include the human factor. It is therefore appropriate to reflect its manifestation as that of a ‘thing’. Another element that is highlighted in Mr. Mbura’s description is that viha (war) lasts for a considerable period of time. It is due to the length of the conflict that viha (war) manifests its characteristic of insolubility. Although length of time is a salient aspect, it is defined by experience rather than measured in terms of years. Including this element in the meaning of viha (war) we can propose the following full semantic description:

Viha

People think like this:

It is a big thing
it is a bad thing
groups of people do things to each other’s bodies
people think this is bad

this thing does not exist for a short time
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if people think about it
it is as if it happens far away.

For lack of salience, no reference is made to kuelewana (understand each other) in this description.

III General conclusion

Presenting a phenomenon that lacks experiential dimensions, viha (war) implicitly highlights what are salient aspects of the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’. It demonstrates that ‘conflict’ is essentially understood in terms of a bad situation that is man-made and can therefore also be undone by man. Viha (war) has lost the human factor, and therefore lacks socio-cognitive salience. The Giryama evaluate it in terms of ‘bad’, yet at the same time detach themselves from it by picturing it as remote from everyday experience. Thus the Giryama ward off a phenomenon that lacks mechanisms to be resolved, and is too ‘big’ to be connected with the human experience of ‘conflict’ anyway.

This conclusion demonstrates that viha (war) is not vague nor universal. At first it seemed to show close resemblances with English ‘war’ and Dutch oorlog, but in the course of the discussion viha (war) articulated its culture specific articulation of ‘remoteness’. Although the English and Dutch counterparts also include reference to powers of state, it is inferred that the consequence is a complete upheaval of the social system and therefore of the people. ‘War’ and oorlog being understood essentially in terms of affecting the peaceful living of people, do not include remoteness as a salient meaning aspect in the sense that viha (war) does.

With the discussions of k’ondo (conflict), fuyo (trouble) and viha (war) the conceptual landscape that reflects the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’ has been drawn. It turns out to be an area of great variety and distinct articulations. Although fuyo (trouble), and viha (war) more in particular, lack the overall encompassing impact on Giryama society which k’ondo (conflict) has, they have been able to refine and highlight certain elements of the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’. The final challenge is bringing them together in a comprehensive description of the Giryama ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’, a challenge that is taken up in the last chapter.
PART IV

CONCLUSION
Conclusion

The unusual two-layered character of this study leads to a conclusion in two – albeit intrinsically connected – concluding parts. They share the focus on the central theme of ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’, one addressing it as a theoretical issue with its analytical consequences, the other as a socio-cultural reality among the Giryama.

I Theoretical and analytical framework

I.1 Cultural understandings and linguistic practice

In the introduction and chapter one the broad outlines of this study were drawn, which set the research within the wider context of social studies on conflict and its resolution. As a matter of fact, these outlines comprise the heart of this study and its contribution to the development of socio-cultural theory in the area of conflict and its resolution. The theoretical argument is innovative in that it proposes a new analytical framework for studying cultural aspects of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. Its focus on the socio-cognitive aspects of culture is inspired by the idea that ‘cultural understandings’ are an important – yet relatively unexplored- dimension of establishing or maintaining peace among cultures in which ethnic or religious profiling has upset or threatens peaceful co-existence. The exploration of relevant theoretical propositions resulted in an analytical model, which facilitates a study of ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ from within a social formation, while at the same time enabling cross-cultural exchange, as well as cross-cultural comparison.

The concept of ‘cultural understanding’ takes a central place in this study. Its characteristics of being generally shared in a social formation and including different knowledge structures, as well as being potentially ideologically charged, make it a highly appropriate object of exploration in the context of grass-root understandings of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. One area in which ‘cultural understandings’ manifest themselves is cultural discourse, it was claimed.
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With the implicit highlighting of language as a doorway to ‘cultural understandings’, the exploration of ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ has a -consciously chosen-specific scope. Within this scope an analytical framework has been developed that is open to different theoretical perspectives and inclusive of different modes of meaning production.

The anthropological-linguistic approach, with its characteristic view on language as linguistic practice, operating within the wider framework of other cultural practices, offered an overall framework. Within that broad field, the general assumptions of the cognitive sciences about knowledge and knowledge acquisition have been conducive to defining the contours of the relationship between ‘cultural understanding’ and linguistic practice in the present study. In line with the basic assumption of the cognitive sciences that mental constuctions are fundamentally shaped by our experiences in a world, ‘cultural understandings’ were assumed to manifest themselves through practices. Focusing on cultural discourse implied exploring ‘cultural understandings’ in linguistic practice. This particular perspective on language can be graphically illustrated with a little anecdote from my fieldwork period.

In the early days of my stay at the Kenyan coast I described the subject of my dissertation to a British lady, who had lived in Mombasa for over twenty years. She had employed Giryama workers for almost as long. Her reaction was: “Oh, there is really little to write about, there is one word the Giryama use for conflict, which is fujo (trouble)”. Her words were later underscored by a British medical doctor, who had done research among the Giryama for some years. He argued that the Giryama had such a small vocabulary that they did not have the means to express anything like a profound cultural statement on ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’.

The anecdote illustrates a very common (Western) mode of thinking. Both speakers argue that the Giryama do not have a very extensive vocabulary in the area of peace and conflict. From this they conclude that the Giryama do not have great refinement in their thinking of it. I agree with them that one cannot express oneself without words, and that the variety of a vocabulary and its degree of specification reflect the variety of domains of experience and their degree of specification. Still, this way of thinking refers exclusively to referential meanings, failing to include other, hidden and enforcing levels of meaning production. In the present study these less obvious levels of meaning production were
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tapped into, because they are assumed to be the level from which cultural ideologies exert their impact.

A logical conclusion is that ‘cultural understandings’ are not explicit cultural statements. They belong in the sub- or unconscious regions of human cognition. The search was therefore directed at levels of meaning production that inspire rather than those that define. Departing from the premise that the same ‘cultural understandings’ can inspire verbal and non-verbal modes of expression, an analytical framework has been developed that was geared to address these different modes.

To be able to analyse a variety of manifestations that potentially refer back to the same ‘cultural understanding’, I followed Blommaert’s (2005) ‘holistic’ interpretation of discourse analysis. Sharing with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) the basic assumption that ‘meaning’ is socially constituted, this study has adopted its characteristic inclusiveness of other disciplinary perspectives, and its pragmatic use of them (selecting the perspective which is productive in a particular analytical context).

The search for ideologically charged ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ in the area of cultural discourse focused on expressions which are inspired by these understandings. These cultural key words were identified along the lines that Wierzbicka (1997) indicated for the identification of a cultural key word. In fact, key words and their concomitant semantic descriptive framework have been a central feature of this study.

In addition to being a frame of analysis that fits the research domain of the present study, key words were a comprehensive tool across different analytical perspectives. This property of a key word greatly enhanced the argument of a concept’s ideological features. After all, different analytical perspectives could address different (features of) cultural phenomena, thereby implicitly demonstrating the social distribution – and hence the cultural salience – of key words.

In fact, the concept of key word has acquired new analytical potential in the present study. Giryama key words of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ were investigated in a relational fashion. In this way, the key words showed their links to one another. The interpretation of the key word k’ondo (conflict), for instance, was enriched by the analysis of kujo (trouble) and viha
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(war), and the paraphrase of *fujo* (trouble) benefited from the ‘cultural understanding’ of the kind of behaviour that *kuzinya fujo* (end trouble) includes.

This newly found analytical dimension of a *key word* is an analytical elaboration on Wierzbicka’s original concept of a *key word*. The analysis of Giryama *key words* exhibits one other divergence from the practice of analysis of Wierzbicka and other NSM (Natural Semantic Meta-language) scholars. The meanings of the *key words* were not consistently presented in NSM vocabulary (see Appendix III). It was argued that, in spite of its supposedly universal character, NSM has a limited lexicon. Therefore descriptions written in NSM vocabulary tend to be long. This was considered to take out the bite of a description, and because of that have a negative effect on cross-cultural comparability. A pragmatic use of NSM characterised the descriptions. Non-NSM basic words were used when the description threatened to become long-winded. However, even if conciseness has been the leading principle, it was never exercised to the detriment of the accuracy of a semantic description.

1.2 Ideologies in the practice of conflict avoidance, prevention and conflict resolution

As the above description has illustrated once more, ‘cultural understandings’ are not an explicit statement of shared ideas and beliefs. They are implicit, and potentially reflect (parts of) the ideational fabric of a social formation. This ideational fabric, or *ideologies*, is what people experience as ‘natural’, framing their social experiences and social institutions. This ‘naturalness’, partly the result of *ideologies* being passed on from generation to generation, grants them a certain resilience to change.

It is precisely because of their ‘naturalness’ and their ‘stability’ that (elements of) *ideologies* of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ can be highly productive in intercultural mediation. How can this claim be substantiated? After all, ethnic or religious differences are usually manipulated by the conflicting parties into being the justification of intercultural tension or conflict. Making these differences even more explicit in a mediation process seems counterproductive. However, this line of thought has a flaw, which is that the statement of cultural differences is usually the result of stereotyping of the other’s identity. Not denying the potent (negative) impact of stereotyping on human thinking, I would argue that it is one (limited) way of articulating ‘the other’. A *cultural ideology*, on the other hand, is a much less explicit and more socially distributed phenomenon, pervading a great variety of
domains of human experience within a social formation. As a result the effects of cultural stereotypes and cultural ideologies on human thinking could be characterised as fragmenting versus synthesising. It is in particular the synthesising quality of cultural ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ that can be profitably used in the context of intercultural mediation.

One example of this synthesising quality in an intercultural context of peace(-making) was mentioned in this study. The Giryama value of ishima (respect), a salient feature of kuelewana (understand each other) as peaceful living, was demonstrated to have a core meaning with different defining meaning elements according to the social context in which it operates (cf. chapter four, section III.3). Being a fundamental value for any social interaction, ishima (respect) is understood by the Giryama to be the guiding value too in intercultural communication. The interaction of Giryama leaders and the British District Officer (chapter four, section III.3) was qualified by the Giryama speaker as one in which ishima (respect) facilitated intercultural dialogue.

Another example highlighting the synthesising quality of cultural ideology is taken from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC was set up on the premise that intercultural ‘healing’ is a people-driven process. Therefore, the victims and perpetrators of the Anti-Apartheid regime themselves were given a forum to speak out. The chairman of the commission, the emeritus Anglican archbishop Desmond Tutu, epitomised, more or less physically, the moral context in which the reconciliation was enacted. Its primary aim being the healing of the (socio-)emotional traumas of the victims, intercultural ‘cross-roads’ for reconciliation presented themselves in the process.

The confrontation between Cynthia Ngewu and the murderer of her son vividly illustrates the ideologically charged elements of peace-making. The murderer asks for forgiveness for the murder of Christopher Piet, the son of Cynthia Ngewu. The event is described by the South-African author and poet, Antjie Krog, who reported on the proceedings of the TRC for the South African radio in the nineties of the last century.

When the man [a white South African] who had murdered her son begged her for forgiveness, she answered: “This so-called reconciliation……if I am right….if it means that the culprit, the man who killed Christopher Piet, if it means that he becomes a human being again, this man, so that I, so that
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all of us will regain our humaneness, I agree, I am all for it." (translated from Krog 2006: 34)

Interpreting the request for forgiveness of the white South African in terms of central values of her own cultural ideology of reconciliation, made the (Christian/ Western) value of ‘forgiveness’ more meaningful to her, and placed it in the right socio-emotional context. In this way she not only ‘forgave’ the murderer because he asked for forgiveness, but granted herself and her community the chance of being ‘at peace’. Thus, two ideologically charged values became major tools for intercultural reconciliation.

The examples of the meeting of the Giryama leaders with the British District Officer and that of Cynthia Ngewu and the murderer of her son at the TRC, underscore the positive potential of cultural ideologies in the domain of peace-making. Their being generally shared and experienced as ‘natural’ makes them the perfect means of including ordinary people in a peace process. Indeed, there is a growing awareness that peace-makers should reach out to grass-root understandings. The discontent, frustration or lack of identification of the masses with a peace contract brokered by high-level officials are, after all, fertile grounds for renewed intercultural tension. One recent example of this awareness - which unfortunately came to a dramatic halt - is the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) between the Sudanese government and the rebel groups from Darfur.¹ In the agreement it was stipulated that there should be a Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation, following the signing of the peace contract by rebel leaders and Sudanese government officials. Including the people in the peace process, as has been advocated by the DPA, is a clear indication of the importance that is attributed to grass-roots understandings of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. Tapping into their ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ would greatly enforce the identification of ordinary people with the peace process.

So far the contribution of cultural ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ have only been evaluated in the context of peace-making or reconciliation. This implies that two parties are ostensibly in conflict. There is an additional area in which the framework of cultural ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ can be made productive. In chapter five the term cross-ideological structural violence was introduced, reflecting the persistent negation of core Giryama ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘land’ by the dominant ideologies of the Kenyan state.

¹ Alex de Waal (2006)
I think a situation like that of the Giryama is not unique. Ethnic suppression is a world-wide phenomenon, but due to its generally subtle workings difficult to lay one’s hands on. With the help of the exploration of cultural ideologies and their (impaired or non-existent) reflections in public phenomena and institutions, an assessment can be made of the dimensions of cross-cultural ideological structural violence.

From the above we may conclude that cultural ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ – the latter in a complimentary way to the former— are a productive framework in peace-making processes among ethnic or religious groups, which are ideationally or ideationally and physically in conflict. What is more, the values that are entailed in these ideologies can be important tools for sparking off people-driven intercultural reconciliation processes. Indeed, cultural ideologies should be the broad framework within which practical measures for peace-building are formulated. In this way, peace-building can become a truly people-driven process and lead to lasting results.

II Giryama key words of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’

In this part of the conclusion I turn to the six Giryama key words, summarising their ideological elements. Their analyses, as presented before, are related to the overall framework of Giryama understandings of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’.

II.1 The Giryama ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’

With the study of six Giryama key words of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ we have, as it were, collected six reflections of the Giryama ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. These reflections were demonstrated to be distinct, if not unconnected. Starting with the assessment of the socio-cultural salience of words of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’, we found that the Giryama ideology of ‘peace’ is most comprehensively reflected by kuelewana (understand each other), while k’ondo (conflict) is the most comprehensive reflection of ‘conflict’. Interestingly, both kuelewana (understand each other) and its opposite, k’ondo (conflict), were not selected as key words by Giryama informants. In the sort-pile task, which I asked sixty informants to do, they did not feature as heads of a semantic category. However, both appeared to be prominent cultural articulations of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’
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respectively, at the less conscious levels of meaning production (e.g. stories, sayings, discussion and conversation). In contrast, the words viha (war) and dheri (peace), which were preferred as category heads to k’ondo (conflict) and kuelewana (understand each other) respectively, were hardly articulated at the less conscious levels.

From this state of affairs it was concluded that the exploration of the more unconscious levels of expression is essential for assessing the socio-cultural salience of particular concepts. This is in line with the general thrust of the study, which highlights the lived experience as the source of shared understandings (cf. chapter one, section I.1).

Starting with kuelewana (understand each other), we found that its core notion, ‘all are part of the same thing’ (i.e. all (Giryama) are part of the same moral universe), was qualified as ‘good’ and ‘people feel good about this’. If we consider these observations in the context of the above argument, we cannot but conclude that these normative and emotional associations determine kuelewana’s (understand each other) socio-cultural salience. In fact, we could argue that this observation holds for all Giryama key words. Clearly, the experiential dimensions are a pre-condition for a concept to qualify as a cultural key word. This explains too why viha (war) is not a prototypical key word. From viha’s (war) rare occurrence in Giryama discourse, we already concluded that viha (war) had a different status from the other key words. Its obvious lack of relevance and closeness to the Giryama people really determines its lack of cultural salience.

At the end of the analysis of the six key words of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’, it was clear that kuelewana (understand each other) is considered by the Giryama the one and only guarantee for peaceful co-existence. One may well ask, apart from its ostensible experiential dimensions, what other grounds are there for its socio-cultural salience? Kuelewana (understand each other) is in many ways an exceptional key word. Giryama use it as a principle for qualifying a great variety of social relationships, from the homestead to the village level and beyond, as far as including a relationship between a Giryama and a non-Giryama. Additionally, the Giryama use it to refer to a highly

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2 Kuelewana (understand each other) and kusikizana (understand each other) are synonyms, reflecting the same concept of ‘all are part of the same thing’. Both terms are used interchangeably by the Giryama. Therefore, even if the discussion focuses exclusively on kuelewana (understand each other), the argument holds equally for kusikizana (understand each other).
appreciated (Giryama) way of decision-making. Furthermore, kulelwana (understand each other) is instrumental in defining other ‘peace’ key words such as kilongozi (leader) and ts’i (land), as was demonstrated in the analysis of these key words. Lastly, the general appreciation of kulelwana (understand each other) as the ‘normal’ mode of living was found to have a major impact on how Giryama understand ‘conflict’. In fact, the following set of conclusions on the Giryama key words of ‘conflict’ would not be possible without reference to kulelwana (understand each other).

The three key words that were argued to reflect the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’, demonstrated that the most salient parameter for differentiating types of conflict is the degree to which they affect the community. Although not physically participating, the community is always understood to be part of a ‘conflict’ by the Giryama. The experience of ‘conflict’ of this group was found to be essentially defined in terms of social and emotional deterioration – the social ideal of kulelwana (understand each other) being under pressure rather than physical or economic terms. This deterioration was explained to be the result of the lack of kulelwana (understand each other) between those in conflict.

Two key words of ‘conflict’, fujo (trouble) and viha (war) were not prototypical key words in the sense that they are salient Giryama conceptual articulations of ‘conflict’. They were not considered by the Giryama speakers as headwords. Still, they were valuable objects of analysis, revealing additional features of the Giryama understanding of ‘conflict’ to those that were found in the analysis of k’ondo (conflict). As the analysis of fujo (trouble) and viha (war) demonstrated, fujo (trouble) is understood to affect kulelwana (understand each other) among the members of the community in a minor way, while viha (war) does not affect kulelwana (understand each other) at all. In this way the terms helped to highlight the state of being of the community as a prominent feature in defining the Giryama understanding of ‘conflict’ and its ending. The analysis of viha (war) additionally demonstrated that ‘conflict’ which is imposed by high-level bodies, is not considered to be part of the socio-emotional experience of the Giryama. The lack of a socio-emotional dimension not only discards viha (war) as a salient cultural concept, but also implies that kulelwana (understand each other) among the members of the community is not endangered. In fact, this explains also why viha (war) is the only ‘conflict’ concept which lacks an entailed understanding of its resolution.
Conclusion

The most comprehensive reflection of the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’ is *k’ondo* (conflict). As was noted above, it was selected as a key word for its salience in the more unconscious articulations of Giryama understandings of ‘conflict’. It is the type of ‘conflict’ in which the community has the most acute experience of lack of well-being. Not surprisingly, the arbitration of a ‘conflict’ case is conceived as a process which leads to the restoration of *kuelewana* (understand each other) of the community. In this way it is essentially different from the institutionalised Kenyan – and Western – practices of arbitration; the Giryama legal practice is not built on the opposition of the parties, where one is right and the other wrong. Another observation which was made in this context is that the mechanisms to end *k’ondo* (conflict) are much more explicitly articulated than those of *fujo* (trouble). This is another, logical, corollary of the acute sense of endangerment of the community’s well-being in case of *k’ondo* (conflict).

The practice of *kuthanya k’ondo* (end conflict) in fact articulates the concept of *kuelewana* (understand each other) in three different ways, as can be concluded from chapters three, four and six. First, it aims at the restoration of *kuelewana* (understand each other) between the parties in conflict, and by extension among the members of the community. Secondly, the arbitration procedure itself is characteristically one of *kuelewana* (understand each other). Recalling *kuelewana* (understand each other) in its applied form of decision-making (chapter three), we may conclude that arbitration proceeds according to the same principles. Giryama decision-making or arbitration is characteristically a process that involves all those present. It is furthermore assumed that the audience and the discussion leaders think along the same lines, and that the final decision reflects consensus.

Besides structuring the process of arbitration and defining its broad mission, *kuelewana* (understand each other) characterises the council of elders presiding over the arbitration process. They are considered *vilongozi* (leaders). As was noted above, the figure of *kilongozi* (leader) is closely associated with *kuelewana* (understand each other). What is more, *kilongozi* (leader) is modelled on it, thus reinforcing the ideological content of *kuelewana* (understand each other). In the semantic description of *kilongozi* (leader) this was reflected as: He/she makes all of us feel like parts of the same thing.

The close association of *kilongozi* (leader) with *kuthanya k’ondo* (end conflict) illustrates *kilongozi*’s role as an agent of peace. This fits in with the general conceptual framework
of *kilongozi* (leader). In the discussion (chapter five) Giryama informants were found to describe *kilongozi* (leader) largely in terms of a folk ideal, highlighting his/her personal and leadership qualities. He or she ideally personifies great Giryama leadership values like wisdom and vision, combined with interactive behaviour that manifests *kuelewana* (understand each other) values, such as compassion, respect and trust. Ethnic and social background, as well as political status were found to be of secondary importance. Similarly age was not appreciated as a salient feature, provided that *kilongozi* (leader) has the wisdom that comes with age. Formal schooling was demonstrated to be a recent addition to the list of *kilongozi* (leader) qualities, and certainly not generally salient. However, with the increasing complexity of (Giryama) society, no doubt this aspect of leadership will be gaining more prominence.

In fact, the Giryama mental picture of *kilongozi* (leader) was demonstrated to be highly consistent. From the smallest social unit, the family, to the largest, Giryamaland, he/she is basically the same person. As a result of this ‘holistic’ understanding of *kilongozi* (leader), the Giryama ‘leader’ was argued to be always physically and psychologically close to the people. Indeed, it is precisely because of this ‘closeness’ that we concluded that *kilongozi* (leader) is a persuasive mediator of the many dimensions of *kuelewana* (understand each other). Phrasing this conclusion in the framework of the Giryama *ideology* of ‘peace’, we could say that *kilongozi* (leader) is an essential element in promulgating the ideological content of *kuelewana* (understand each other) as the ‘normal’ structuring principle of society. Furthermore, in times of ‘conflict’ he/she is the key to ‘normalising’ society again.

How does *ts’i* (land) fit into the picture? It was argued in chapter five that *ts’i* (land) features both ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. Its nature can best be described as one of an ideological barometer measuring the (lack of) successfullness of people to interact on the basis of *kuelewana* (understand each other). In its capacity of a barometer *ts’i* (land) is soil and ground, but also Giryama society and the home of both living and dead Giryama. This is a single unified understanding, every instance of *ts’i* (land) including all these meaning dimensions. The integrated whole which the meaning dimensions of *ts’i* (land) make, is underscored by how the Giryama qualify their relationship with *ts’i* (land). Characteristically, they define their relationship as one of ‘taking care of it’ (*kuilenga*). The necessity of ‘caring for’ – an element of *kuelewana* (understand each other) - is enhanced by the Giryama understanding of *ts’i* (land) as a living and life-ensuring force. This was
Conclusion

demonstrated with the help of the analysis of idiomatic phrases and metaphors that are part of the discourse on *tsi* (land) across Giryamaland.

Summing up the relationship between the three *key words* of the Giryama *ideology* of ‘peace’, we may conclude that *kuelewana* (understand each other) is the most comprehensive Giryama statement on peaceful co-existence. As *kuelewana* (understand each other) features primarily as a principle of interactive behaviour, it is not surprising that it finds its most pronounced idealised expression in the person of *kilongozi* (leader). The relationship between *kuelewana* (understand each other) and *tsi* (land) is more complex. It demonstrates that *kuelewana* (understand each other) is not all there is to say about the Giryama *ideology* of ‘peace’. Comprising the notion of *kuelewana* (understand each other), *tsi* (land) additionally refers to the metaphysical dimension of ‘peace’, in the form of ancestors. This frames the Giryama thinking about *tsi* (land) in terms of ‘taking care’. Thus *tsi* (land) adds to the positive social impulse of *kuelewana* (understand each other) an existential motivation for the Giryama *ideology* of ‘peace’.

II.2 The cross-cultural context

The opening lines of this study suggested potential differences in socio-cultural experiences of words for ‘peace’ across different cultures on the basis of some loose observations. This suggestion signalled the kind of theoretical exploration that has been carried out in the rest of the book, which has a cross-cultural orientation. The Giryama case-study was not extended into a cross-cultural comparison, because of the precariousness of assuming the equivalence of the terms across cultures and languages. Still, English and Dutch dictionary explications of English and Dutch counterparts of some of the Giryama terms were presented in the analysis. They helped to refine our thinking about the Giryama concepts under discussion.

One is a case of a high degree of demonstrable equivalence. From the exploration of *kilongozi* (leader) emerged a Giryama understanding of it in terms of a folk-ideal. *Kilongozi* (leader) is an ideal personality. The psychologist Goethals (2005) indicates a similar understanding of Western people with respect to their leaders, saying: “… leaders must have particular qualities. They must be imposing ideal types…” (548). Thus there was scope for comparison between the Giryama and Western understandings of leadership, even more so because both are based on a folk ideal that relates to similar primeval
psychological imprints. A comparison could throw a different light on *kilongozi* (leader), I assumed. Besides demonstrating equivalence in many of its characteristic features, I think the quotations from Goethals’ (2005) article on psychological theories of Western leadership also bear out the status of leader as a *key word* in American and European societies. Thus salience equivalence can also be argued in the Giryama and Western understandings of a leader.

On the other hand, the precariousness of cross-cultural compatibility of cross-cultural counterparts was also demonstrated. As was argued before *viha* (war) is not a salient concept among the Giryama for lack of experiential dimensions, while in Western societies it is. The opposite goes for *kuelewana* (understand each other). It loses its experiential entailments in its translation into English as ‘agree’, as an exploration of the social contexts in which *kuelewana* (understand each other) operates, demonstrated.

This example of cross-cultural ‘mistranslation’ highlights the possible missing socio-cultural dimension of the original concept in its translation to a different language. The impact of socio-cultural loss in intercultural communication should not be underestimated. Not being able to bring across the salient elements that are implied in *kuelewana* (understand each other), the Giryama may cause confusion or worse in intercultural communication. In the context of intercultural peace-making the effect may be even detrimental to the peace process. What would happen if the Giryama were one of the parties in an intercultural peace process, and they would emphasise *kuelewana* (understand each other), while the other parties understood it in terms of ‘agreeing’? It could lead to feelings of frustration among the Giryama; it could even raise suspicion among the Giryama as to the good intentions of the other parties at the peace process. Alternatively, they would not believe that practical measures to peace-building would be in line with their understanding of it. Therefore, it is essential that indigenous terms are not only translated adequately, but also explored as potentially salient reflections of a *cultural ideology*. A greater awareness of salient cultural concepts can, I would argue, greatly enhance the success of intercultural peace-making.
Conclusion

Some final remarks

As I started out by saying in the introduction, this study falls within a much wider scholarly enterprise, which aims at improving on paradigms for the avoidance of conflict and the prevention and resolution of violent conflicts in the world. By taking a view from the inside and from bottom-up it has given the grass-roots pride of place in the discussion of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. This is consistent with the general practice in the domain of peace studies. Its novelty lies in presenting an analytical framework that elicits salient socio-cultural understandings within a social formation from grass-root discourse, and present them in a format that facilitates cross-cultural comparison. This framework surely has some practical potential. In fact, it invites a more applied kind of research, which outlines ways of implementing these cultural understandings in the practice of intercultural conflict avoidance, prevention and resolution.

By carefully analysing expressions from very diverse areas of everyday and public practices (varying from everyday conversations, life-stories, folk-tales, sayings, gestures, songs, public meetings, and arbitration cases to palm-wine drinking and funeral procedures), this study has demonstrated that we can draw a consistent and revealing picture of ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. It has also demonstrated that the framework of ideologies of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ can add a new and productive conceptual dimension to the generally practiced paradigms of intercultural conflict resolution.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>amani</td>
<td>(Kisw.) peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bomu</td>
<td>big, important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dheri</td>
<td>peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elewana</td>
<td>understand each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elimu</td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ ya mudzini</td>
<td>education of the homestead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__ ya sikuli</td>
<td>formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fingo</td>
<td>charm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fujo</td>
<td>trouble, quarrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwirana</td>
<td>unite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hanga</td>
<td>funeral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hurira</td>
<td>be quiet, be peaceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ishima</td>
<td>respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaya</td>
<td>sacred centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kidzidzi</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kilongozi</td>
<td>leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k'oma</td>
<td>spirit of an ancestor (and (home) memorial)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k'ondo</td>
<td>conflict, fight, war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lalo</td>
<td>location (administrative unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maono</td>
<td>vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbazi</td>
<td>compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moho</td>
<td>n. fire; adj. hot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

mudzi: homestead
muthumia: (title of address for an) elder
mutsai: sorcerer
mut'u: person
mwenye: owner

ndugu: relative
nguvu: strength, power
nonga ku-: destroy
nyumba: house

patana ku-: get along
p'eho: n. coolness, breeze; adj. cool

raha: happiness

shirikiana ku-: co-operate
sikizana ku-: understand each other

ts'i: land, ground, country

uaminifu: trustworthiness, integrity
ugumbao: courage
uhendzo: love
utsai: witchcraft

viha: war
vula: rain
Appendix I

Provisional list of Giryama *key words*

I. Words for peace and conflict

*Amani* - peace (Kiswahili and Kigiryama)
*Dheri* - peace
*Fujo* - trouble, quarrel
*Kilume-lume* - violence (lit. male-male)
*K’ondo* - conflict
*Shidha* - problem
*Thabu* - problem
*Viha* - war

II. Words that manifest peace and conflict

A. Socio-emotional:
   a. behavioral
      *iklii* - inborn intelligence
      *ishima* - respect, honour
      *kidhyomo* - way of speaking and doing
      *kuelewana* - understand each other
      *(kusikizana* - understand each other)*
      *mbazi* - compassion, sympathy
      *umwenga* - unity
   b. expressive
      *kuhurira* - be quiet
      *moho* - heat, fire
      *nguvu* - strength, power
      *p’eho* - coolness
      *raha* - happiness
      *utsungu* - bitterness, grief

B. Socio-spatial:
   *at’u a k’onze* - people from outside

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1 *Kusikizana* and *kuelewana* are synonyms, and generally interchangeable.
Appendix I

kaya - sacred centre
mudzi wehu - home
ts’i - land
yula - rain

C. Socio-existential:
elimu - education
kilongozi - leader
maenderero - progress
ndzala - famine
nyoha - abundance
Appendix II

Sayings that reflect kulelwana (understand each other) and values associated with it

1. Akuthuwaye nave muthuwe. The one who follows you, follow him also. (When somebody suggests that the two of you should do something, next time it is his turn to follow your suggestions).

2. Akwambiraye anakuhendza. He who tells you loves you. (advocating openness of communication).

3. Alume nyika alume mudzini. Men in the wilderness, men at home. (a division of tasks that one should adhere to).

4. Ase ndugu k’ahendza. The one who does not have a brother/sister, does not like it. (It is important to observe the rules that govern the bonds of relatives).

5. Mwinyi si utumwa, ela ni kuishimiana. Mwinyi is not slavery, but it means respecting one another. (Mwinyi (a historical figure, probably a slave-master) is a term of respect). A similar saying is: Bwana, bwana, si utumwa, ni kushimiana. Sir, sir, is not slavery, but it means respecting one another.

6. Chala kimwenga k’akibanda tsaha. One finger does not break a louse. (You need other people to achieve something).


8. Chuye moyowe. Chuye (a local bird) is heart. (When somebody remarks that every person depends upon himself, this saying can be used as a reply, emphasising mutual dependency).

9. Dzakusinga mongoni ela lagani marigiza mwenye. I have rubbed the back for you (a habitual procedure), but on the chest finish yourself. (Although it is an accepted reality that people depend on others, it does not mean that people need not take any responsibility themselves).

10. Figa mwenga k’arisinyanya nyungu. One cooking stone cannot balance the cooking pot. (advocating co-operation).

11. Baha k’arihoza mukongo. “Sorry”, does not cure the sick person. (it is not enough to express one’s sympathy, one should show it in one’s behaviour).

12. Changiracho pishini ndo kipimwacho. The one which enters the measuring cup is the one which is measured. (This saying emphasises to be content with what one receives).
Appendix II

13. *Fisi ra kwenu k’arikubanda musoza.* The hyena of your place cannot break your bones. (However bad a person may be, he is a member of the community. Therefore he will not harm you).

14. *Funga pore k’akubanda musoza.* When tied slowly the bones will not break. (When things are difficult but solved slowly, they will be solved peacefully).

15. *Garigo hamwenga k’agaricha kudundana.* The ones which are together cannot help knocking one another (referring to oxen pulling a plough together). (There may be some irritations between friends or relatives, but this is natural).

16. *Gogo ra mudzini k’arinyerenwa.* The log in the village is not to be defecated upon (the log is used by people to sit on). (Do not speak badly about the people in your village).

17. *Haraka-haraka ramuhendya k’uro akizhala ana masio na matso.* Haste-haste made a dog give birth to blind young ones. (emphasising that problems should be handled carefully).

18. *Hanho athumia k’ahagwa kimba.* Where there are old men, a carcass (referring to a dead elephant leaning against a tree) cannot fall. (There may be a problem, but the old men will solve it).

19. *Hinde-hinde ni kilagane.* Let’s go, let’s go is an agreement. (There is a good understanding between two people).

20. *Kubo nyango ni kiikana.* “*Kubo nyango*” (the characteristic cry and response of a type of Girryama bird) is agreeing. (There is a good understanding between two people, agreement with the other is a natural expectation)

21. *Handa mweng a k’aridzaza k’adzama.* One bunch of coconuts (for palm wine) cannot fill the gourd. (One has to carry something through to the end)

22. *Karibu ni ada.* Welcome is a custom.

23. *Kigir yama ni kimwenga ugoro (ela kila mudzi una chakwe).* Kigir yama is one in greeting (but every village has its own customs). (One should appreciate other customs).

24. *Kinji kuriwa, kichache kuriwa.* Much food to be eaten, little food to be eaten. (Encouragement to share, when you feel there is little food to be shared).

25. *Kulungu wa kaya k’abandinwa uha.* The gazelle of the village, you cannot break your bow for it. (You cannot harm a weaker person in your community).
26. *Mafuha wa dzana k’agaviniwa rero.* The oil that was smeared yesterday, you cannot dance with it today. (A good deed cannot be expected to last forever).

27. *Maneno madzo gausa ndzovu mundani.* Good words removed the elephant from the farm. (Major problems can be averted by speaking in the appropriate register).

28. *Manina ga madzach’a kuring’ala ni kufuruka.* The dew of the morning, when daylight comes it will dry. (e.g. When you have been helping other people for a long time, and now your resources have dwindled, you may use this saying to explain why you are no longer supporting them).

29. *Mbeyu k’ailashwa mut’u.* Seeds cannot be refused to anybody. (If somebody asks for something little, but essential, one has to help him).

30. *Mimi nkigwirwe kigulu, we ugwire mukono.* If I hold the leg, you hold the arm. (encouragement to cooperation).

31. *Moyo mudzo k’auna mutsere wa p’anya.* A good heart does not have the remains of rats. (If you have a good heart you will give everything).

32. *Mugiryama azola maomu ga lugaro k’azola.* A Giryama removes the excrements, but he cannot remove diarrhoea. (A friend can help you with some problems, but the most difficult problems can only be solved with the help of relatives).

33. *Muhenda vidzo arifwa ndhath’a ya mongo.* Someone who does good is paid on the back by a walking stick. (Goodness doesn’t pay. This is a reality, yet goodness is a Giryama value).

34. *Mukala mbere nde mukala nyuma.* The one who goes ahead is the one who will be behind. (one person should not always be the leader).

35. *Mukia wa rero ni mushaha wa machero.* The one who is poor today, is the one who will be rich tomorrow. (Encouragement to treat poor and rich with the same respect).

36. *Mulachu k’adzinyola (na akidzinyola k’aera, na akiera suthi adzitsindze).* No one will shave himself because he is clever, or else he will cut himself. (advocating co-operation to those who think that they can do everything by themselves).

37. *Mukongo k’ahakirwa angwe.* A sick person cannot be given a responsibility. (encouraging people to help others who are weak).

38. *Muyu uvumbwa ni mitsatsa.* The baobab tree is backed by bush. (A leader needs people to be a leader).
Appendix II

39. *Muzigo wa ndze utsukulwa ni wa ndani.* The outside luggage is carried by the inside one. (One person cannot do everything, others should support him in his work).

40. *Mwana wa mwandziyo ni wako.* The child of somebody else is yours. (The child is taken care of by the entire community).

41. *Mwane-mwane ragonya nyoka.* Staying alone finished the snake. (highlighting the unnaturalness of staying by oneself).

42. *Ng’ondzi yangizwa kisimani ni mwanawe.* The sheep fell into the well, because of her child. (to similar extremes motherly love can go).

43. *Nguluwe airi mana mizungu.* Two pigs have plans. (Two know more than one).

44. *Mut’u na nduguye magazha ts’erere.* A person with his brother divide the ts’erere (a very small local fruit). (This is what real brotherhood is about).

45. *Tembe na tembe ni mukahe.* A seed of grain and a seed of grain make a bread. (If many people contribute, something substantial can be achieved).

46. *Ukifitsa ukongo undasemwa ni kiriro.* When you hide a sickness, crying will report you. (If there is a problem, tell other people about it and try to solve it, otherwise it may be too late to solve it).

47. *Ugwa ni kuremera mwandziwe.* The tree that falls leans against another. (When somebody has a problem, others should help him).

48. *Ukigwinwa mud’ath’a nave ts’etsera.* If someone holds the walking stick for you, then try to walk. (When somebody helps you, you cannot just lie back. You must make an effort too).

49. *Ukinya k’uk’u kwa mwandziro marondo ga lola kwako.* When you eat a chicken at your friend’s place, the legs look towards your place. (A return favour is expected).

50. *Hendza akuhendzaye.* Love (him/her) who loves you. (Encouragement of reciprocity).

51. *Umwenga ni nguvu.* Unity is strength.

52. *Umwenga ni hina ra ifho.* Unity is a bundle of sticks. (A variety of characters makes a community strong).

53. *Uvoru k’auriwa.* Greetings are not eaten. (Encouragement to greet others).
Appendix III

Natural Semantic Meta-language list of semantic primes, and an NSM description of the Polish understanding of ojczyzna (homeland)

The Natural Semantic Meta-language (NSM), developed by Anna Wierzbicka and Cliff Goddard, is characterised by a universal vocabulary and meaning grammar.¹ Below is given the set of semantic primes, which Wierzbicka and Goddard argue, are used in any language in the world. The table has been copied from the NSM website, which is a helpful resource for information on NSM: http://www.une.edu.au/arts/LCL/disciplines/linguistics/nsmpage.htm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: Proposed semantic primes (2002)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Substantives:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Determiners:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Quantifiers:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluators:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptors:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intensifier:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental predicates:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speech:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions, events, movement, contact:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existence and possession:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life and death:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Space:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Logical” concepts:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Augmentor:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taxonomy, partonomy:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarity:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ On the NSM website (http://www.une.edu.au/arts/LCL/disciplines/linguistics/nsmpage.htm) Anna Wierzbicka admits, that the NSM primes are not yet capable of explicating all lexical meanings. She notes: “It is or aspires to be a formal semantic metalanguage based on natural language. It is not the case, however, that all lexical meanings can be resolved directly or immediately to the level of semantic primes.” This remark lies in with this study’s argument against using only NSM vocabulary for semantic descriptions.
Appendix III

The following explication of the Polish understanding of *ojczyzna* (homeland) illustrates what an NSM explication can look like (Wierzbicka 1997: 190):

*ojczyzna*

(a) a country
(b) I was born in this country
(c) I am like a part of this country
(d) I can’t be like a part of any other country
(e) this country is like part of me
(f) when I think of this country, I feel something good
(g) if I didn’t, this would be very bad
(h) I think something like this when I think about this country:
(i) this country is not like any other country
(j) this country is like a person
(k) many bad things happened to this country
(l) I don’t want bad things to happen to this country
(m) this country did many good things for me
(n) like a mother does good things for her children
(o) I want to do good things for this country
(p) if I feel something bad because of this I don’t want not to do these things because of this
(q) many other people think the same when they think about this country
(r) these people feel something good when they think about this country
(s) these people are like one thing
(t) I am like part of this thing
(u) these people say things in the same way
(v) these people do many things in the same way
(w) these people think about many things in the same way
(x) these people often feel in the same way
(y) when I think about these people, I feel something good
(z) these people are like part of this country
(ž) before this time, for a long time many other people were like part of this country.
(ž) I am like a part of all these people
(ž) in many ways, I am like these people
Appendix IV

Recorded illustrations of Giryama ways of dealing with conflict provoking situations

1. Interview

Interviewer: George Kazungu (K)
Interviewee: Mr. Gunga (G)
Place of interview: Mr. Gunga’s homestead near Kinarani (see map II)
Date: June 1999.

The general question of the interview was: “What is your view on the present-day state of the Giryama?”. From this interview a piece of text has been taken, which highlights Mr. Gunga’s view on how the Giryama deal with more powerful outsiders, encroaching on Giryama society. The text is an explanation of the place-name, Manamuinga.

K: Vikara k’ahuzithuwiwa enye, hedu ni sirikali ndiyo inafuhenda husizithuwe?
K: Mhu.
G: K’udzaisikira sita ya Mwanamwinga.
K: Mhu.
G: Unamanya ino Kilifi were ndiyo ni ijengwe haryahu?
K: Mhu.
G: Mana haryahu hatha uchenda ukizunguluka undakwenda ukaone kuna vikuta zha ziryahu nyumba marizhokala manaanza kuaka. Elakini vikara musaga dzaya wakala ni
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(aside:) Manake ni nini? - Wanawafukuza! Muende kabisa.
Kwa kukala Muzungu k’amanaya “manamuinga”-ni noni, makiisabu “manamuinga, manamuinga”-hatha marihoshindwa ni kujenga. Ndlo unasikira Kilifi ichenda jengwa kuryahu. Ambaho hatha kuku nako were kudzaimarika.
Ndlo ikikwacha ni dzina vikara muhaka machero ni Mwanamwinga, iriyokudza kwa kit’u dza kicho. Unaona. Vikara Agiryama enye were K’amenz kuhokwa ts’o zao. Manaisabu ni kwao. Vinyahu zha kukala were ni maenderero ganadza, k’amagamanyi. Makitegemea uryahu musaga dzaya.

Translation:

K: Now, are we not following our own ways or does the government make us to not follow them?
G: Now, that is the government’s way (these days)….now the customary way of life does not coincide with the way of the government. Now, when it comes to government, I come back to the question that I asked before. Because they are powerful, you cannot compete against them. They come and demand to have a piece of land that was supposedly ours. Maybe that is the place where the ancestral shrine is. You don’t need to surrender it to them. I have a right to defend that land, but if they invade the land, and you are not strong enough to oppose them, what can you do? Still, many things will go wrong. Because when I leave this place, you don’t know what I do before I go. I can go and change some things back there, which will cause problems. As see you up there…that corner which turns to Mwanamwinga.
K: Hmmm
G: You have heard of Mwanamwinga Bus stage.
K: Hmm
G: Do you know that Kilifi was supposed to be built there?
K: Hmm.
G: Because there, when you go round (the corner), you will see some small walls of the house they had begun building. However, there was strong witchcraft from a woman.
Now that kind of witchcraft was so strong, that whenever Europeans set out to build, they found things were different. Sometimes they would be chased by bees, at other times they would find little sheep and very many other wonders. So, when they asked the locals: “What is the matter?”; they were told: “Manamuinga”. (Aside:) What is its meaning? - They are chasing you! You should go for good.

Just because the European[s] do(es] not know the meaning of Manamuinga, they kept wondering “manamuinga, manamuinga”, until they gave up building. That is why you see that Kilifi (the District Headquarters) was built where it is now. Otherwise this place would have been developed by now.

That is why the name will be Mwanamwinga even in future, which came about in that way. The Giryma themselves did not want to be deprived of their land. They reckon it is theirs. The fact that that was development was not known to them. They just depended on witchcraft.

2. Folk tale

The storyteller is Charo wa Katana, sub-chief of Tsangats’ini sub-location. He was telling the story at a storytelling session, which was dominated by lady storytellers (see picture: Storytellers at Tsangats’ini). The audience appreciated his contribution very much (see picture: “Some members of the audience at Tsangats’ini”).

Place of venue: the grounds next to sub-chief’s office
Time: April 2000.
Audience: approximately 30 youngsters and a few older people.

*Kuk’u na Mwee* (the hen and the eagle) is a folk tale which explains why chickens scratch the ground. At another level, the story demonstrates how friendship deteriorates between two friends, if there is not a mutual commitment to the values that adhere to friendship. The result is a harsh fate for the one who makes fuido (trouble).
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K'UK’U NA MWEE

All: Dekheha.
CK: Kwakalwa
All: Kukikalwa.
CK: Kukikalwa. Hathia siku dza inya kukihendeka mwee na k’uk’u. At’u aa were ni asena sana aa. Kila kit’u mandichotegeza were manakitengeza hamwenga. Yyuu mwee were ana kadzembe, kariko were kanakodishwa ni at’u. Were mut’u akidza kodisha were anamboza p’esa, mwee anahala ziyahu p’esa ziyahu anagula unga kurisa anae.
Siku mwenga k’uk’u akidza muvo ya yyuu mwee karyahu kadzembe. Mwee akiamba: “Hala ko kadzembe, lakini ukigonya kuhumira niujira haraka, kwa kukala kako ndiko niriko nafigira anangu. Kakodishwe gonya vivi anangu niagulira wari. Kwa vizo kahumire gonya ukarehe kabila k’akadzangwe kuchelewa.”
HK: Mhu.
Achenda hatha anafika haho, akiamba: “Aa musenangu, samba we kisha nakwamba ukigonya kuhumira unujire? Zhaandzadze vino?”
Akiamba: “Be hatha nakaika hat’u, be vivi dzasahau be hatha thariza, nimate.”
Akbumburusa kila hat’u, ela k’akaonere. Akimwamba: “Mussenangu be kuryahu kadude be sikaona. Nip’a mwidha, nikamale be nikikapata ndamup’a mwanangu adze nako.”
Akiuya ye mwee. H’aya K’uk’u akikamala k’aakaonere. Be zhakukala ende akamwambire kukala k’akaonere ye k’endere. Hatha kunacha na madzachia akidza kaheri ye mwee.
Akiamba: “H’aya be dzana na dziloni nalomera na k’udzire nako. Vidze?
Akienderera kukanola. Akimwamba: “Be vivi kare uya, ela nikikapata be ndakurehera.”
Akkamala k’akaonere. Akidza ye mwee.

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Akiamba: “Musenangu be ela vino ni vizho jeri vino. Mino nakwaviza ut’u wa kukala wagonya ukanirehera, we ukilika nawe. H’aya lolana vino…kadzangamika, undaninhendadze? Vivi unaona vino, kala unahendza nikuriche. Be mino tsenzi kadzembe hatha ni kasha kwani nahendza ko kangu unikohala, unipe kako. Ela kala k’undanip’a ko kadzembe be naona hundakosana viii vii sana.”
K’uk’u akiamba: “H’aya be kala ni kasha nikakugulira nawe k’ukaenzi; gonya nami ko kakwako sikaona. Be hatha ndakuhendadze?”
Mwee akiamba: “Be kala k’undanip’a ko kadzembe kangu, be ndarya mwanao mumwenga. Aa anao nahendza mumwenga.”
K’uk’u vikumukulira akiamba: “Uwe enda ela wakathi wowosi ndakurehera ko kawembe.”
Ndo, saa nyingine unadima kuona k’uk’u anafukulafukula hat’u vikara viryahu nikukala anamala karyahu kadzembe karikong’amika.
Ngano yangu idzagomera haho.

Translation:

HEN AND EAGLE

CK: My name is Charo Katana. I am going to narrate a story to you.
   *Chondoni.* (A way of drawing the attention of the audience for a story telling)
All: *Dekeha* (Word for accepting to pay the attention called for)
CK: Once upon a time.
All: Once upon a time.
CK: Once upon a time there lived a hen and an eagle. These were great friends.
Everything they did, they did together. The eagle had a razor, which was hired out to
people. When a person came to hire the razor, he would pay money. The eagle used
that money for buying maize flour to feed her children. One day, the hen went to ask for
the razor. The eagle said, “Take the razor, but return it immediately after you have
finished with it, because it is the one that I hire out in order to take care of my children.
It is hired out so that I can buy maize-porridge (sic). So use it and bring it, and do not
let it be late.”
HK: Hmm.
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CK: The hen took the razor with her. She used it. When she had used it, she forgot to return it..... She put it in a place and then she forgot. The days passed and passed, but then the eagle said to herself, “Oh! Will my friend return the razor? Let me find out”.

When she reached there, she remarked, “Say, my friend, I told you to return my razor after you had finished with it. What happened?” The hen replied, “I kept it somewhere, but I cannot find it now. Just wait, I will look for it.” The hen searched hard, but it could not be found. She said: “My friend, I cannot find that thing. Give me time, so that I can get it. Then I will give it to my child to bring to you.” The eagle went home. The hen searched, but she could not find it. Worse still, she did not send any message to the eagle.

The following morning, the eagle came again and said: “I waited the whole evening yesterday, but you did not come with it. What about (my blade)?” The hen replied: “I did not see it. Just give me more time. I will bring it as soon as I find it.” She was given time. She kept on looking. She told her (the eagle): Now go back as before, but as soon as I have it, I will bring it to you.” She looked for it, and did not see it. The eagle came and said, “My friend, is this fair? I helped you, so that you could return it to me, but instead you kept it. See now, when you need it I leave it to you. I don’t even want a new one, because I need my razor which you have, you give that to me. But if you do not give me the razor, I think we will have a bitter disagreement. The hen replied: “If you need a new one, I can buy it for you, but you say you do not want it. As I cannot see that one of yours, I do not know what I will do for you.” The eagle said, “If you will not give me my razor, then I will eat your child. I demand one of your children!” This upset the hen and she said, “You go, but as soon as I find it, I will send it to you. Some day you will see it”

That is why you can see at times, the hen scratching the ground now in search of the razor which got lost. That is the end of my story.

3. Dance

*Chechomo* is a dance accompanied by singing, and performed at joyful occasions. Its usual context is a wedding party, or the entertainment of guests. It can also be
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performed at the funeral of a musician. It is performed by women and/or men, and characteristically features a soloist and a chorus. The instruments that are used, are a rattle (ndonga) and an empty jerry-can.

This particular performance took place during the afternoon, at the end of a rather disappointing meeting between members of the Village Development Committee (VDC) of Mitsedzini (map II, near Dulikiza), the Kilifi District Development Committee (KDDP) and the Mitsedzini Women’s Group. I had joined the meeting as an interested outsider. My presence had been announced before.

The meeting was organised in preparation for a workshop to promote girls’ education in the area. The Women’s group, however, showed up two hours late. Since they were considered to be major stakeholders in the workshop, their absence was considered ‘bad behaviour’ by those present. When they eventually turned up, the atmosphere was spoilt. The women did not apologise, nor did they say anything to explain their behaviour. Only at the end of the day, shortly before departure, we were informed of the reason of their absence through Chechemeko.

The text of the song subtly accuses the pastor, Kenga wa Iha, of misleading the women about this meeting. Apparently he resented the behaviour of one of the women, and therefore demanded their presence at his church while he knew the women were expected to attend the meeting for the Girls’ Education Workshop. In the song a Girayma saying expresses what the women think of the pastor: Ukiinga wa vilalu, nawe unatinya nguo (If you chase a madman, you should wear clothes). The women indicate that they cannot ignore the demands made by the pastor, but at the same time they are aware that they should stick to their own ideas. This poses a dilemma, for the pastor also helps them at times. They resolve the dilemma with another Girayma saying, which is also used in the song: Ukimala cha muvinguni suthi ukizamire. (If you want something from under the bed, you must bend). This implies that the women accept some hardships in achieving their goal, which is a better future for their children.

Part I
Soloist: Martha wa Baya na iye Jumwa wa Kenga, anaache a kikundi, nao mapata thabu e, thabu yani ya kusema muku't'ano. Muku't'ano wa gafula ache nafende
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hukahokere Azungu Mitsedzini. Hukifika haho anaache kuhashola. Ukiinga wa vilalu nawe unatinya nguo, huna thabu ache fuunde kikundi.
All: Repeat what soloist sings.

Soloist: *Ukiinga wa vilalu nawe unatinya nguo.*
All: *Ukimala cha muvunguni suthi ukizamire, kala muna thabu ache muunde kikundi.*

Part 2
Soloist: *Kenga wa Iha hunamusifu kamare be kanisa ya kwakwe k'amumanya ina nguvu yo kanisa ya mifume kuvoya. Hunavoya Mulungu akaihupa be naswi hugwage siku ya Jumata. Hunamalwa k'alamu, hamwenga kithabu na samiti* *za kidheri?? ache muunde kikunde husaidhiye aho ho.*
All: Repeat what soloist sings.

Soloist: *Ache muunde kikundi musaidhiye aho ho.*
All: Repeat after soloist.

Soloist: *Charlo yu sekendari, be Kazungu a kode, e Mwenda a chanane.*
All: *Ache muunde kikundi msaidhiye aho ho.*

Translation:

Part 1
Soloist: Martha Baya and Jumwa, ladies of the women group, faced problems while telling people about a meeting... an abrupt meeting... let’s go to Mitsedzini and see white people for ourselves, but on reaching there, we women were treated unfairly. When you chase a mad person, you should put on some clothes and when you want something from under the bed, you must bend. Therefore, as women we have problems, so let us form a group.
All repeat after soloist.
Soloist: When you chase a mad person, you should put on some clothes.
All: When you want something from under the bed, you must bend. Therefore, as
women we have problems, so let us form a group.

Part 2
Soloist: Let us give praise to Kenga Iha, as his Church, the Apostolic Church where we
go to pray is strong. We pray to God so that when He gives us, we can give out on
Monday( to our children). We are asked for a pen, together with a book and money for
githeri.1 Women form a group so that we can help children.

ALL: Repeat song after soloist.

Chorus: Women form a group so that we can help children.
ALL: Women form a group so that we can help children.

Soloist: Charo is in Secondary School, Kazungu is in Nursery School, Mwenda is in
Standard Eight.
ALL: Women form a group, so that we can help children

4. Discussion

During a story-telling session at Mtsenko (map II) my field-assistant at the time,
Anderson Yeri (Y), incited members from the audience to volunteer a second story. His
way of speaking was generally experienced as unpleasant. In spite of this, people tried
to be co-operative, until the last speaker puts an end to this unpleasant situation by
indicating with the help of a Giryama saying that Mr. Yeri and the others should stop
pushing them.
Place of venue: a public ground behind a road-side shop in Mtsenko.
Audience: sixteen adults.
Time: February 1999

1 githeri is originally a Kikuyu dish (a mixture of maize and beans) given to children at lunch time in
schools in the poorer areas of Kenya. Sometimes the parents are asked to give a little money to buy things
like cooking oil, etc.
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M: *K'audzagoma bule wo ukanda.*
Y: *K'audzagoma bule.*
KK: *Ni ukanda hiwo wo undagoma?*
All: *(Laughter)*
Y: *Hakuna hadithi huko (Kisw) he, don’t be shy!*
KK: *Tshani ugome wo ukanda.*
Man1: *Tshani hadisi mwenga ko.*
Y: *Zile hadithi za kule (Kisw)*
Man1: *Mudzakwenda nao wanguwangu. vino....*
KM: *Ngeza uwe.*
KK: *Mhu.*
KM: *Mumwenga na angeze hatha kala ni futifuti.*
Man1: *Endani, endani. H'aya enda kare mulamu namanya unazo uwe.*
P: *Ye ngoi be kuwangwa imbe be ulagwe hatha vinaricha kamare. Hatha bahwa ukale wo ut'u ukale kuwangwinwe imba: haya be vinanga'ala*
Y: *Mhu.*

Translation:

Y: Another one. Two each. We need that tape there to get finished.
M: The tape is not finished yet.
K: It is not yet finished.
KK: Which belt is to be finished?2
All: *(Laughter)*
Y: Are there no stories there? Don’t be shy!
KK: Narrate the stories so that the tape can get finished.
Man1: Give one story there.
Y: The tales from there (the past).
Man 1: You have gone so fast with them, and now?
KM: You just add.
KK: Hmm.

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2 This person misinterprets the word *ukanda*, which literally means ‘belt’.
KM: Let one person give us more, even if it is a short one.
Man 1: Go on. Go on now my brother in law. I know you have them.
P: If the soloist is told to sing before he is killed, he will not be able to do so.
   It is better if one does without being told. That way things can happen.
Y: Hmm.
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Summary

Cultural Ideologies of Peace and Conflict: A Socio-Cognitive Study of Giryama Discourse (Kenya)

This study is inspired by the idea that ‘ordinary’ people, and especially their understandings and beliefs, are an essential – yet relatively neglected – factor in intercultural conflict resolution. Within the wider context of social studies of conflict and its attempted resolution this is a cognitive study of their understandings (i.e. the ‘cultural understandings’) of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’. The overall framework is that of anthropological linguistics, with its characteristic view of language as linguistic practice.

An analytical model is developed and applied to a case study of the Giryama of Kenya. This model facilitates accounting for an insider view as well as a cross-cultural comparison. It can be used for studying ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ in other communities, and renders outcomes that can be compared. The research domain is everyday and public discourse. Being generally shared, everyday and public discourse is an appropriate domain for the exploration of ‘cultural understandings’.

The book consists of four parts. Part I contains a description of the theoretical background and the analytical model (chapter one). Additionally, it includes an introduction to Giryama society (chapter two). Giryama society features in the case study, which is presented in parts II and III. Part II presents an analysis of three Giryama terms which reflect core elements of the Giryama ideology of ‘peace’. Part III focuses on the analysis of three Giryama terms of ‘conflict’ to illuminate the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’. Part IV is the conclusion.

Part I (chapter one) focuses on the concept of ‘cultural understandings’. A description is given of its characteristic elements, which are adopted from theories in the field of the cognitive
sciences. A fundamental characteristic of ‘cultural understandings’ is that they are shaped in human interaction.

After the cognitive framework of ‘cultural understandings’ has been outlined, two other concepts are introduced, which are fundamental to this study’s approach. These concepts, cultural ideology and cultural discourse, are discussed in their particular relationship to ‘cultural understandings’.

Cultural discourse – i.e. everyday and public discourse – is the domain in which ‘cultural understandings’ of ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ are studied. Discourse is typically language-in-action. As a result, meanings that are produced in discourse are more than the ‘direct’ (referential) meanings of words. They are complex entities, which include non-verbal elements as well as references to a socio-cultural context. This particular perspective on language facilitates a study of ‘cultural understandings’ as a social phenomenon through linguistic practice.

Cultural ideology is the overarching ideational framework from which ‘cultural understandings’ are assumed to derive their forcefulness. Translated into socio-cultural practice, this implies that ideological charging determines the degree in which ideas, which are included in ‘cultural understandings’, are experienced as ‘normal’ (and hence normative). Viewing ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ from this angle, we find that cultural discourse contains focal points of ideology. These are words that manifest themselves in different social contexts and which organise one or more socio-cultural domains. In fact, one can make a list of so-called cultural key words (the term and method of description are borrowed from the (cultural) semanticist Anna Wierzbicka). One important criterion in the assessment of a key word is that it is a common word – following the cognitive scientist Eleanor Rosch, it is assumed that common words are re-presentations of most generally shared knowledge.

The analysis aims at gaining insight into the meanings of these key words. After all, they include ideological components. The outcome of the analysis is a description of their meanings. This is done in simple language, which is easy to understand. The reason for using simple language is that it facilitates cross-cultural accessibility, which in its turn facilitates cross-cultural comparison.
In Part II, three Giryama key words of ‘peace’ are discussed: *kuelewana* (understand each other) (chapter three), *kilongozi* (leader) (chapter four), and *ts’i* (land) (chapter five). *Kuelewana* (understand each other) highlights ‘peace’ as a social (ideal) phenomenon; *kilongozi* (leader) is the mediator of ‘peace’. *Ts’i* (land) reflects ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ as existential entities; ‘peace’ and ‘conflict’ imply the continued existence of Giryama society and its disintegration respectively.

In Part III the Giryama ideology of ‘conflict’ is highlighted through three ‘conflict’ terms. In fact, *k’ondo* (conflict) (chapter six) is the only Giryama ‘conflict’ key word. There are two other words that are related to *k’ondo* (conflict), which are *fujo* (trouble) and *viha* (war). *K’ondo* (conflict) is the type of conflict in which the community has the most acute experience of lack of well-being. This lack of well-being is essentially understood in terms of emotional and social deterioration – the social ideal of *kuelewana* (understand each other) being under pressure – rather than in terms of physical or economic decline.

The ending of *k’ondo* (conflict) and *fujo* (trouble) appears to be a prominent entailed understanding of the concepts of conflict. This is not the case with *viha* (war). In fact, *viha* (war) is not considered part of the socio-emotional experience of the Giryama. *Viha’s* lack of salience in the Giryama context highlights a potential cross-cultural misinterpretation – seemingly equivalent words, such as *viha* (war) and ‘war’, are attributed very different degrees of salience. English (and Dutch) lexical counterparts of other Giryama key words show a similar picture.

Part IV, the conclusion, reiterates the central arguments, and reflects on the positive impact that cultural ideologies can make in situations of (potential) intercultural conflict. Besides their ‘representative’ quality i.e. their being (almost) generally shared among the members of a community, it is argued that they could be used to understand the cultural context of conflict and thereby facilitate their resolution. In that context the socio-cultural discourse framework is a pre-eminent instrument. This study has depicted the conceptual outlines of the potential of cultural ideologies as a paradigm in intercultural conflict resolution. A more applied kind of research could highlight the practical dimensions of that potential.
Samenvatting

Culturele ideologieën van vrede en conflict: een socio-cognitieve studie van Giryama
Discours (Kenia)


In deze studie wordt een analytisch model ontwikkeld en toegepast in een case study van de Giryama. Dat model maakt het mogelijk ‘cultureel begrip’ en zijn ideologische kenmerken vanuit het perspectief van de samenleving te bestuderen. Tegelijkertijd geeft het de mogelijkheid culturele begrippen en interpretaties tussen culturen te vergelijken: hetzelfde analytische instrumentarium is toepasbaar bij de bestudering van ‘cultureel begrip’ van ‘vrede’ en ‘conflict’ in andere gemeenschappen, en levert uitkomsten die met elkaar vergeleken kunnen worden. Het domein van onderzoek is het alledaagse en publieke discours, dat vanwege zijn algemeen gedeelde karakter bij uitstek geschikt is om ‘cultureel begrip’ te onderzoeken.

Het boek bestaat uit vier delen.
Deel I geeft een beschrijving van de theoretische achtergrond en een uiteenzetting van het analytisch model (hoofdstuk 1). Daarnaast bevat het een introductie van de Giryama samenleving (hoofdstuk 2). De Giryama samenleving staat centraal in de case study, die gepresenteerd wordt in de delen I en II.
Deel II bespreekt drie Giryama termen die uiting geven aan de Giryama ideologie van ‘vrede’.
Deel III bevat een analyse van drie Giryama termen die inzicht geven in de Giryama ideologie van ‘conflict’.
Deel IV is de conclusie.
In deel I hebben we in de eerste plaats met ‘cultureel begrip’ te maken. Er wordt een beschrijving gegeven van kenmerkende elementen, die afgeleid zijn van theorieën op het gebied van de cognitieve wetenschappen (hoofdstuk 1). Centraal in die beschrijving is de aanname dat ‘cultureel begrip’ gevormd wordt in de menselijke interactie. Naast het uiteenzetten van het cognitieve kader van ‘cultureel begrip’ worden twee andere concepten geïntroduceerd, die bepalend zijn voor de benadering die in deze studie is gekozen. Deze concepten, culturele ideologie en cultureel discours, worden met name beschreven in hun relatie tot ‘cultureel begrip’.


De culturele ideologie vormt het ideeën raamwerk waaraan ‘cultureel begrip’ verondersteld wordt zijn kracht te ontlenen. Vertaald naar de socio-culturele praktijk betekent dit, dat de ideologische lading de mate bepaalt, waarin ideeën die besloten liggen in ‘cultureel begrip’ als ‘normaal’ (en daarmee normatief) ervaren worden. Als we op deze wijze naar ‘vrede’ en ‘conflict’ kijken, dan zien we dat er binnen het culturele discours een aantal ideologische brandpunten zijn. Dit zijn woorden die zich manifesteren in verschillende sociale contexten, en één of meer socio-culturele domeinen organiseren. Zo kan er een lijst van zgn. culturele sleutelwoorden samengesteld worden (de term en de methode van beschrijving zijn overgenomen uit het werk van de (cultureel) semanticus Anna Wierzbicka). Een belangrijk selectiecriterium voor het vaststellen van een sleutelwoord is dat het woord ‘gewoon’ is – van ‘gewone’ woorden wordt aangenomen, in navolging van de cognitieve wetenschapper Eleanor Rosch, dat ze re-presentaties zijn van de meest algemene kennis.

De betekenis van een sleutelwoord is het doel van de analyse. Immers daarin zijn ideologische componenten besloten. De uitkomst van de analyse is een beschrijving van de betekenis. Deze wordt gekenmerkt door eenvoudige taal, die gemakkelijk te begrijpen is. Het
eenvoudige taalgebruik draagt bij aan de cross-culturele toegankelijkheid, en daarmee aan de mogelijkheid tot cross-culturele vergelijkingen.

In deel II worden drie Giryama sleutelwoorden van 'vrede' besproken: *kuelewana* (elkaar begrijpen) (hoofdstuk 3), *kilongozi* (leider) (hoofdstuk 4) en *tsi* (land) (hoofdstuk 5).
*Kuelewana* (elkaar begrijpen) belicht 'vrede' als sociaal (ideaal) fenomeen; *kilongozi* (leider) is de bemiddelaar van 'vrede'. *Tsi* (land) weerspiegelt 'vrede' en 'conflict' als existentiële grootheden, waarbij 'vrede' en 'conflict' gelijk staan aan respectievelijk het voortbestaan en de desintegratie van de Giryama samenleving.

In deel III komt de Giryama ideologie van 'conflict' centraal te staan. *Kondo* (conflict) (hoofdstuk 6) is in feite het enige Giryama 'conflict' sleutelwoord. Er zijn twee andere woorden die gerelateerd zijn aan *kondo* (conflict) en die ook in de analyse zijn opgenomen, te weten *fujo* (onrust) en *viha* (oorlog) (hoofdstuk 7). *Kondo* (conflict) is het type conflict waarbij de gemeenschap het meest acute gebrek aan weizijn ervaart. In het Giryama begrip is dat in de eerste plaats emotionele en sociale schade – het sociale ideaal van *kuelewana* (elkaar begrijpen) staat onder druk – en niet fysieke of economische neergang.

Als we denken aan *kondo* (conflict) en *fujo* (onrust) dan is de beëindiging ervan bij de Giryama zondermeer verbonden met de ervaring van 'conflict'. Dit is niet het geval met *viha* (oorlog). De Giryama beschouwen *viha* (oorlog) niet als deel van hun socio-emotionele context. Deze bevinding illustreert een veel algemener cross-cultureel fenomeen, namelijk dat schijnbaar overeenkomstige woorden, zoals *viha*, 'oorlog' en *war*, van verschillende importantie blijken te zijn. Andere Nederlandse en Engelse lexicaal tegenhangers van Giryama sleutelwoorden laten eenzelfde beeld zien.

Deel IV is de conclusie. Deze bevat een herhaling van de belangrijkste argumenten, en een beschouwing over de positieve bijdrage van culturele ideologieën in situaties van (potentieel) intercultureel conflict. Behalve dat culturele ideologieën representatief zijn - zij worden (bijna) algemeen gedeeld door de leden van een bepaalde gemeenschap – kunnen zij bijdragen tot een beter begrip van de culturele context van een conflict en daarmee bijdragen aan de oplossing ervan. In die context is het raamwerk van het socio-culturele discours een uiterst geschikt instrument. Deze studie heeft de conceptuele dimensies geschetst van de bijdrage van culturele ideologieën als Paradigma van interculturele conflict oplossing. Een meer toegepaste studie kan de praktische dimensies van die bijdrage belichten.