Ideological orientation of the educated youth in Tanzania : a literature review

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Machiko TSUBURA *

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Since the political and economic liberalisation in the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, Tanzania has witnessed a combination of liberal and socialist values and practices in the public sphere. It has influenced political views of Tanzanians, including the youth who do not have the lived experience of the socialist period led by the founding president, Julius Nyerere. This study examines the ideological views of Tanzanian educated youth, and their interactions with national politics to deepen our understanding of contemporary Tanzania. As the first step of the study, this paper provides a brief literature review on three themes: 1) ideology/ideologies and socialism in general and in sub-Saharan Africa; 2) the historical background of Tanzania with a focus on President Nyerere and his socialist ideology, *ujamaa*; and 3) the re-emergence of *ujamaa* as moral principles in post-socialist Tanzania. The reviewed literature suggests that Tanzanians, including the youth, have incoherent ideological views today, which may be a result of the deliberate silence on the ideological aspects of Nyerere and *ujamaa* by the political elite in public debates.

* Research Fellow, African Studies Group, Area Studies Center, IDE (Machiko_Tsubura@ide.go.jp)

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Keywords: ideology, socialism, youth, Tanzania

* Research Fellow, African Studies Group, Area Studies Center, IDE (Machiko_Tsubura@ide.go.jp)

1. Introduction

Since the transition from a socialist to liberal state in the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, the Tanzanian government has been implementing market-oriented economic policies and multiparty democracy. At the same time, the extant literature suggests that moral principles embodied in *ujamaa* (meaning 'familyhood' in Swahili), socialist ideology introduced by the first president, Julius Nyerere, in the 1960s, have re-emerged in the public sphere (Fouéré 2014). The growing influence of socialist ethics characterised the 2015 presidential nomination of President John Magufuli within the ruling party, *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (Party of Revolution: CCM), which has been in power since Tanzania achieved its independence in 1961. While his predecessor, former president Jakaya Kikwete, and his government were turmoiled by the revelation of grand corruption allegations involving CCM leaders, Magufuli was nominated with the support of senior party members who called for a return to the original ethics of the party established by Nyerere (Tsubura 2018: 70, 73).

The co-existence of liberal and socialist norms and values in the public debates has certainly been shaping the views of ordinary Tanzanians, including the youth who were born after the socialist period and do not have the lived experience of it. The proportion of the youth in Tanzania's population has remained high due to the continued high fertility rate[1] and they constitute important parts of the politics, economy and society of the country. Against this background, the present study examines the ideological views of the educated youth, with a focus on university students, in Tanzania. The study sheds light on this population group with particular interest in the influence of education on the political views of the youth. University students are expected to have relatively solid knowledge obtained from formal schooling, and their political thinking should have been developed with the significant influence of education. The views of the educated youth are worth examining as some of them will directly engage with national politics as members of political parties, civil society organisations or mass media, or through their economic and social activities after completing their education. In particular, this study highlights the ideological dimension of Tanzania's youth on the ground that the country has been influenced by both socialist and liberal ideologies.

The present paper is aimed at laying a foundation for the study of the ideological orientation of the educated youth in Tanzania by presenting a brief literature review of the three themes by which this paper is organised. The first section reviews the literature

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[1] The proportion of the youth in Tanzania's population has not significantly changed between the 1980s and the 2010s. Approximately half of the population (50.1%) are under 18 years and one fifth (19.1%) aged between 15 and 24 years in 2012 (United Nations Association of Tanzania 2014).

on ideology/ideologies and socialism in general and in sub-Saharan Africa; the second summarises the historical background of Tanzania with a focus on President Nyerere and his socialist ideology, *ujamaa*; and the third discusses the re-emergence of *ujamaa* as moral principles in Tanzania and highlights the ambiguous ideological orientations of Tanzanians today. The paper ends with a summary of the findings from the literature review and a proposal of research questions of this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Ideology/Ideologies and Socialism in General and Sub-Saharan Africa

While ideology can broadly be defined as 'a lifeguiding system of beliefs, values and goals affecting political style and action' (Putnam 1973, cited in Thomson 2016: 31), it is among the fundamental concepts extensively discussed by political theorists (see, for example, Freeden 2006). By identifying difficulties in distinguishing between ideology and similar concepts or contradictions in the attributes of the conceptualisation of ideology, some scholars propose a coherent structure or system as the core attribute of ideology (Mullins 1972; Gerring 1997). On the other hand, as a leading scholar in the field of political ideology, Freeden (2019) points to the ongoing realignment of the characteristics of ideology. He states that current studies on ideologies tend to be immediate responses to recent political and ideological crises (e.g., populism, the far right) and there is a tendency that a 'fixed ideological structure, displaying a high degree of internal coherence and systematization, is vanishing' (Freeden 2019: 7). He continues, suggesting that 'the newer modes of delivering ideology are far more elusive to observe and discern' (2019: 7). While this study takes into consideration the elusive nature of ideology today, it respects the core attribute of the concept and seeks to identify the coherent political views of Tanzania's educated youth to the extent possible, with a reference to the socialist ideology introduced in the country by President Nyerere.

African political ideologies have been shaped by complex interactions between their indigenous culture and regional, continental and global influences (Hendrickson and Zaki 2013). After independence from colonial rule in the late 1950s and 1960s, African leaders pursued nationalism, a broad and inclusive ideology which contained more narrowly defined ideologies such as African socialism, African populism and African Marxism (Martin 2012: 2; Thomson 2016: 36–37). Socialism was a dominant ideology in many post-independent African countries; no fewer than 35 out of 53 African countries adopted socialist policies between the 1950s and the 1980s, albeit their varying

interpretations of and adherence to socialism (Pitcher and Askew 2006: 1–2).

Instead of adopting socialism prescribed by the Soviet Union, African leaders developed their own versions of socialism by emphasising traditional values in their countries. With the view that Africans used to live in classless and egalitarian communities prior to colonial rule, African socialism sought to recover traditional values in combination with modern production methods and state institutions. The state played a central role politically and economically to achieve the socialist goals. The private sector was largely nationalised, agricultural products were bought by marketing boards and international trade was controlled by governments. Most African countries, including Tanzania, adopted a one-party system to build national unity instead of encouraging political competition through a multiparty system. However, many of the socialist experiments in the region failed for various reasons, including the influence of the international economy and governments' inability to mobilise rural population (Thomson 2016: 38–39).

Despite the experience of ideological transitions in most African countries in the 1980 and 1990s, many studies suggest that Africans have mixed or unclear ideological orientations today (Wiafe-Amoako 2016). Pitcher and Askew (2016: 11) contend that post-socialist African countries are characterised by combinations of socialism and neo-liberalism in practice. By analysing the Afrobarometer survey data, Conroy-Krutz and Lewis (2011) demonstrate that neither political parties nor citizens in Africa have clearly coherent ideological views. They find that the median attitudes of the bases of major African political parties cannot be distinguished from one another in terms of their views on the role of the state in the economy or support for democratic norms. Similar results are found for the views of ordinary Africans in their analysis. The findings are consistent across subgroups divided by sex, partisanship, education, media access, urban-rural settings, political knowledge and interests in politics. This finding contradicts the studies on advanced democracies which suggest that the better educated tend to have more coherent attitudes (Conroy-Krutz and Lewis 2011: 25). Conroy-Krutz and Lewis (2011: 26) suggest that the inability to identify coherent political attitudes among educated Africans in their analysis indicates the lack of effort by African elites to communicate ideological appeals to ordinary citizens, at least on the issues included in the Afrobarometer. As discussed below, this finding on the ambiguity in ideological orientations seems to be consistent with the situation in post-socialist Tanzania.

2.2. Historical Background of Tanzania: President Julius Nyerere and *Ujamaa*

Tanganyika achieved independence from British colonial rule in 1961 and formed the United Republic of Tanzania through the merger with the islands of Zanzibar in 1964. Tanzanian society is diverse with over 120 ethnic groups, Asians and Arabs, who practise Islam, Christianity or traditional beliefs. Therefore, after independence, the initial task of President Nyerere and the ruling party, the Tanganyika African Nationalist Union (TANU), which changed to the CCM in 1977, was to build a nation by enhancing unity among Tanzanians. Nyerere viewed capitalism as an inappropriate ideology to generate economic development. He did not believe that Soviet-style socialism based on class struggle would be suitable for Tanzania's development, either. Instead, he developed his own socialist ideology, *ujamaa* ('familyhood'), with an idea of 'common ownership and production as well as equal distribution of goods among people of common descent' (Hyden 1975: 54), based on the traditional society that had existed in Tanzania before colonial rule (Thomson 2016: 49–51).

President Nyerere announced the Arusha Declaration, which provided an overall framework of *ujamaa* policies, along with the leadership code in 1967, and the party guidelines, called *Mwongozo*, for the TANU in 1971. The leadership code and *Mwongozo* aimed at controlling the behaviour of political leaders; they were advised to be peasants or workers and their association with capitalist practices, such as holding shares or directorships in private companies, receiving multiple salaries and renting houses to others, was strictly prohibited (Hyden 1980: 156–160; Shivji 1976: 126; Yeager 1989: 73). President Nyerere also adopted a one-party system and ensured that the TANU would establish its dominant status in the country (Tripp 1992: 229; Hirschler 2006: 3). His government then formulated domestic and foreign policies and nationalised economic sectors, collectivised agriculture and promoted the liberation of Southern Africa from apartheid (Ibhawoh and Dibua 2003; Hendrickson and Zaki 2013: 616; Thomson 2016: 49–51).

Nyerere's emphasis on the importance of rural development in achieving socialist goals was materialised in his policy of building *ujamaa* villages across the country (Lal 2015). It was a resettlement scheme with capital intensive techniques by concentrating resources in selected areas in the fertile part of the country (Okoko 1987: 89–90). Agricultural production was expected to grow in *ujamaa* villages through the collective farming of common land that would provide both the subsistence of villagers and a surplus. *Ujamaa* villages were also envisaged to facilitate connections between public officials and peasants who could gain modern agricultural techniques and

technology from the government. Indeed, the vision of *ujamaa* villages was broader than mere communal production. It was a style of living as 'a cooperative and imaginary way of putting a community's resources, skills, and enthusiasm at the service of the development of all of its members' (Schneider 2004: 349). While some of them voluntarily moved to *ujamaa* villages by supporting socialist ideas, others sought benefits provided to the villages such as tax exemption, access to schools and clinics, subsidised seeds and fertilisers. At the later stage of the programme, a number of reluctant peasants were moved to *ujamaa* villages coercively. By 1975, a majority of Tanzania's rural population had resettled in approximately 7,000 villages across the country (Schneider 2004: 345; Thomson 2016: 52–53).

Despite the massive investments in rural areas, Tanzania failed in expanding the national economy through *ujamaa* policies and the villagisation programme, which led to the government's liberalisation of economic policies by accepting a structure adjustment programme by the International Monetary Fund (Gibbon 1995). Hyden (1980) attributes the failure in villagisation to the government's inability to 'capture' the peasantry. Tanzanian peasants did not adopt modern methods of agricultural production or the custom of collective farming of communal land. Instead, their first priority was to farm their individual plots by continuing using their own methods for their subsistence, and collective farming comprised supplementary activities to raise additional income (Thomson 2016: 53–54). More fundamentally, Nyerere's assumption of the traditional egalitarian society that had existed in pre-colonial periods of Tanzania was inaccurate. In reality, there were diverse forms of society in the country, many of which were not egalitarian (Spalding 1996; Edwards 1998: 41).

Education was critical in the implementation of *ujamaa* in Tanzania. President Nyerere was particularly keen on using education to mobilise citizens towards socialist goals and objectives (Cliffe 1973; Okoko 1987: 41–42). During the colonial period, very few Africans received formal schooling and a majority of them received only one or two years of basic education such as reading, writing and arithmetic. Post-elementary education was mainly manual vocational training such as carpentry, road construction and farming. After independence, the school system was integrated to eliminate racial barriers and incorporated all children (Mbilinyi 1979: 98–99). Soon after the proclamation of the Arusha Declaration in 1967, Nyerere issued a policy statement called the *Education for Self-Reliance* to ensure that educational institutions would support the socialist ideology. The Education Act of 1969 nationalised all schools which were formerly run by voluntary organisations, and the Ministry of National Education came to manage schools, including the requirement of teachers and the control over curricula (Mbilinyi 1979: 101).

In 1968, the subject of *Siasa* ('politics'), or Political Education, was introduced to replace Civics to the curricula at all levels of the education system to teach students *ujamaa* philosophy and practices (Mbilinyi 1979: 105; Mmari 1979: 120; United Republic of Tanzania 2011: 13, 29–30). When the *ujamaa* period ended in the mid-1980s, *Siasa* was renamed Civics, and 18 topics including the history of the CCM, the Arusha Declaration and socialism in other parts of the world were omitted from the subject. Apparently, the content of Civics has not been standardised and the subject has been taught in an uncoordinated manner (United Republic of Tanzania 2011: 14, 38). The knowledge and views of *ujamaa* among young Tanzanians today should have been influenced by the transition of the subject from *Siasa* to Civics (Chachage 2017).

In terms of the close relationship between politics and education during the socialist period, the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) is also noteworthy. While Tanzania's socialism was advanced centrally by President Nyerere and the TANU and later CCM, there were lively intellectual debates on *ujamaa* and other socialist ideologies among Tanzanian and foreign scholars at the UDSM in the 1960s and 1970s. The UDSM was established in 1961 as a college of the University of London, becoming a constituent college of the University of East Africa in 1963 and an independent national university in 1970. It was closely related to the TANU/CCM and the ideology of the country in the 1970s. The party made strong efforts to control the university. It offered its headquarters for use by the university college until 1964 when it moved to the campus in the northwest of Dar es Salaam. A former executive secretary of the TANU/CCM was appointed to the position of Vice-Chancellor of the UDSM in the 1970s. Initially, the university was relatively free in deciding admission conditions, course content and methods of assessment. For example, the admission was mainly based on students' performance at the advanced level. Yet, the Musoma Resolution of 1974 limited the eligibility of students for higher education to those who had completed one-year compulsory national service and had work experience for two years at least with recommendations from their employers (Mkude, Cooksey and Levey 2013: 1–2). On the other hand, the UDSM provided a relatively open space for debates on *ujamaa* and other socialist ideologies and became a hub of intellectuals in the 1960s and 1970s (Shivji 1993).

2.3. The Return of *Ujamaa* as Moral Principles in Tanzania

Despite the ideological shift in political and economic policies in the 1980-90s, socialism has not officially been abandoned by the Tanzanian government. Socialism and self-reliance have remained in Tanzania's Constitution as principles for socio-economic

activities of the country (United Republic of Tanzania 2005, The Citizen 4 January 2015). Makulilo (2012: 8171) thus questions the constitutionality of current liberal policies by the Tanzanian government as they contradict with the Constitution. At least, it can be stated that the current ideological direction of the country is inconsistent across different public domains.

In tandem with the continuity of socialism in the Constitution, a modified version of *ujamaa* has re-emerged as a set of moral principles in the public sphere in post-socialist Tanzania (Fouéré 2014: 2). Nyerere and *ujamaa* have been reference points in public debates on 'social, political, and economic morality … characterized by increasing concerns about economic inequality, threats to national cohesion, and the high visibility of corruption in the political sphere' (Fouéré 2014: 2). However, the re-emergence of *ujamaa* does not necessarily suggest a return of the socialist ideology in the country. Askew (2006) analyses the popular songs composed to remember Nyerere immediately after his death in 1999, 14 years after he resigned from the presidency, and finds that the term *ujamaa* or his socialist policies were rarely mentioned in the songs, while other aspects of his philosophy such as peace, unity, solidarity and the elimination of tribalism and religious divisiveness were frequently mentioned in them. Thus, moral principles promoted by Nyerere have been disconnected from the historical experience of socialism in the country (Askew 2006). Fouéré (2014: 10) also points out that the disconnection between morality and the socialist ideology has allowed the political elite to effectively utilise the past to build political legitimacy. The lack of socialist dimension in the return of *ujamaa* in contemporary Tanzania is generally in line with the inconsistent ideological orientations among Africans found by Conroy-Kruz and Lewis (2011), as discussed earlier in this paper.

More recently, there is a growing influence of senior members within the CCM who emphasise the importance of political ethics promoted by Nyerere. This was against the background that the CCM was increasingly influenced by competing clientelist factions that relied on financial resources, and the public image of the party was adversely affected by the grand corruption allegations involving senior party leaders. The incumbent president Magufuli had distanced himself from CCM factional infighting and was nominated as the CCM presidential candidate in 2015 with the support of CCM senior members who called for a return of the original ethics of the party (Tsubura 2018). Given this trend in intraparty politics, the nature of the disconnection between moral principles and the socialist ideology can be further examined in relation to the changing factional dynamics within the CCM during the post-socialist period.

On the other hand, the political views of the educated youth may be influenced

by the socialist ideology which has re-emerged in higher education in post-socialist Tanzania. Provini (2014) highlights the legacy of socialism in student protests against the government's neo-liberal education policies at the UDSM in the 1990s and 2000s, especially in response to the policy of cost-sharing between the government and students. Thus, the ideological views of students at the UDSM are likely to be shaped not only by the lack of socialist ideology in the public sphere but also by the re-emergence of the socialist orientation of student activism at the university.

3. Conclusion

Based on the studies reviewed so far, one potential explanation for the seemingly lack of coherent ideological views today among Tanzanians, including the youth, is that it is a result of the deliberate silence on the ideological aspects of Nyerere and *ujamaa* by the political elite in public debates. It may be convenient for them to make the country's ideological direction ambiguous so that the memory of Nyerere and *ujamaa* could be used flexibly depending on their need to establish their political legitimacy. This may be reflected in the lack of standardisation of the content and teaching methods of Civics in schools which, in turn, affects the knowledge and views of the youth.

Building on the reviewed literature, some questions can be proposed for the present study on the ideological orientation of Tanzania's educated youth. The overall question of the research is: What kinds of ideological views do the educated youth have in contemporary Tanzania and what shapes them? To address this question, the study will investigate what the educated youth, especially university students, think about the philosophy and practices of *ujamaa* in the past and present. Given the historical significance of the UDSM in ideologies and higher education in Tanzania, this study will pay close attention to the political views of the students at the UDSM. In particular, their views on the role of the state in the economy and collective agricultural production in reference to the experience of villagisation will be highlighted, as they were core practices of Tanzania's socialism in the 1960s and 1970s.

To understand how the views of the educated youth are developed, I will explore the influence of education on them, by analysing how Nyerere and *ujamaa* are taught in schools with a focus on the changes since the end of the socialist period. Some of the questions that will be addressed are: How has Nyerere's educational philosophy, crystallised in the *Education for Self-Reliance*, has affected the ideological orientation of the educated youth in Tanzania today? Does the type of education (i.e., private or public schools, urban or rural areas) matter for the level of coherence in their political thinking?

In parallel with the study on education, the ideological positions of the government, political parties and the political elite will also be examined with a question as to whether Tanzanian leaders have purposely neglected ideological aspects of *ujamaa* in the post-socialist period, and if that is the case, whether it has contributed to the level of coherence in the ideological views of Tanzania's educated youth. Through this analysis, the present study is aimed at deepening our understanding of the politics of contemporary Tanzania. It also seeks to contribute a case study to the broader literature on the changing nature of the manifestation of ideologies in Africa and worldwide.

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