

*Whose knowledge?
Africa & the tension of two worlds*

Milton Keynes – June 2005



Barbara Heinzen

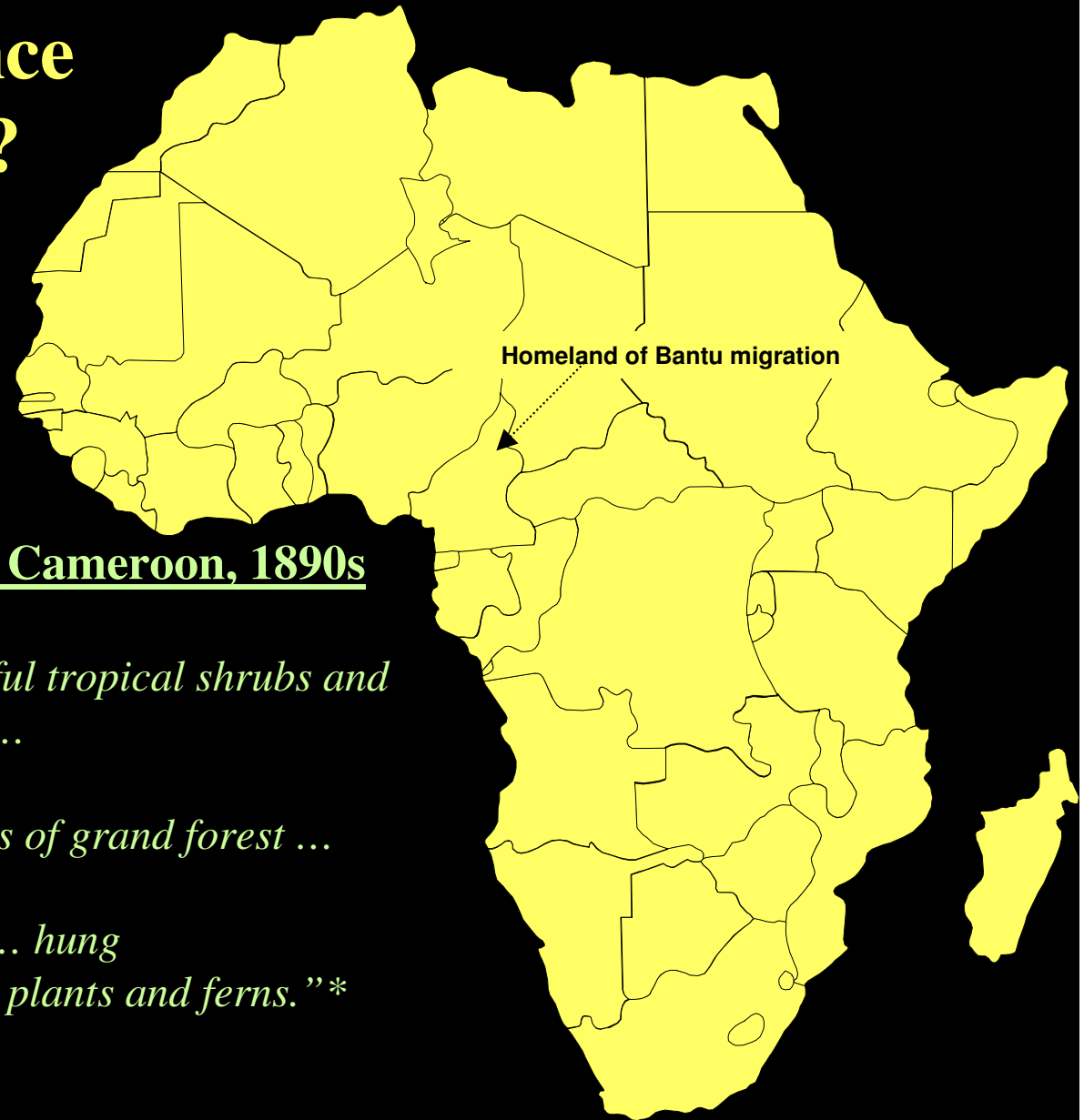


- **The puzzle**
 - **Development**
 - **Tension of two worlds**
-
- **A new necessity & old English lessons**
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- **What can we learn from Africans?**
 - **What can Africans learn from us?**

The Puzzle



What created the biological abundance of Africa in 1900?



Mary Kingsley on Mt Cameroon, 1890s

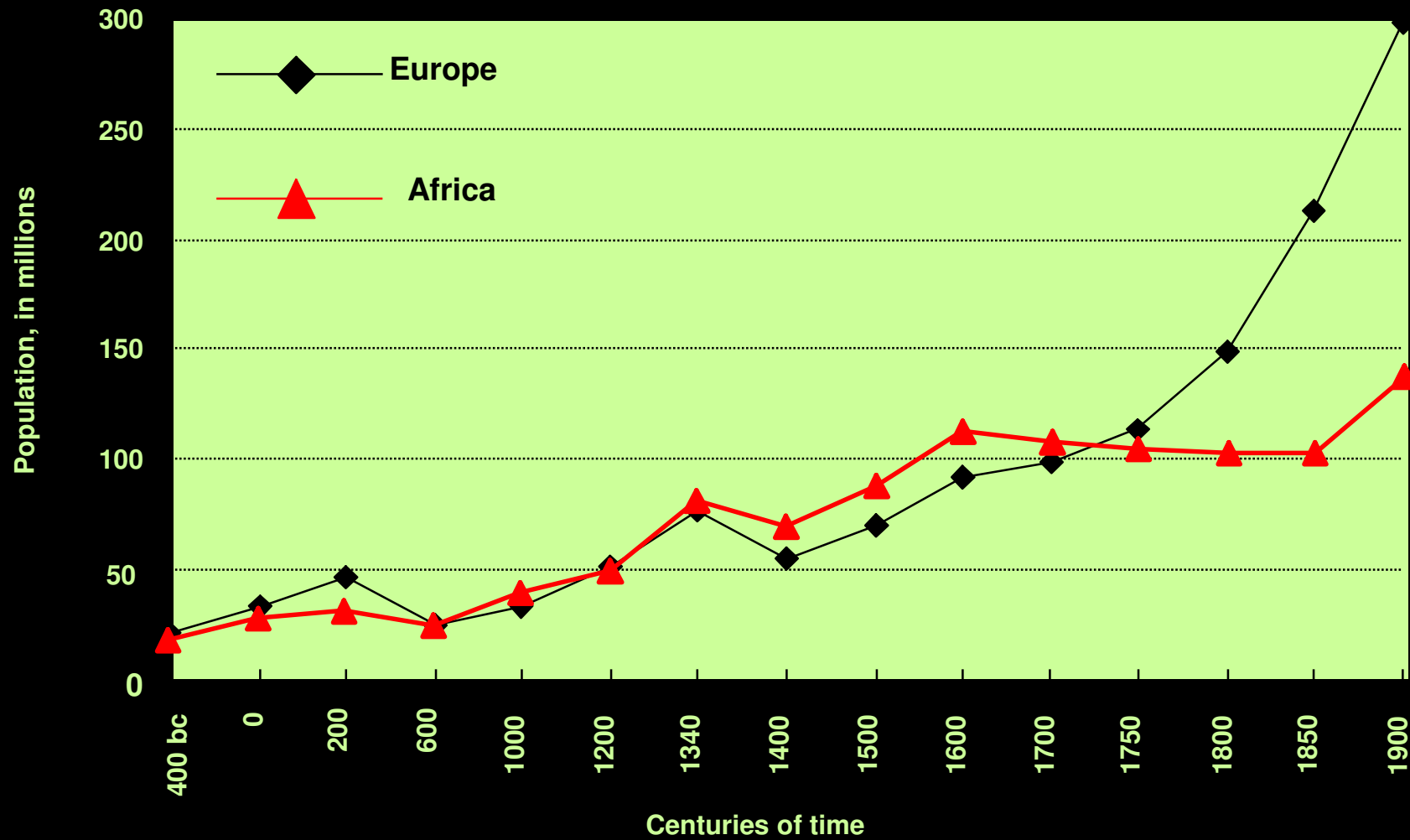
“... banks of varied beautiful tropical shrubs and ferns ...

100-200 feet high, walls of grand forest ...

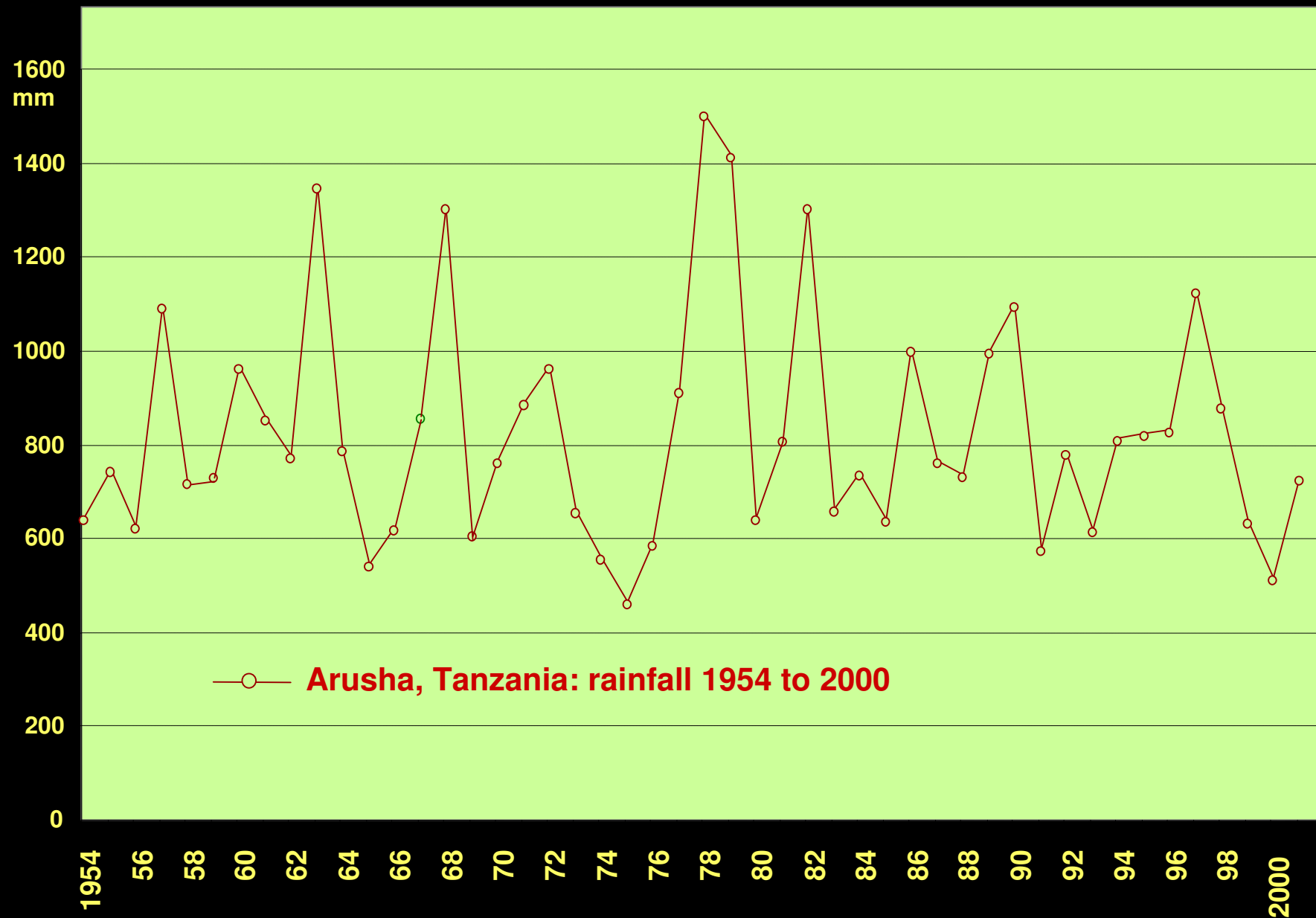
*tree-stems ... hung
with flowering, climbing plants and ferns.”**

**Travels in West Africa, Macmillan 1897;
see also McIntosh, Susan Keech, editor. Beyond Chiefdoms: Pathways to Complexity in Africa. (Cambridge University Press, 1999).*

Evolutions interrupted by slavery or disease?



An adaptation to erratic rainfall & weak soils?



Source: Manyara Estates, Arusha, Tanzania

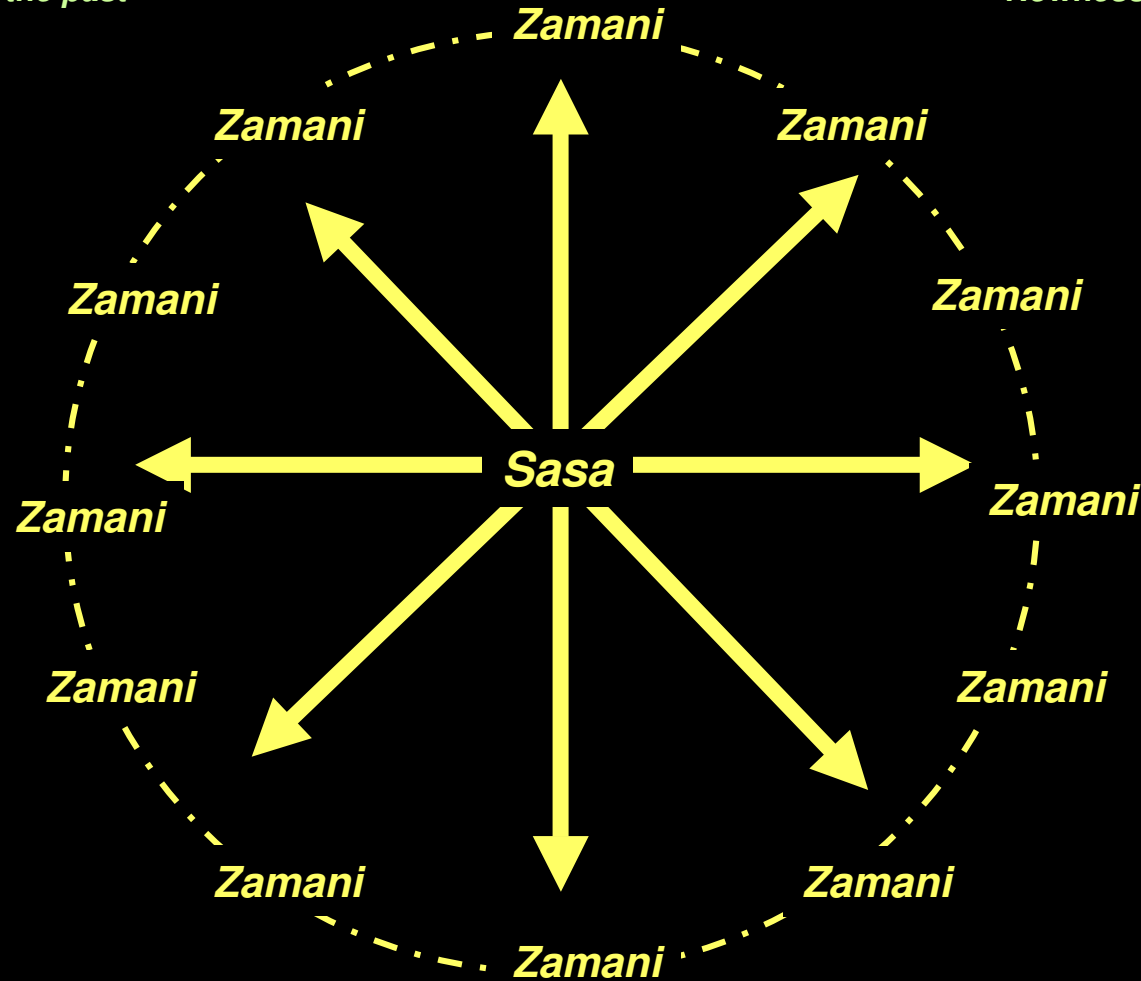
A integrated concept of time?

Zamani

Deep time, macro-time, the past

Sasa

Nowness, conscious living



Sasa feeds or disappears into Zamani.

Zamani overlaps with Sasa ...

the two are not separable.

Source: John S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*, 2nd edition. Heinemann, 1989, p. 22, using Kiswahili words

Communal attitudes to rights in land?

“...the universe has been lent by God to humanity through the ancestors and the living leaders....”



***“What constitutes misuse of the universe?
This question can be answered in one word: greed.”***

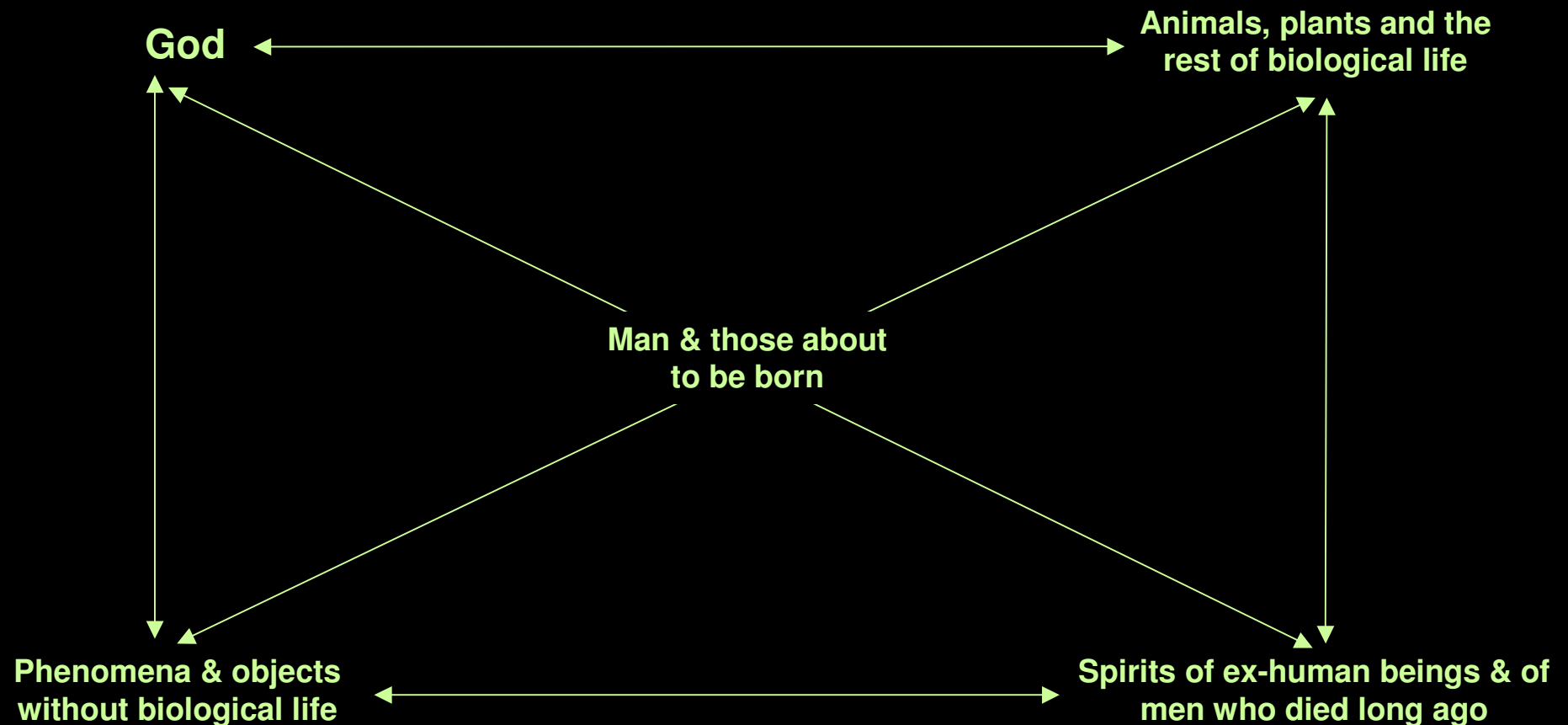
*Mosaic rights: Women & food crops; Men & tree crops; Herders & grazing after harvest
Gov't & mineral rights; Those who dug the well, decide who uses the water*

Photo: Fields near Sipi Falls, Mt. Elgon, Uganda, 2001; mosaic rights from various places;

**Laurenti Magesa, African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life, 1998, p. 62*

A spiritual acceptance of sacred relationships?

“To destroy or remove one of these categories is to destroy the whole existence ...”

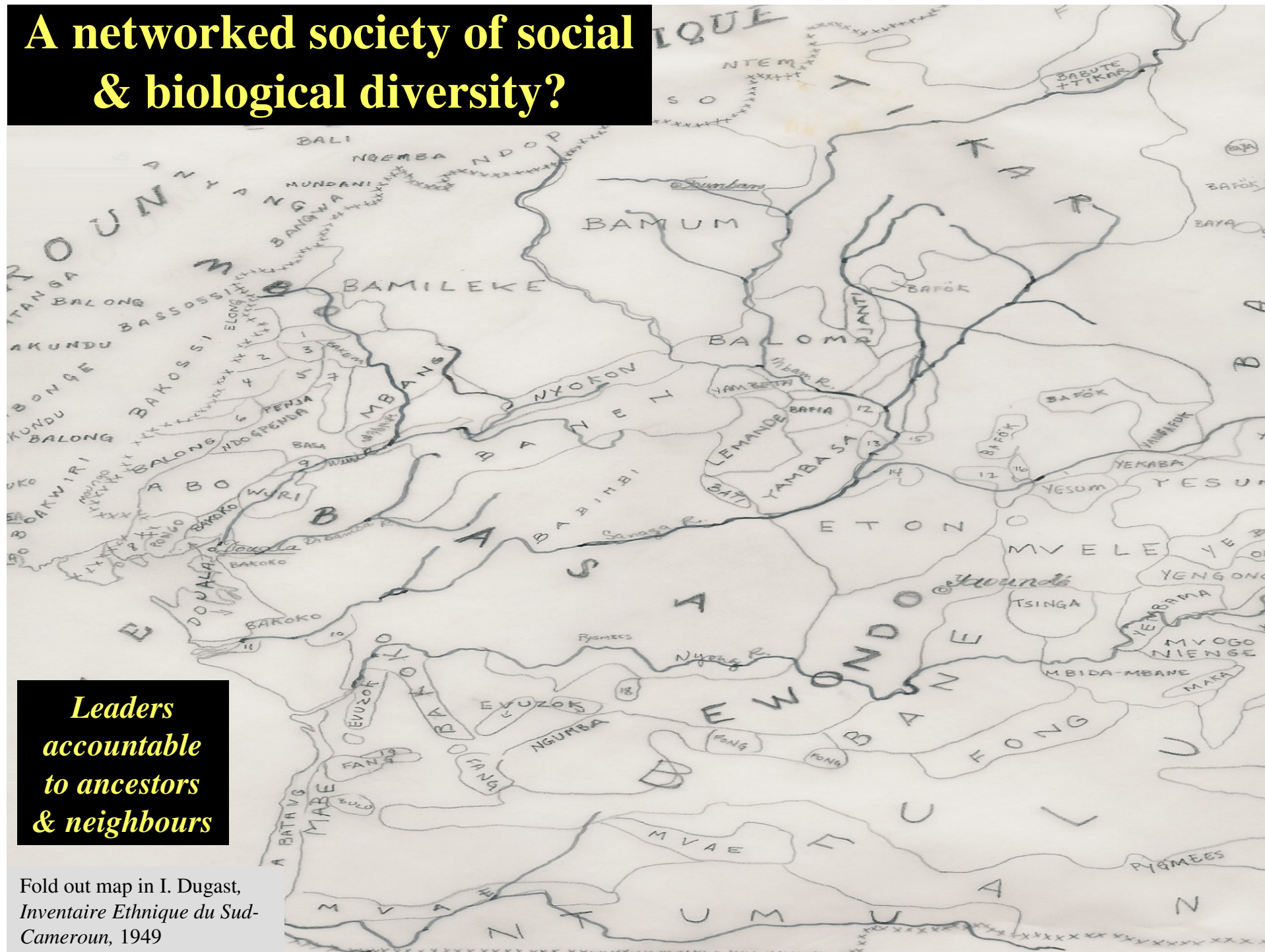


A political voice for the natural world?



Based on interviews with Paul Akiba Hatia, Mtwara, Tanzania, 2001 (Makua clam)

A networked society of social & biological diversity?



*Leaders
accountable
to ancestors
& neighbours*

Fold out map in I. Dugast,
*Inventaire Ethnique du Sud-
Cameroun*, 1949

Was it ever like this?

If so, what might have survived?

For 19th century Europeans, Africa was

An 'invisible' society

An oral society

Multiple languages

Multiple ecologies

Multiple political forms

Not using the abundance of their natural world

BACKWARD & PRIMITIVE

But what if this abundance was created by Africans?

An 'invisible' society – living lightly on the land

An oral society - living in 3 dimensions

multiple languages reflecting

multiple ecologies which created

multiple political forms

Increasing the abundance of all life

LIVING ECOLOGICALLY

Development



The failed ambitions of donors



Abandoned Japanese fishing school, Pangani River Jan '02

Corruption & its roots



Ebyaffe

(Return of our things, our land)

Twatera embundu ...

*(We fought with the gun, now we
deserve to eat.)*

Twariire ...

*(We are harvesting where we have
sown.)*

Nfunira wa?

(What's in it for me?)

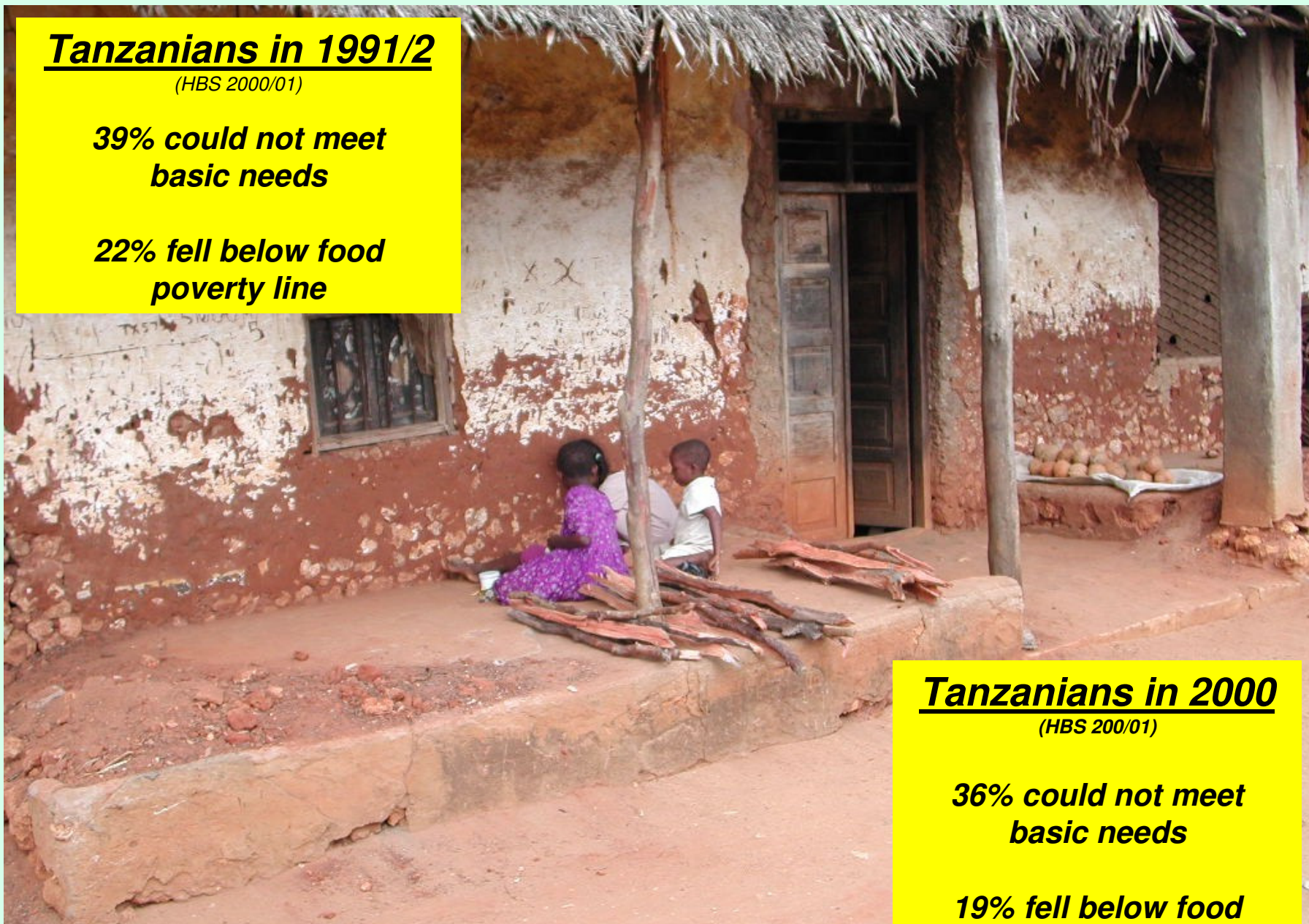
Technical know-who

Tanzanians in 1991/2

(HBS 2000/01)

**39% could not meet
basic needs**

**22% fell below food
poverty line**



Tanzanians in 2000

(HBS 200/01)

**36% could not meet
basic needs**

**19% fell below food
poverty line**

Children minding the shop, Pangani, Jan 2002

Slide taken from the Tanzanian scenarios project: Picture of Now, August 2002

The traumas of those orphaned by war & AIDS



Exploited for labour or sex



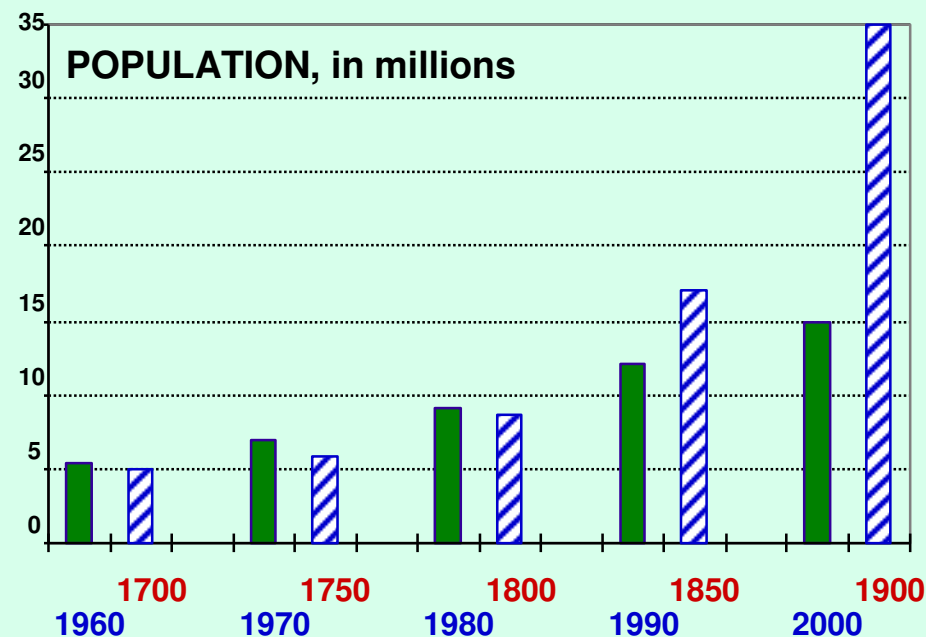
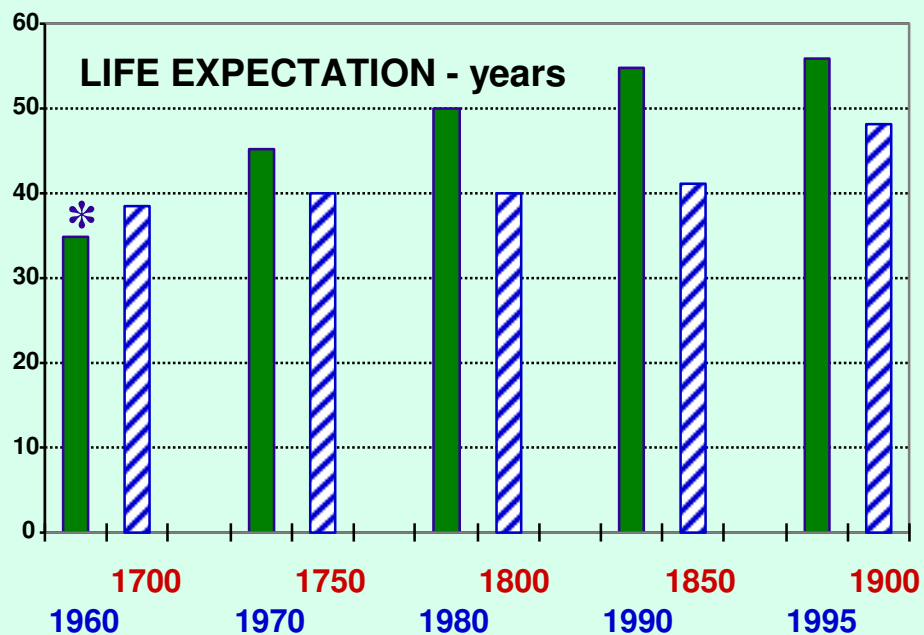
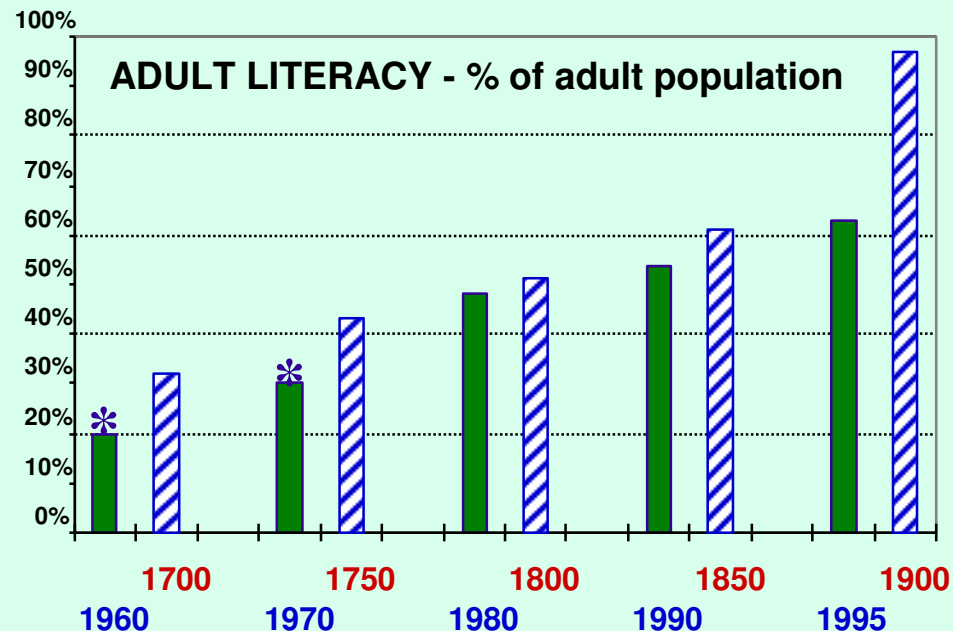
Lack of parental guidance



Less optimistic about the future

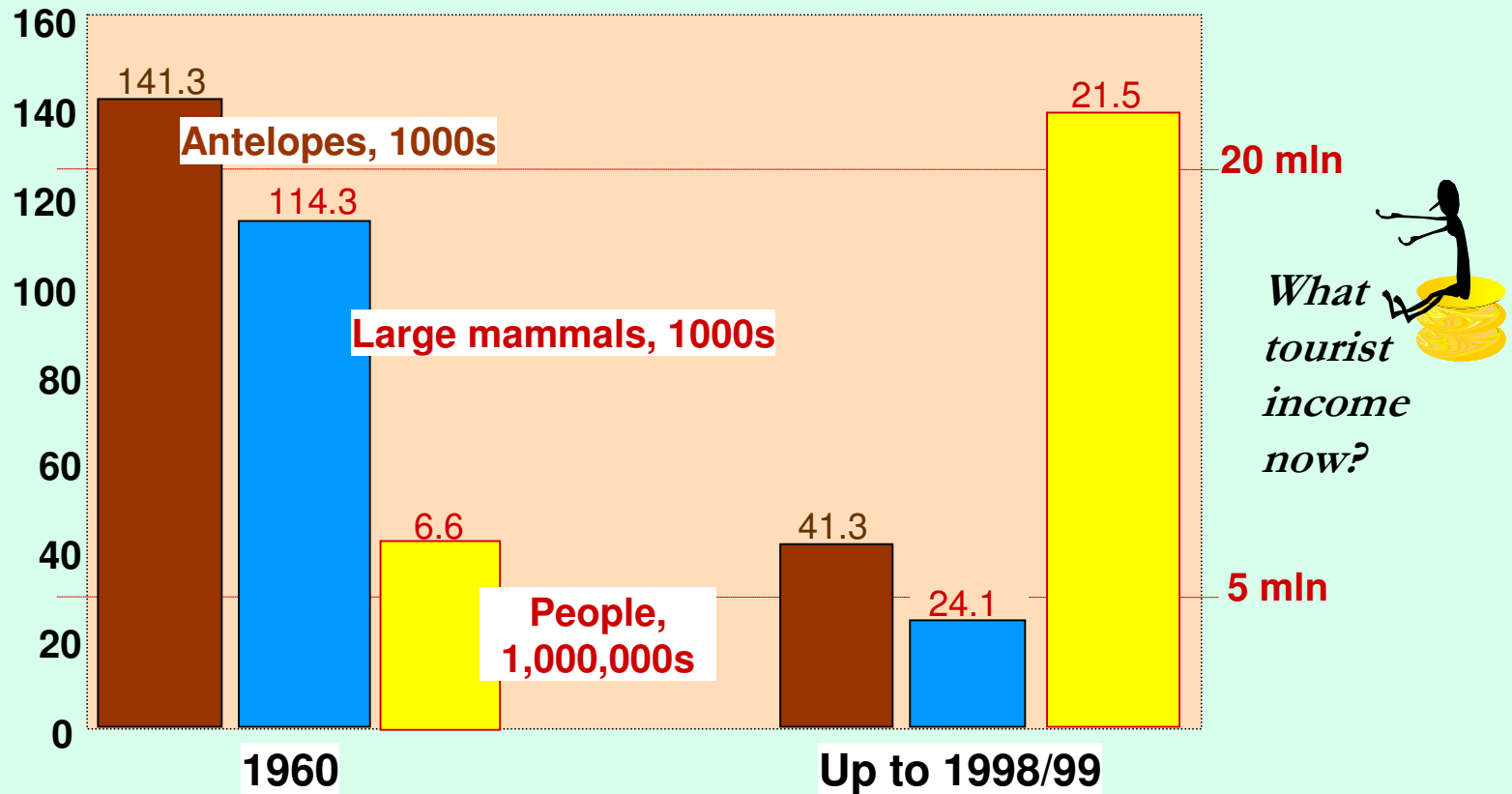
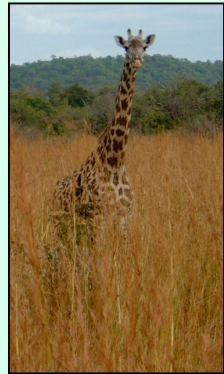
Development's success

- Cameroon 1960-1995/2000
- ▨ England 1700-1900



*Cameroon's literacy for 1960 & 1970, plus life expectancy for 1960 are my own 'best guesses'; no data are available.

Uganda: people & economy drive out the wild



Stable

- Waterbuck
- Uganda kob
- Hippopotamus
- Buffalo
- Elephant (but low)
- Rothschild's giraffe, (but low)

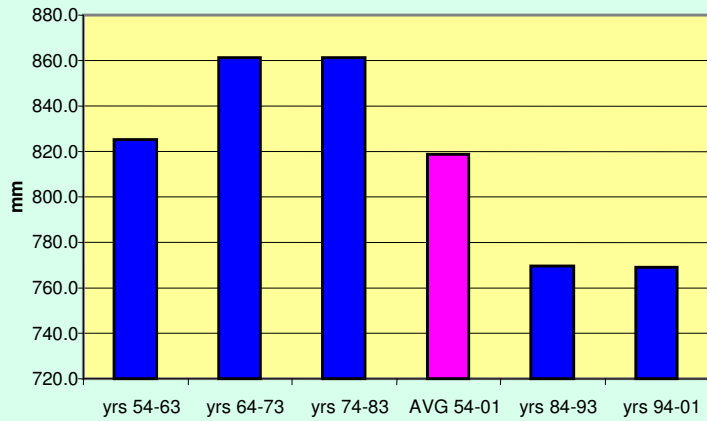
Decreasing or precarious*

- Hartebeest
- Topi
- Impala
- Eland
- Bights gazelle*

Very rare or extinct**

- Roan
- Oryx**
- Berby's Eland**
- Black rhino**
- White rhino**

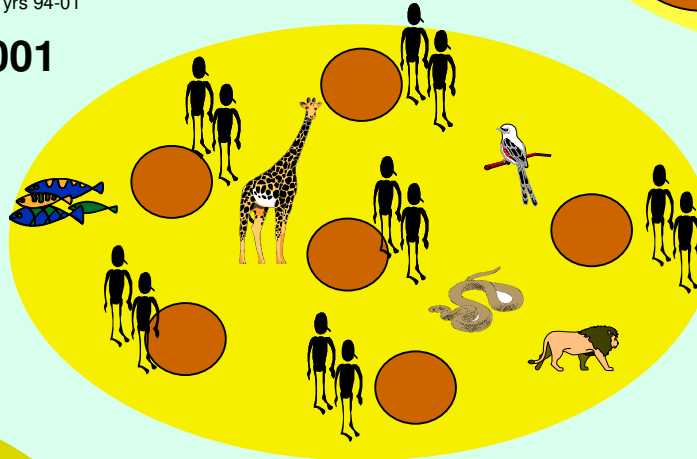
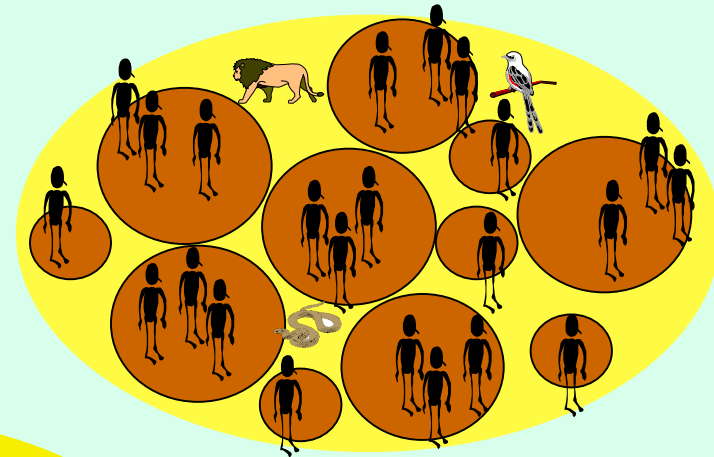
Tanzania: More people need food as climate changes



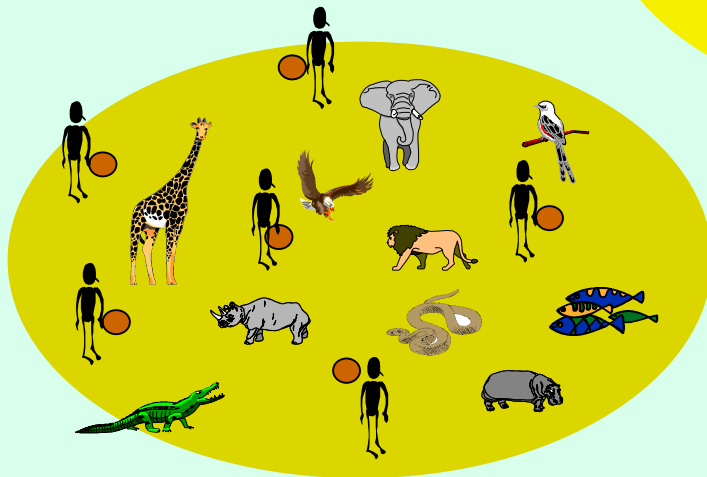
Rainfall in Arusha 1954-2001

10-year averages of total annual rainfall
Data from Manyara Estates, Ltd.

*Will wild
Tanzania
survive?*



*Can we intensify
agriculture when
the climate is
changing?*

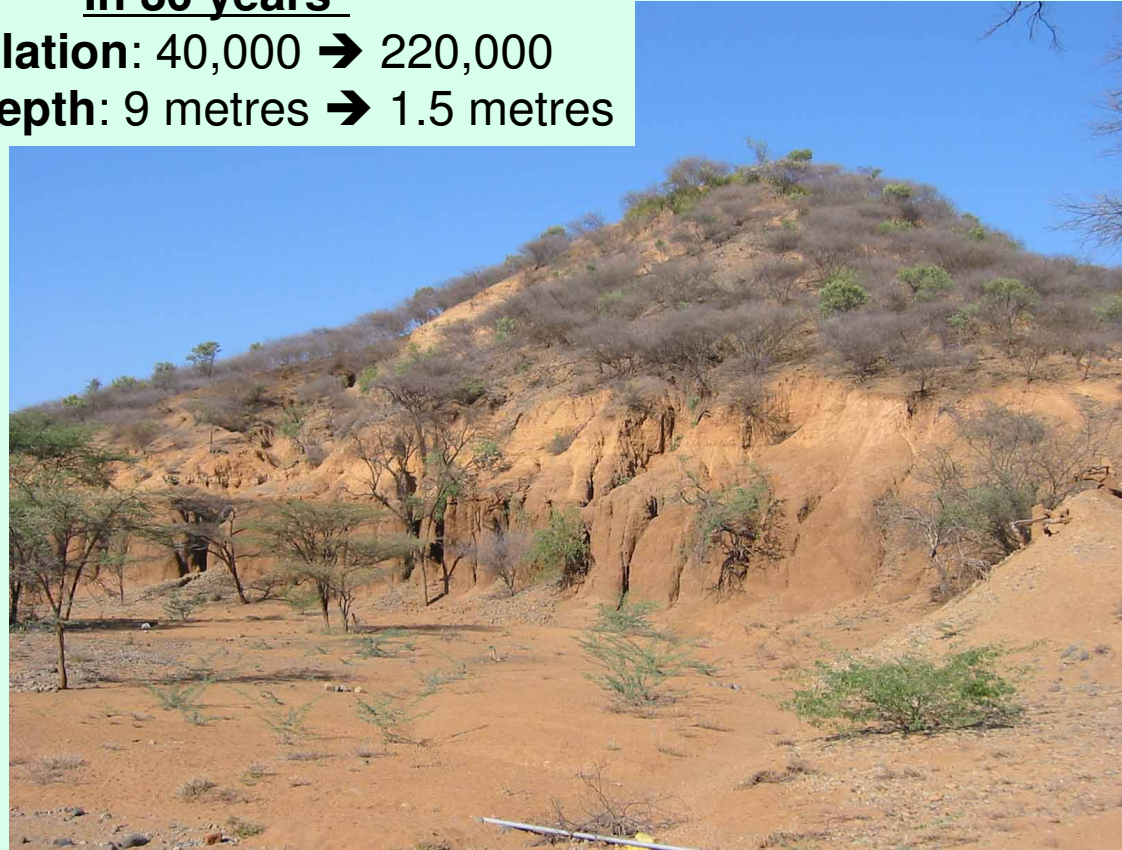
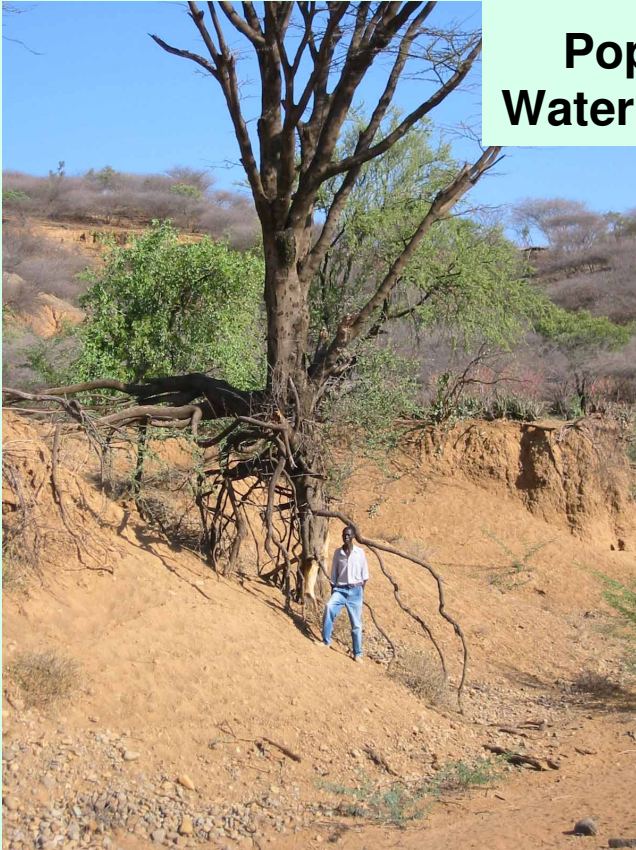


*“We used to have 6 months
of rainfall each year. Now
we have only three.”
Newala district, Aug ‘02*

Kenya: Population pressure & erosion at Lake Baringo

In 30 years*

Population: 40,000 → 220,000
Water depth: 9 metres → 1.5 metres



**Two rainy seasons a year, but large variations
in rainfall from one year to another.**

Rapid urbanisation



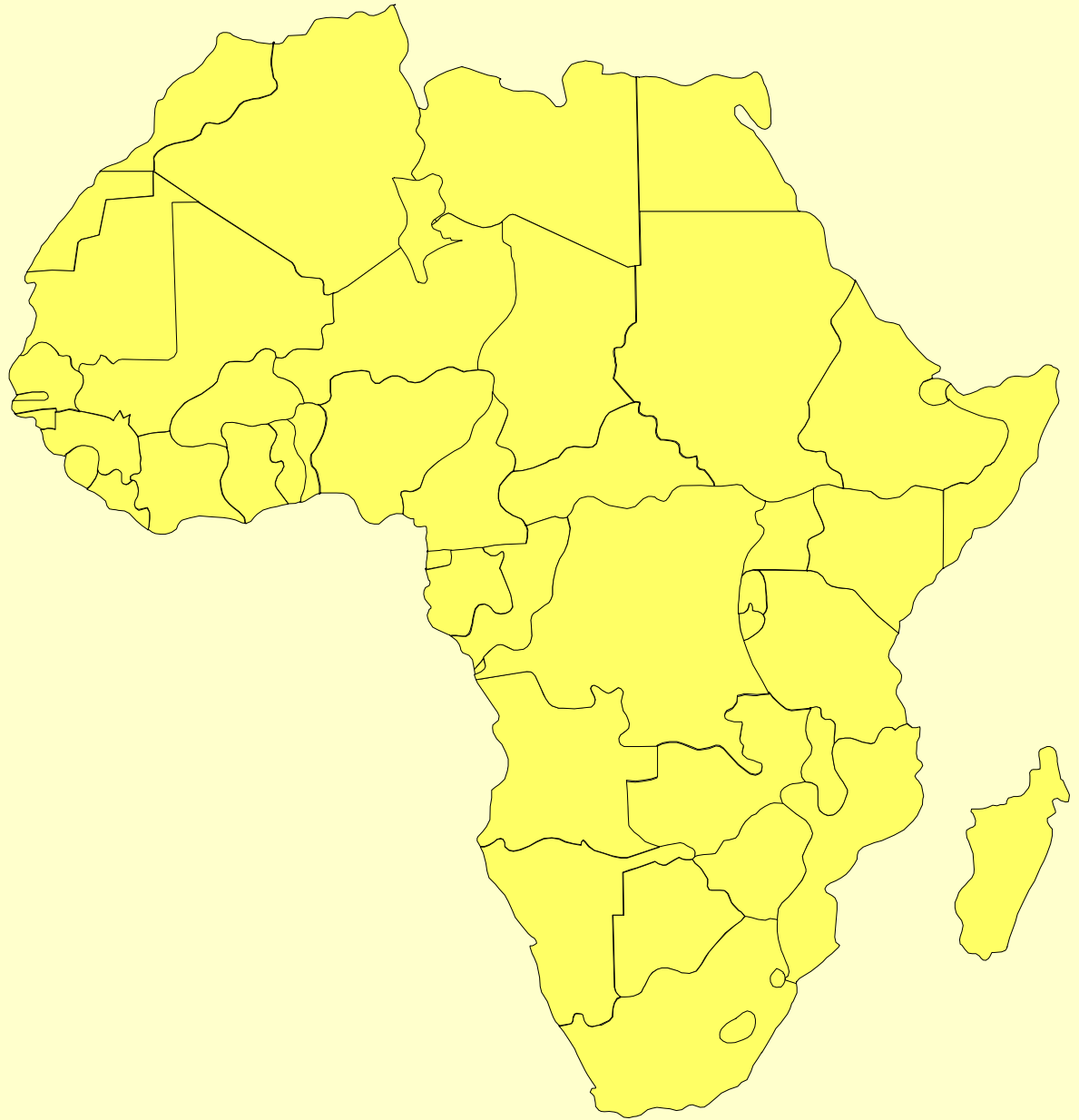
10 years ago, this land was wholly agricultural. Now it is a mix of town and cultivation.



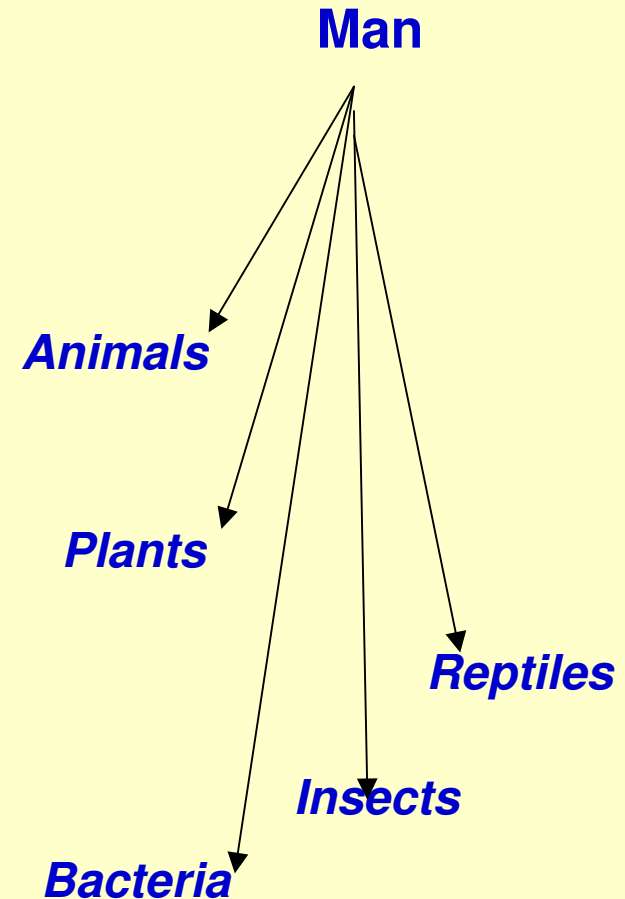
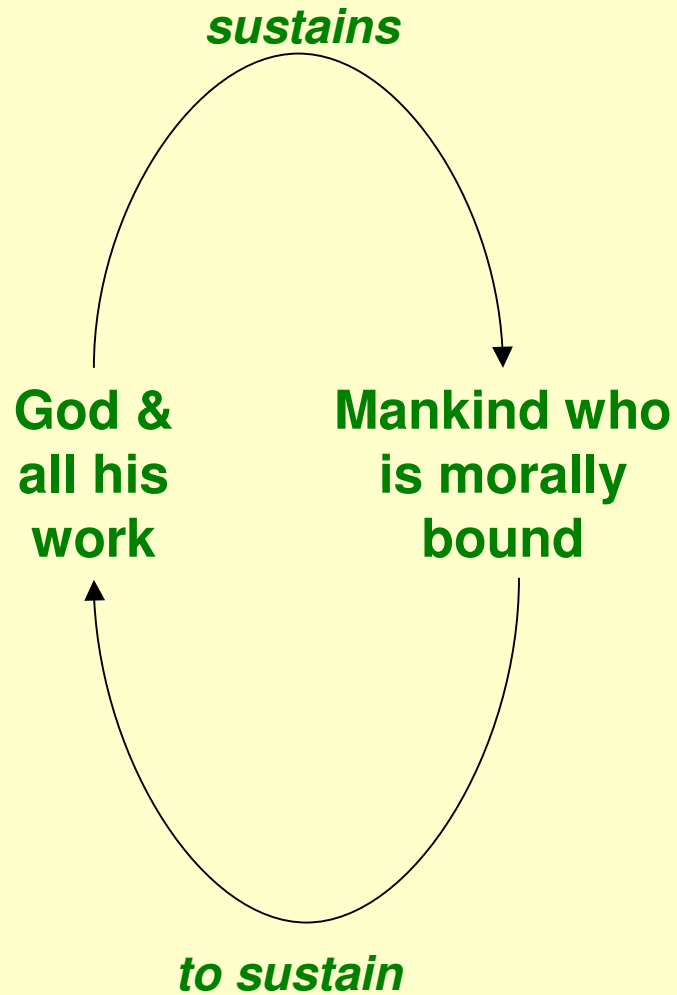


**Who are we?
Where are we going?**

Tension of two worlds



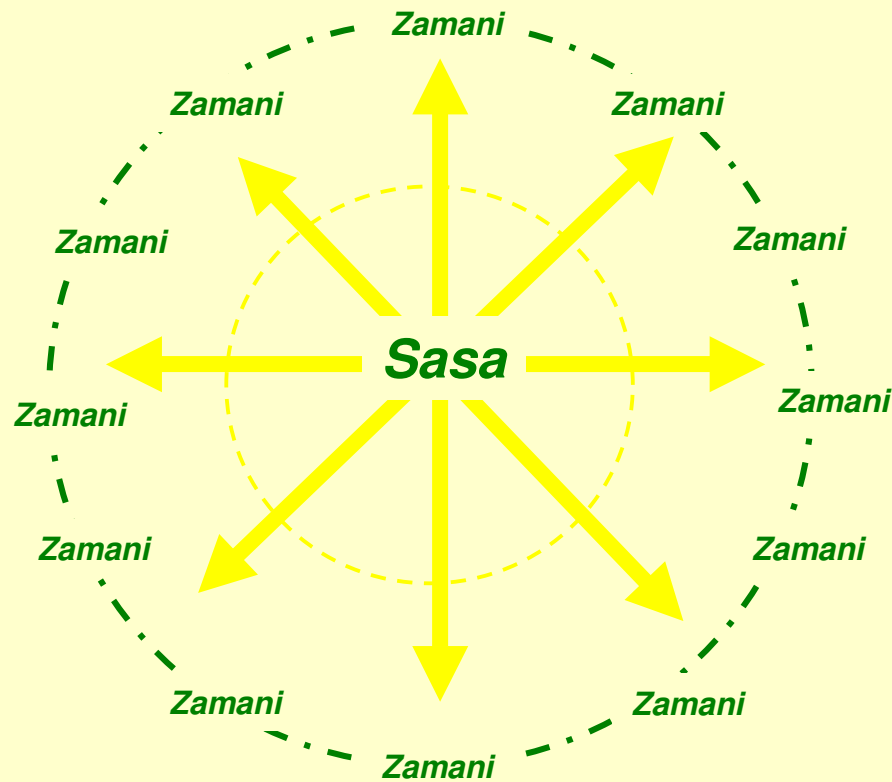
Different cosmologies



Different assumptions re time & the future

Overlapping time

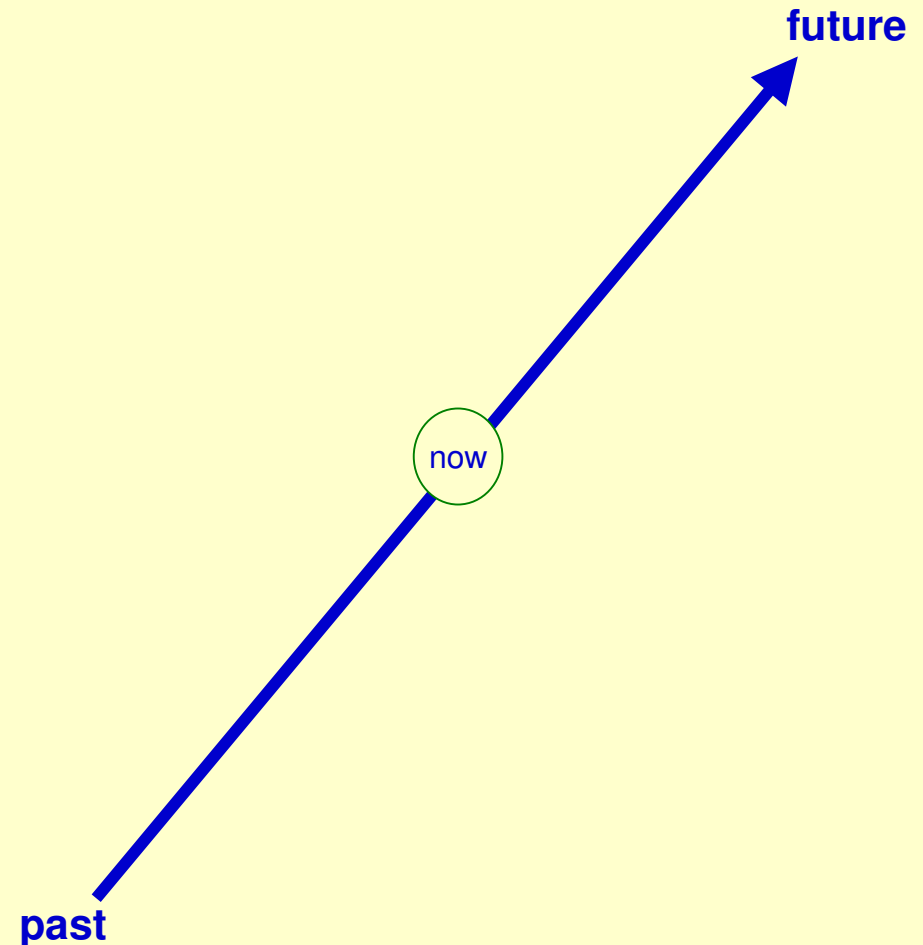
Nowness feeds into deep time where past, present and future exist.



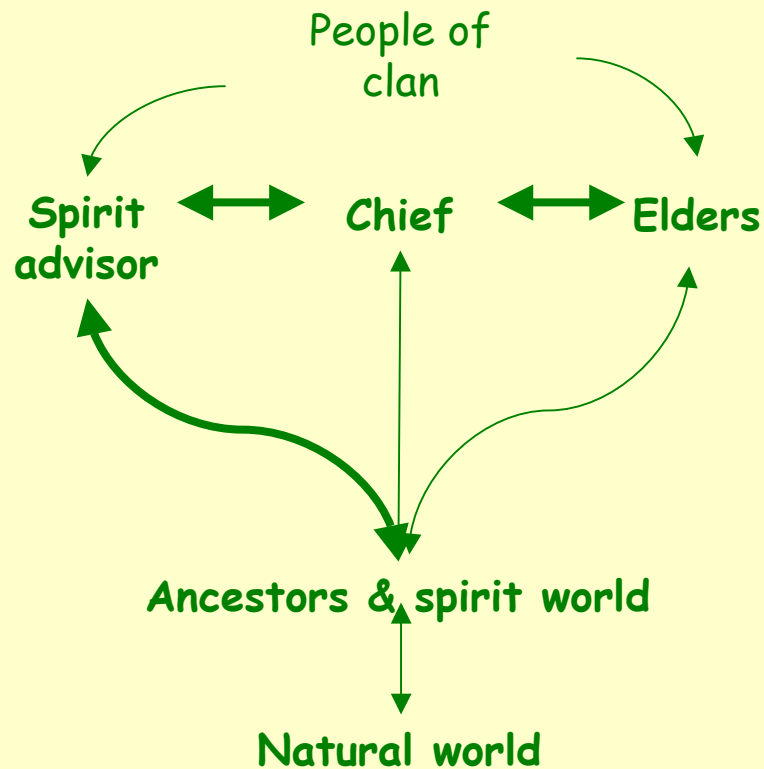
Sasa feeds or disappears into Zamani.

Progressive time

The past has created the present where we now create a better future.

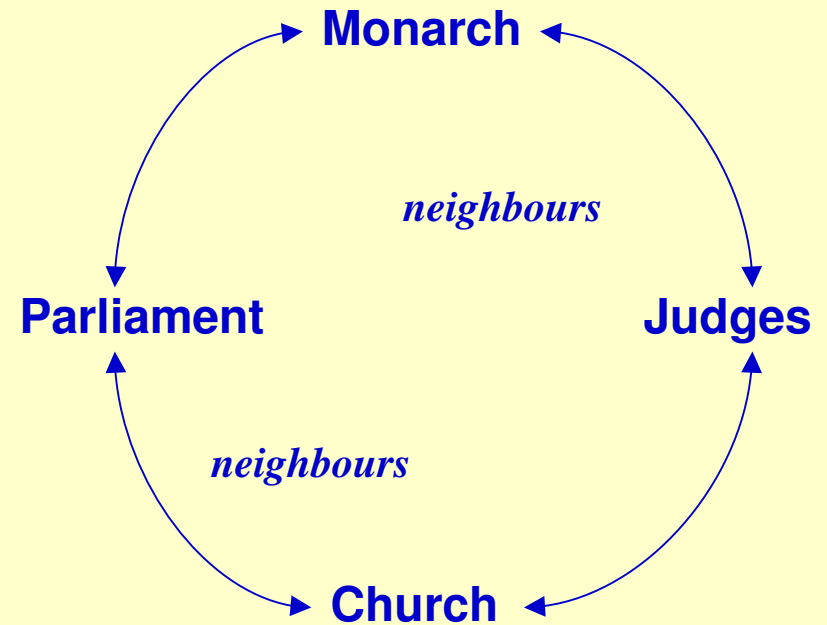


Different place & power for natural world



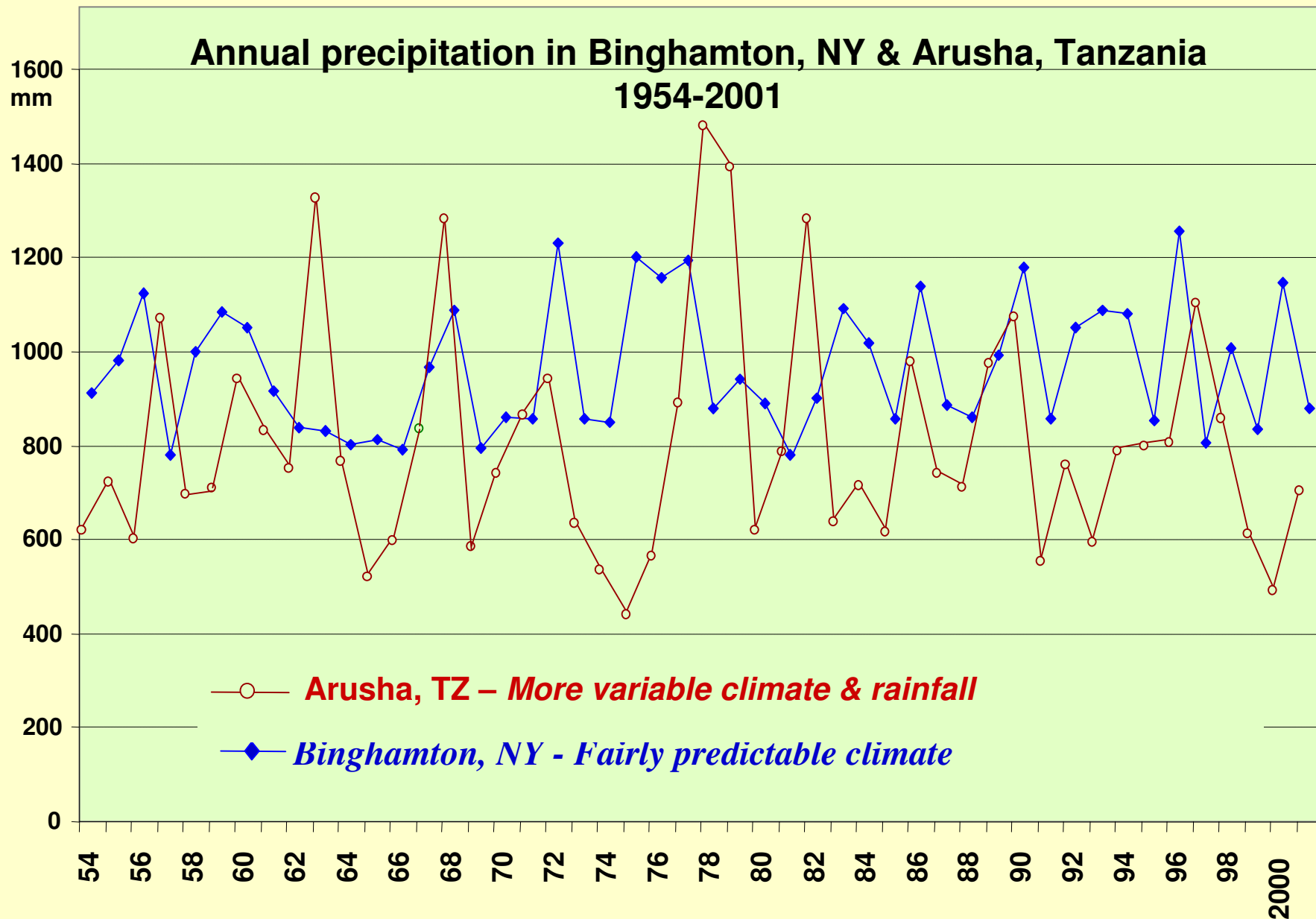
Nature is inside

Natural world



Nature is "out there"

Different climates → different risks



Sources: Manyara Estates, Arusha, Tanzania & <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/bgm/cli/bgmcli.html>

Different assumptions re crises & change

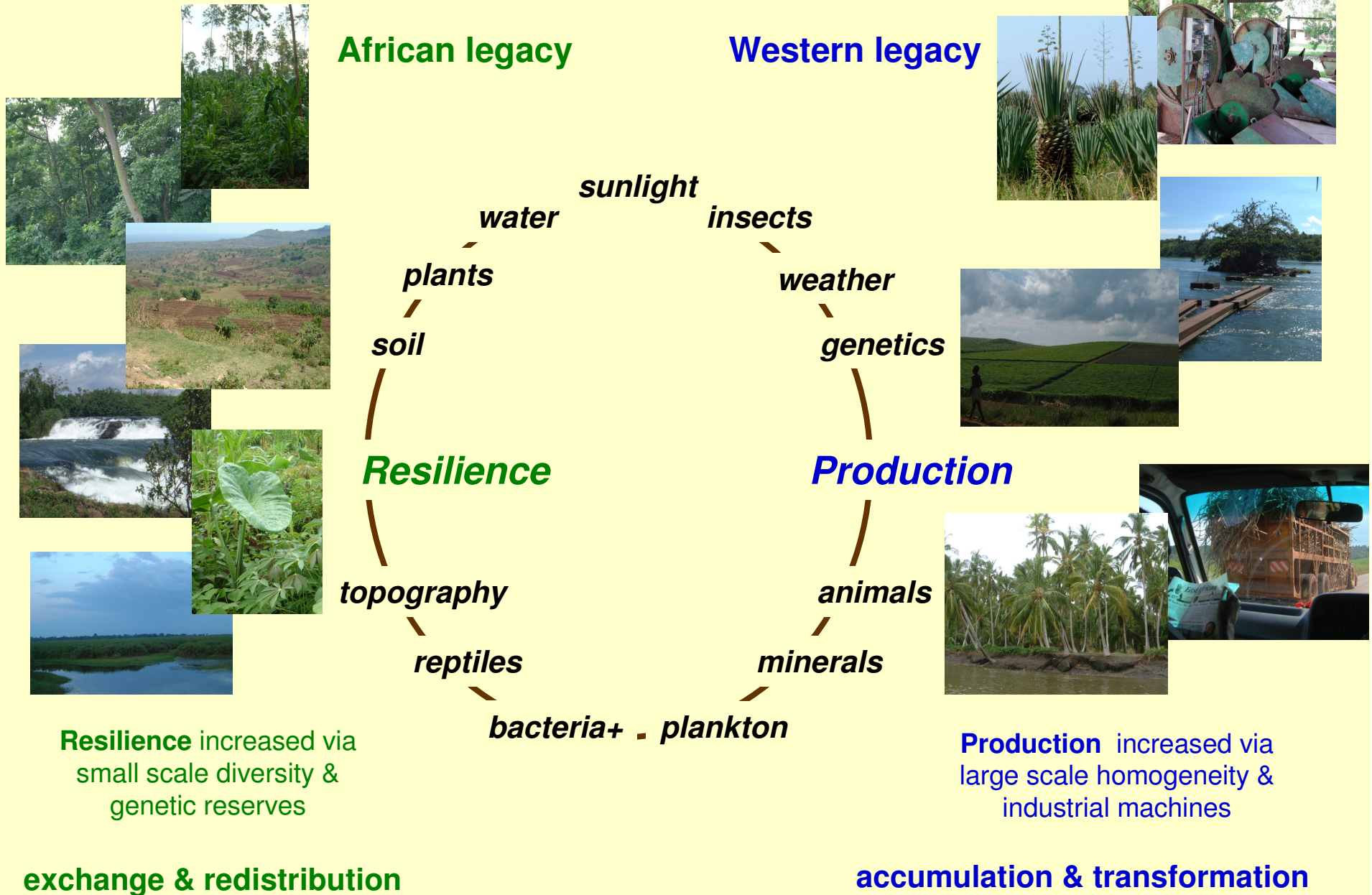


- Extreme events are normal & frequent in tropical Africa.
- The world is changeable; flexibility & adaptation are key.



- Extreme events are abnormal & infrequent.
- 'Normality' can be maintained with good manag't & technology.

Different assumptions → different goals



Different goals → diff't rights → diff't boundaries

Mosaic rights

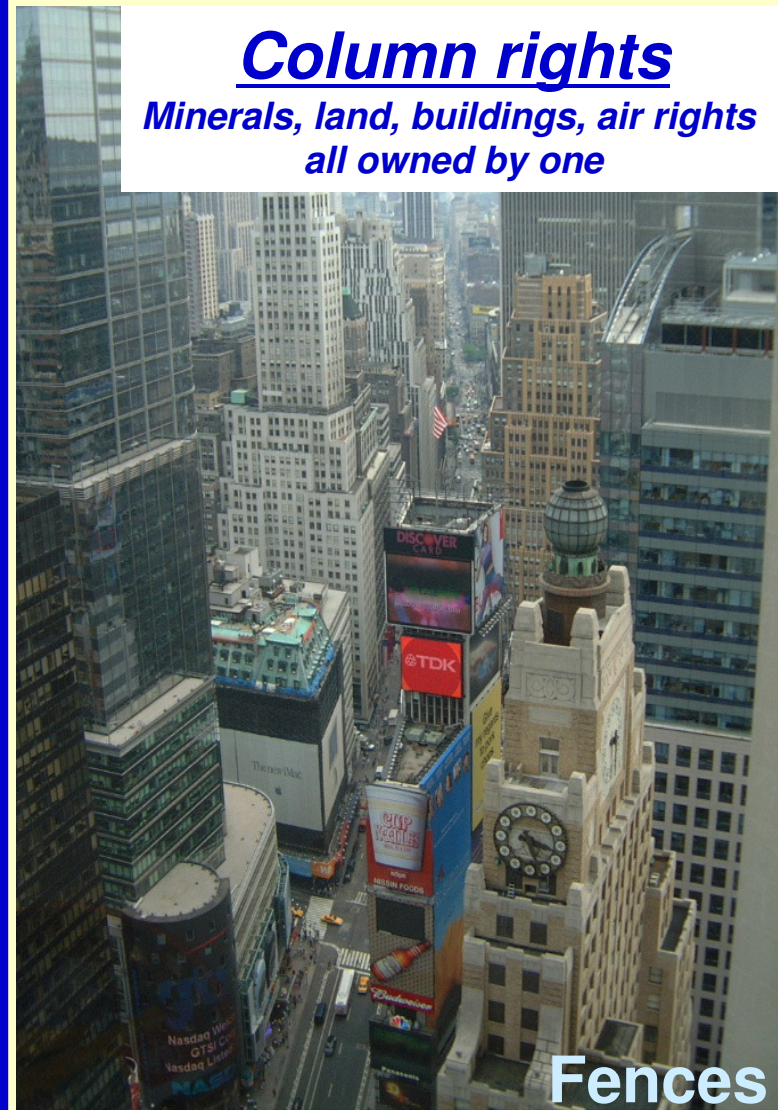
*Women: food crops, Men: tree crops,
Herders: grazing after harvest
Gov't: mineral rights,
Those who dug the well, own the water*



Footpaths

Column rights

*Minerals, land, buildings, air rights
all owned by one*



Fences

Property rights define our relationships

... to the land

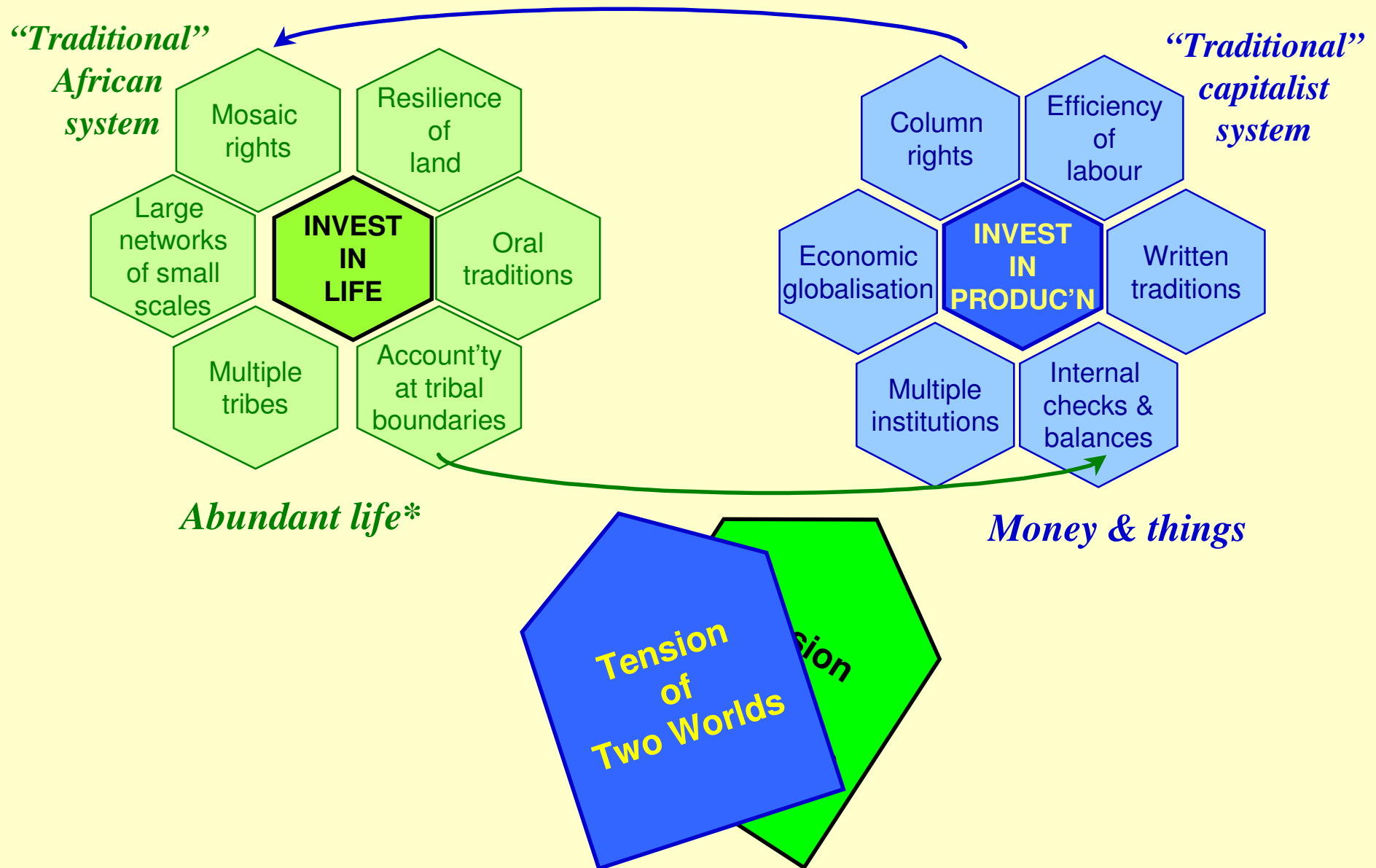


... to each other



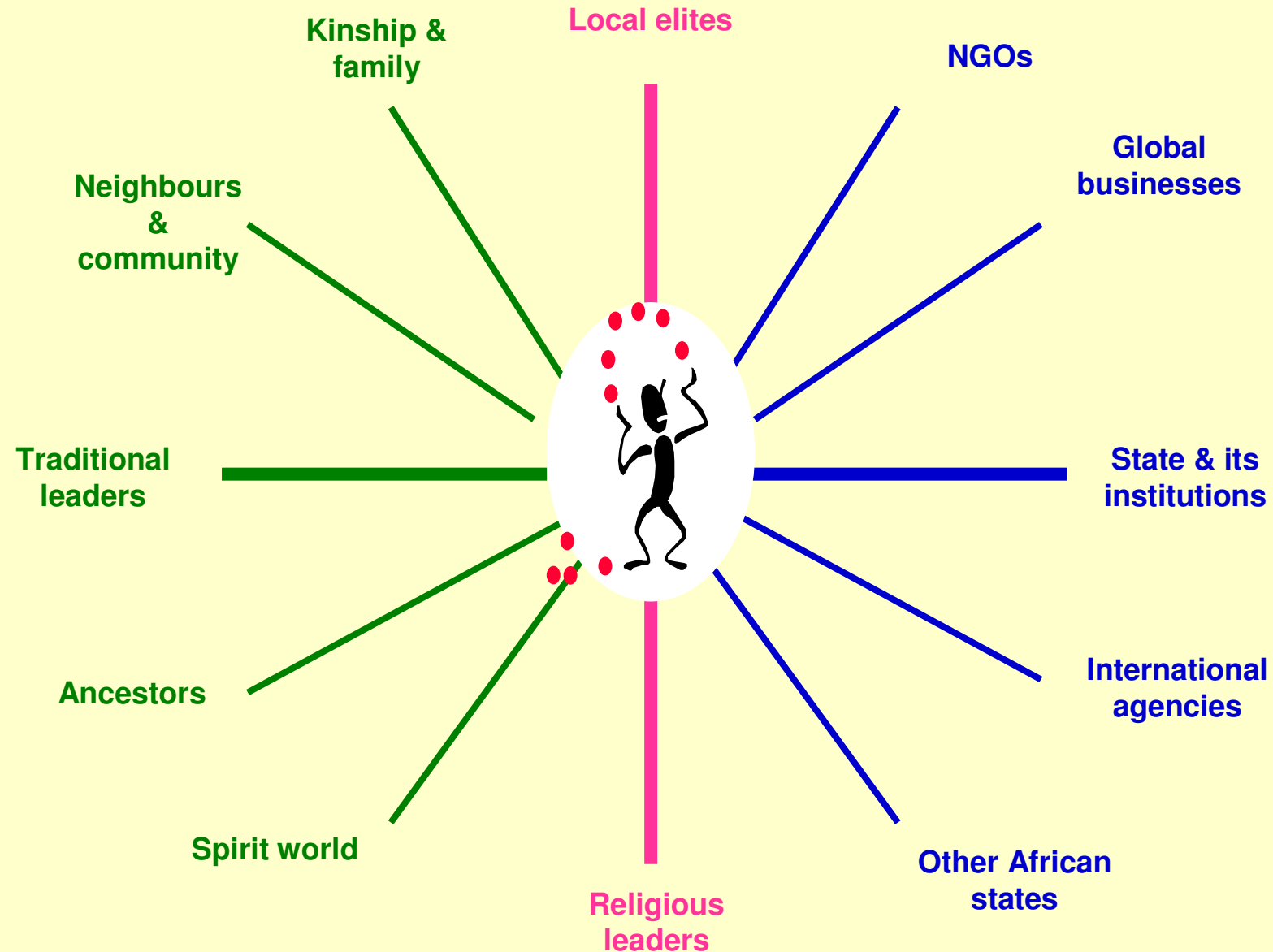
... to all life ...

Two legacies, two kinds of goals



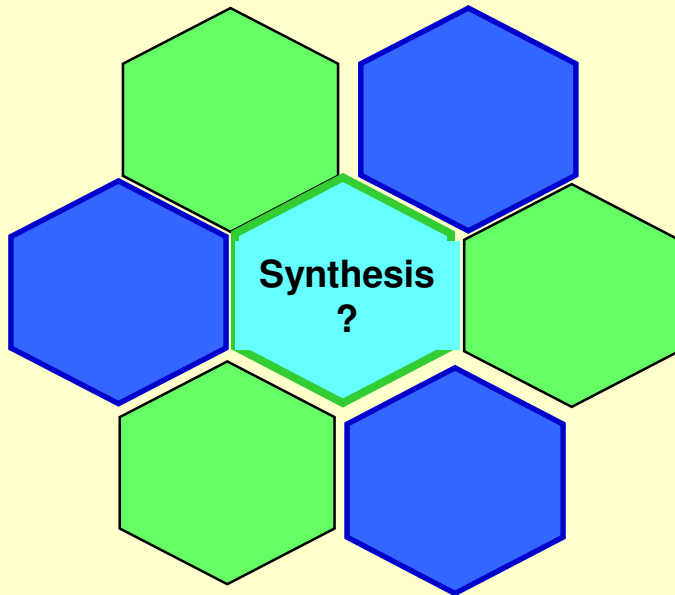
*Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 1998, p. 53

Juggling two legacies: who do you trust?

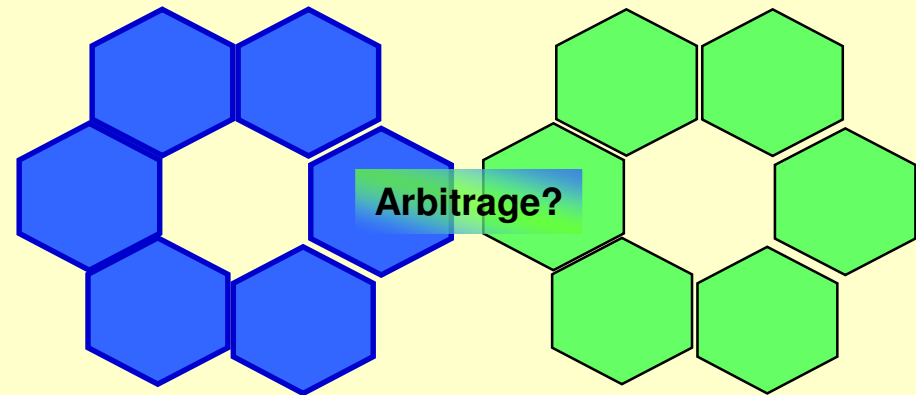


Synthesis or arbitrage?

(Assumption: neither world can ever dominate the other.)

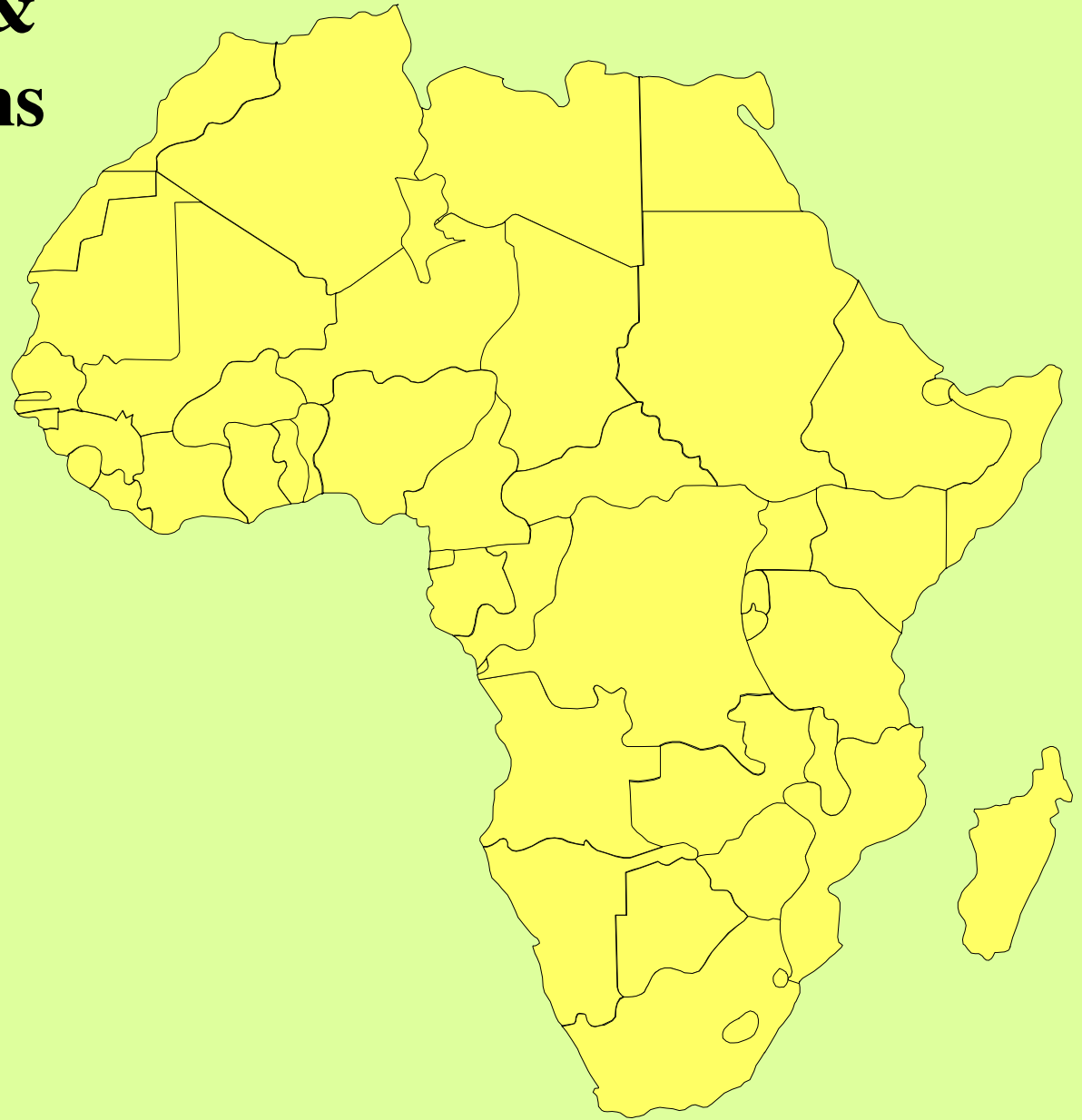


We learn from each other.
Each system changes.
Together, we become something new.

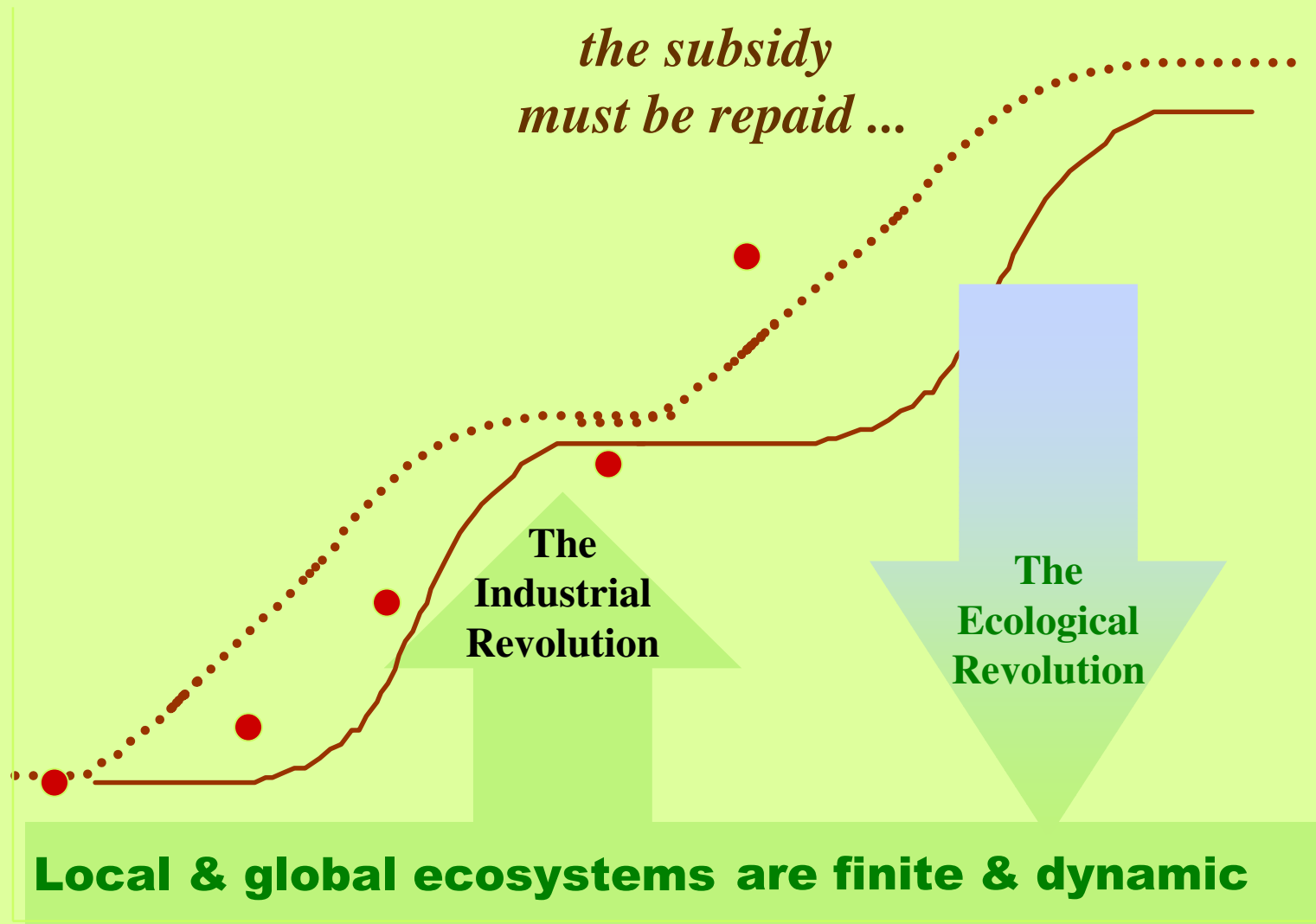


Systems remain discrete.
Case by case, arbitrage advantages are taken.
The uses of disorder multiply.

A new necessity & old English lessons



Need for systemic invention



● *global population, in billions*

.....
Social foundations

—————
Economic growth

Drivers of invention in pre-industrial England

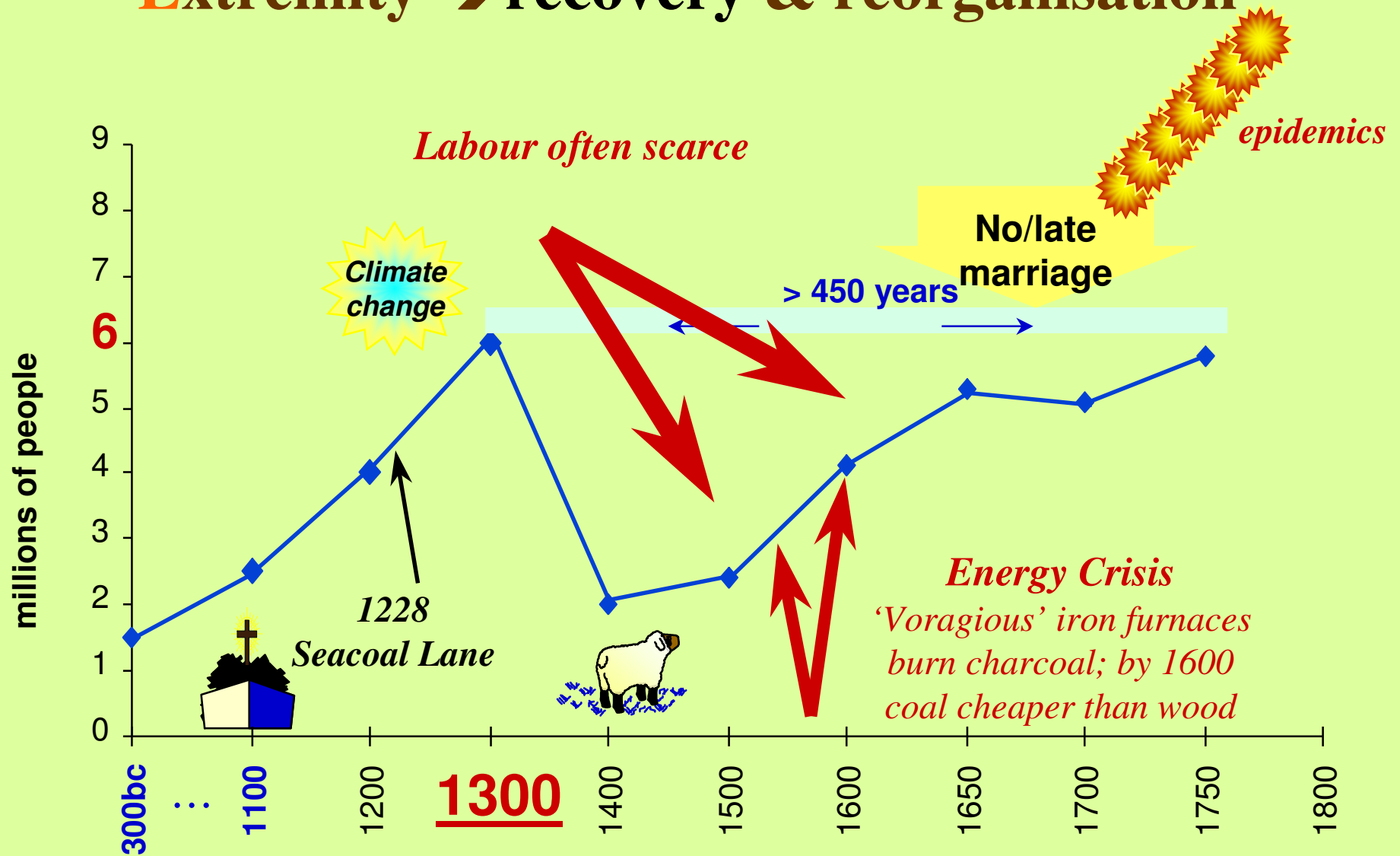
E

Engagement

Education

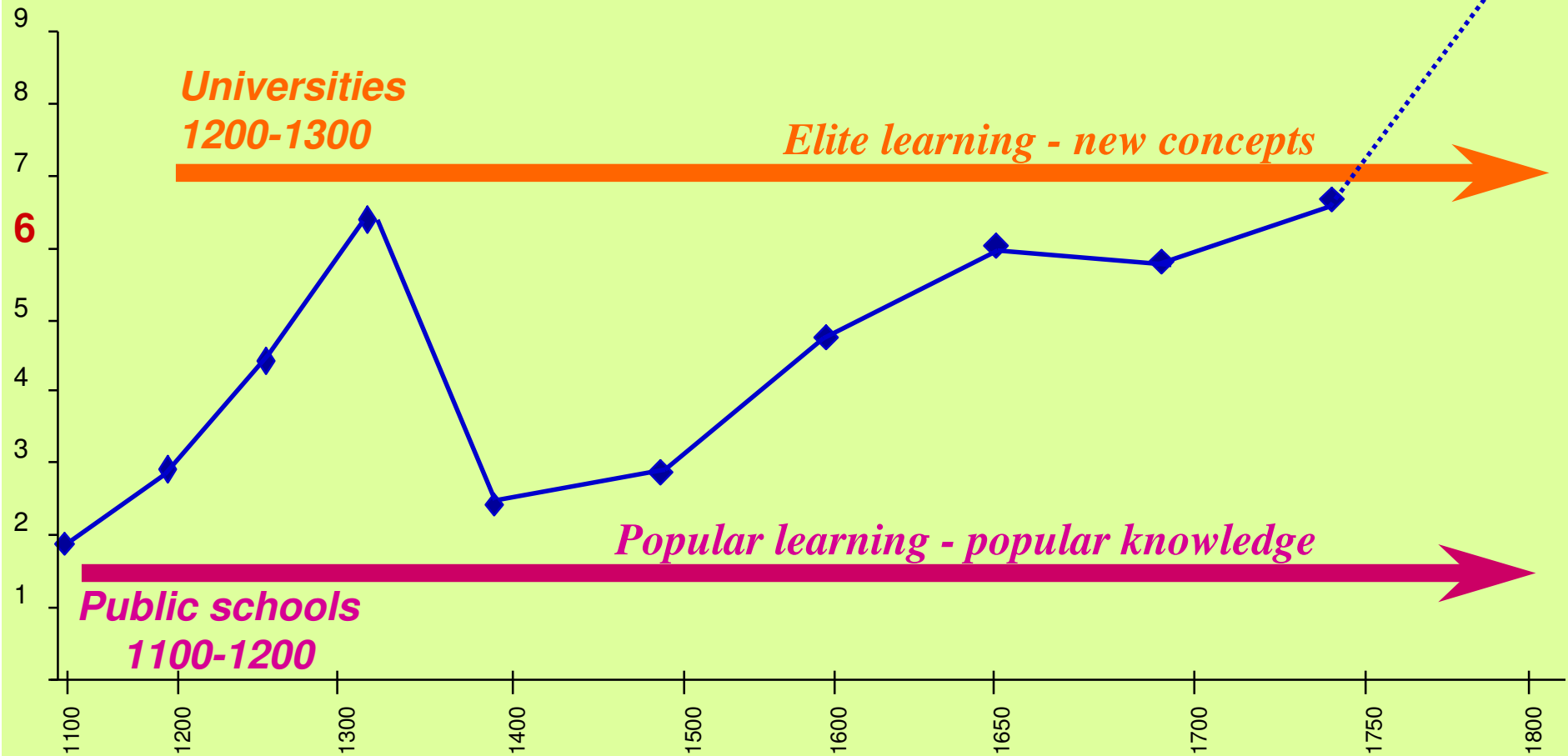
Extremity

Extremity → recovery & reorganisation



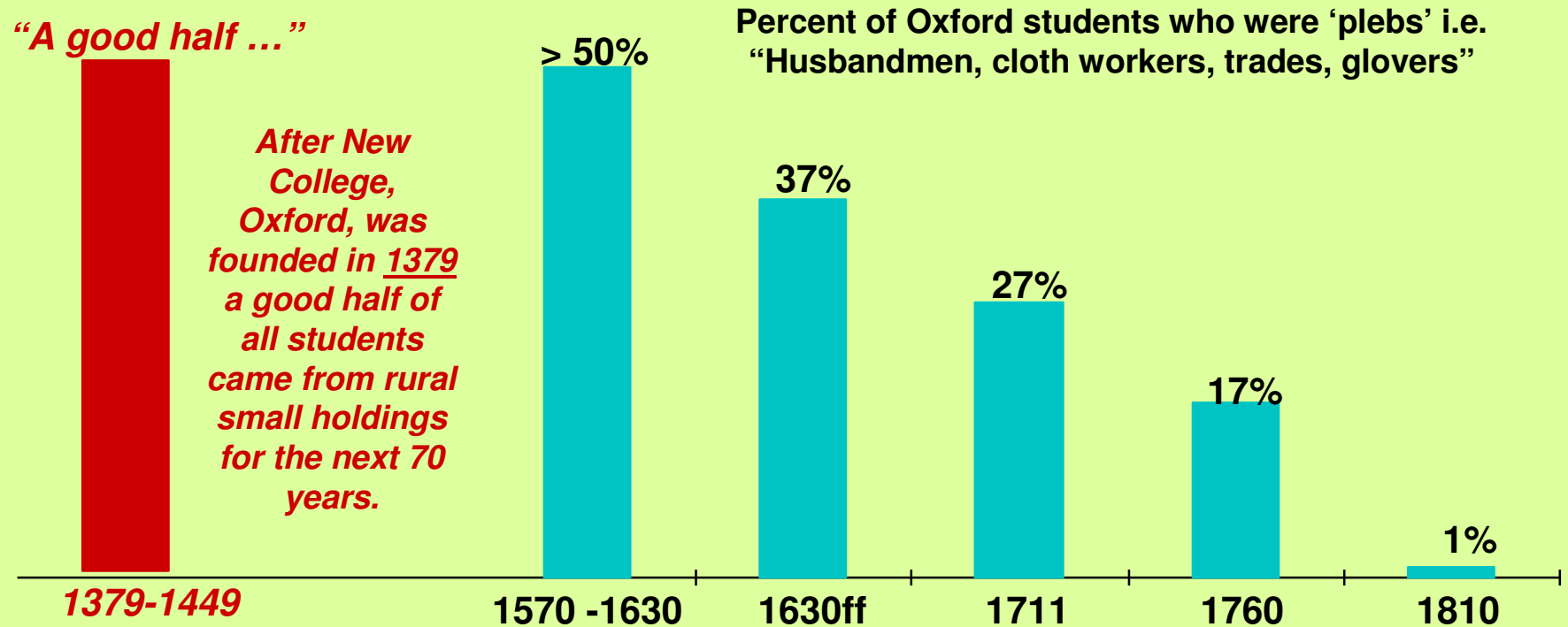
Education

Early revolutionary institutions



Sources: Schools: Nicholas Orme, 1976; Parliament: Ronald Butt, 1989; Universities: Jacques Verger, 1999

Early openness of Oxford University

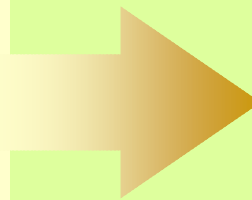


Nigel Whealey, Writing & Society, Routledge, 1999, p.37 percentage of plebs. New College information from Steven Justice Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381. 1994, p.32..

Creation of the “Dispersed University”

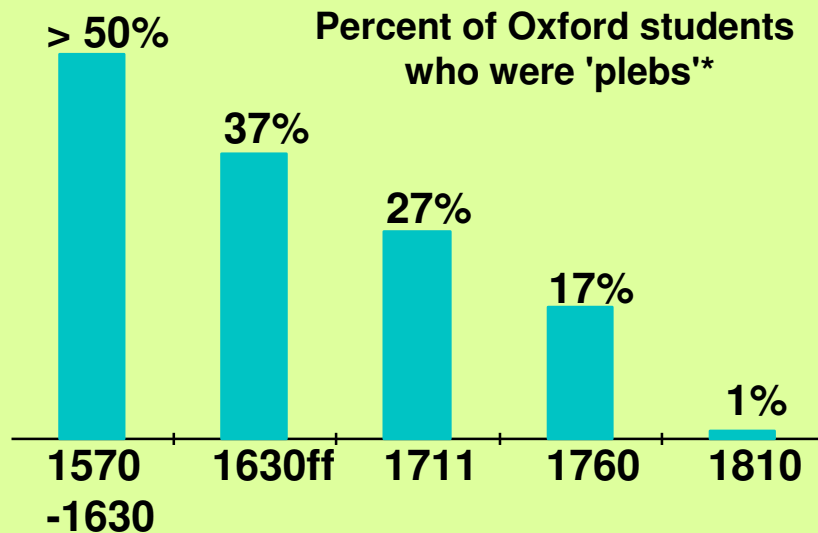
1660 onwards
Decline of Oxbridge & Inns

- higher fees
- no dissenters allowed
- loss of reputation at Inns of Court



“Intellectual life was concentrated outside the universities and merged with practical affairs.”

The most remarkable was the Lunar Society of Birmingham in which men such as Watt, Boulton, Wedgwood, Joseph Priestley and Erasmus Darwin met and exchanged scientific, philosophical and technical information. Many of these societies started in coffee houses which served not only as centres of business and the spreading of news, but as potential learned societies.”



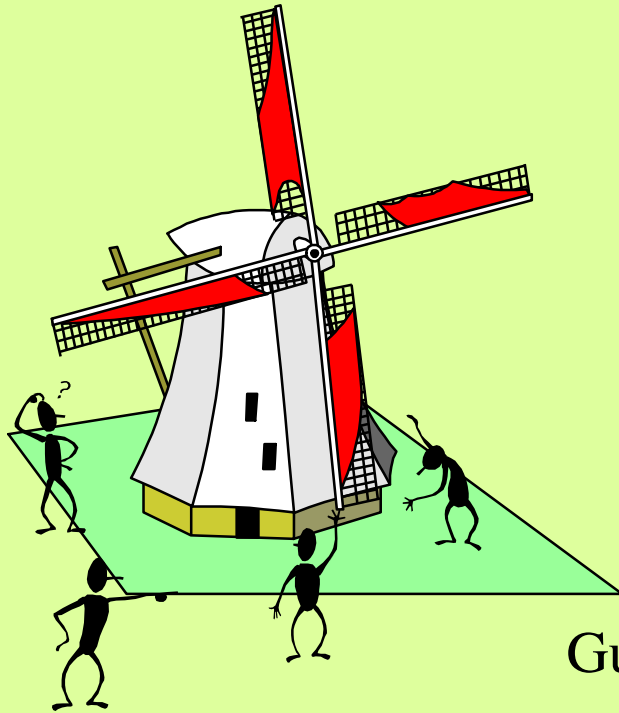
*husbandmen, clothworkers, trades, glovers

Oxford plebs from: Nigel Whealey, *Writing & Society*, Routledge, 1999, p.37, quotation from: M.D. Shipman, *Education & Modernisation*, Faber & Faber, 1971, p. 100.

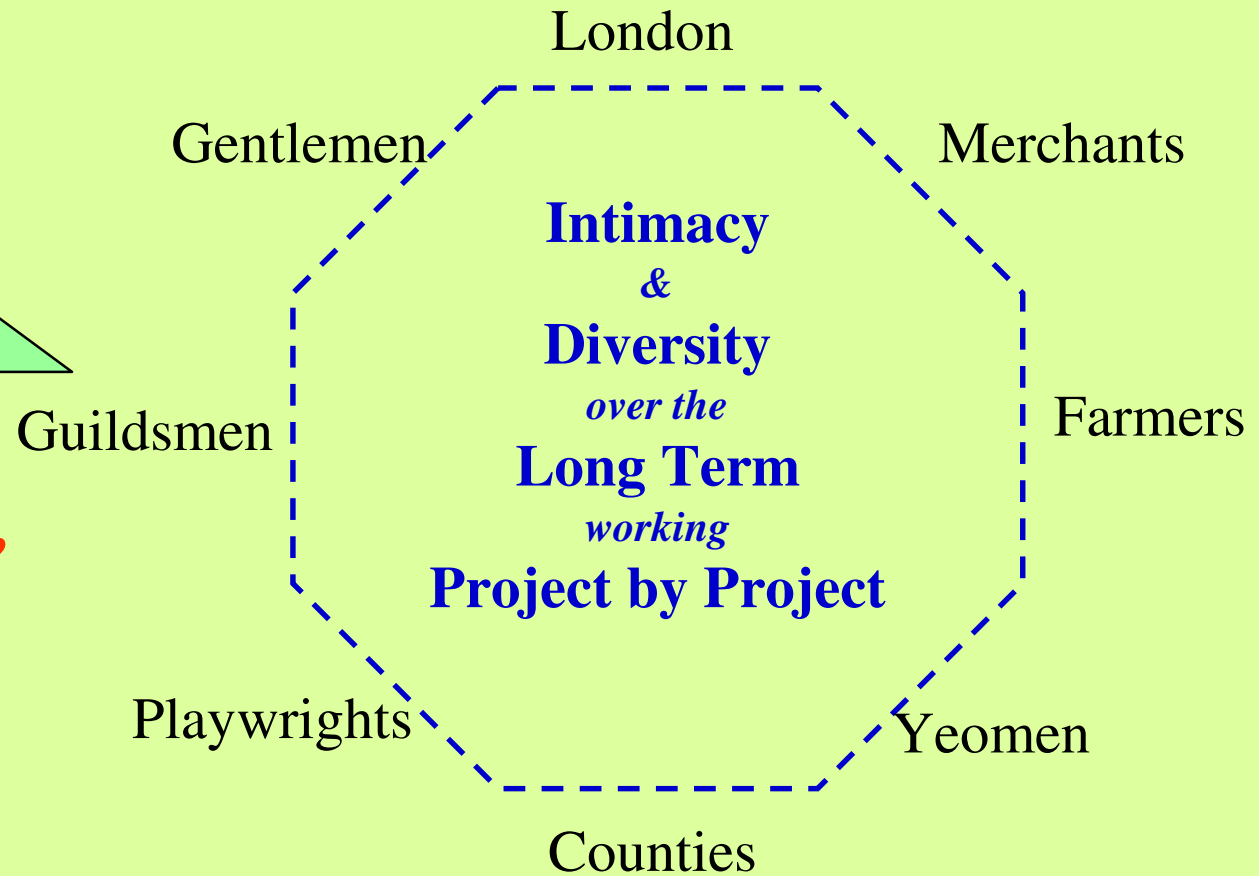
To be a ‘gentleman’:

Leisure, wealth & learning

Engagement: learning from each other



“Neighbourliness”



**What can we learn from
Africans?**

**What might Western education
& engagement with Africans
mean?**





‘Neighbourliness?’



‘Artefacts?’



‘Dead things?’



‘Commerce?’



A new teacher



Kimbunga
by Joseph Nyunga, 2001

*'Why is there no university of
Tanzanian knowledge?'*



LIFE

by Joseph Nyunga, 2001

“Because life is dangerous ...”



What might we learn about living resiliently with nature?

What role for African intellectuals?

Hydrologist



Ecologist



former MP



Economist



Statistician

A new dispersed university?

What role for secret knowledge & traditions?



Franco
Mpangala

Mwenye
Nkope

Dada Fatma, Apwia Mwenye to Mwene Hatia VIII, Mtwara, Tanzania, 2002

What role for oral knowledge?



Boat building fundi – Dar es Salaam, 2001

What role in rural areas?



*Chihanga
baraza*



*People kept arriving as
conversation continued,
"who has the voice of
nature here?"*

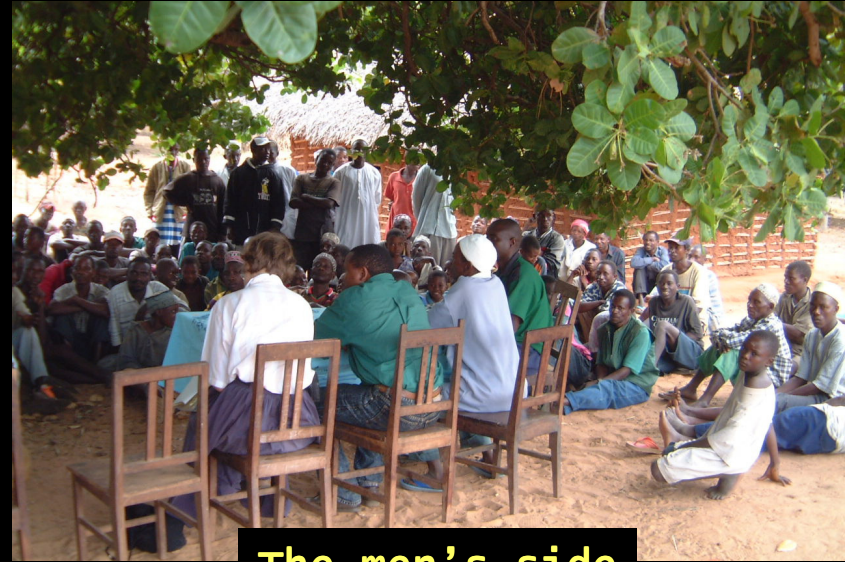


Baraza at Chihanga in Tanzania

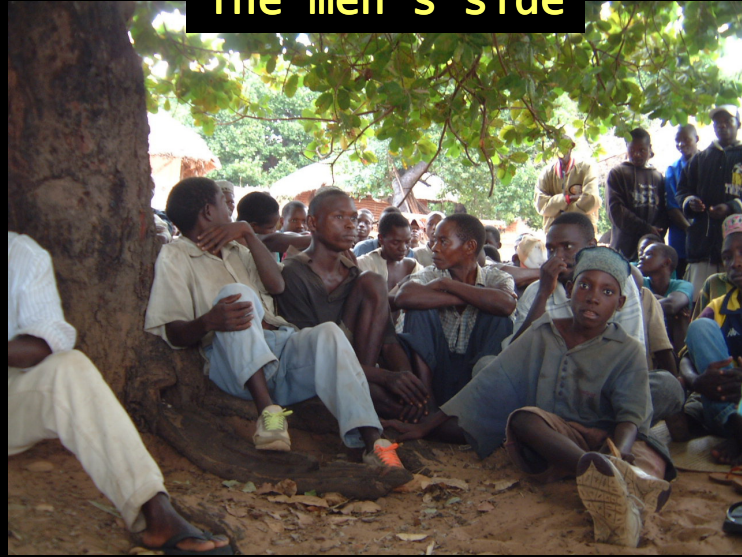
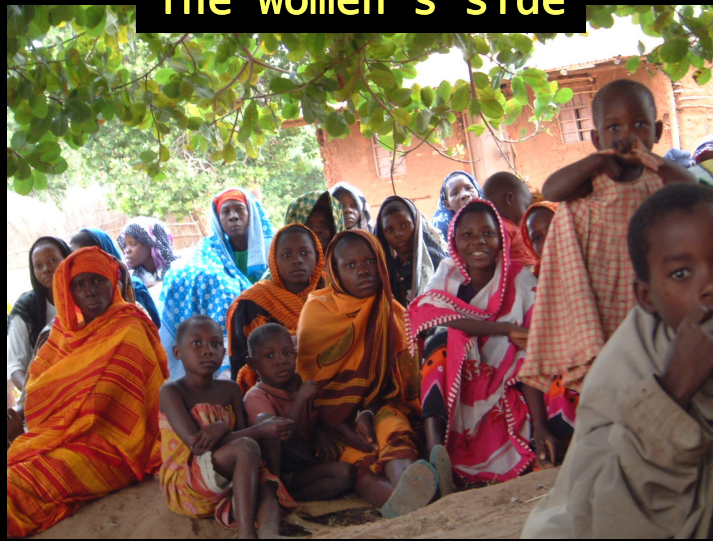
Who will want education? In what language? About what? In what institutions?



The women's side



The men's side



Baraza at Mpilipili, Tanzania

What political complications might arise?

Dick Nyai –
former opposition MP, Uganda



James Magode - ruling party
Movement secretariat, Uganda

What daydreams will you feed?



Jacinta Miracle
Wants to be an engineer



Kenneth
Wants to be an architect



Joel
Wants to be a journalist

Why these?

What future are you preparing them for?



Children – Babu Alfons' interview

“Once they have a good education, they don't come back.”

What jobs will exist, what communication?



Morogoro market & road, Tanzania, 2002

Is synthesis possible?

Mzee Ayubu



Kwa Ayubu – using the wetlands; maintaining the wetlands