

# **TANZANIA ZAMANI**

Indexed in EBSCO databases

ISSN 0856-6518

Volume XIV No. 1, 2022

## **A JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND WRITING**

Published by  
Department of History, University of Dar es Salaam  
and  
Historical Association of Tanzania (HAT)

## **NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS**

### **General**

*Tanzania Zamani* is a journal published twice a year by the Department of History, University of Dar es Salaam, and the Historical Association of Tanzania. It publishes scholarly articles and reviews on all aspects of Tanzania's past, provided they are presented as historical material and follow the generally agreed rules for history writing. Scholarly articles on geographical areas in Africa other than Tanzania may be accepted provided that they are properly introduced to exhibit relevance to Tanzanian history.

### **House Style**

Submissions should be in either American or British English, as long as consistency is maintained. They should start with an abstract not exceeding 250 words. The main text should have a maximum of 7,500 words (excluding notes) and should be double-spaced throughout in font 12 Times New Roman. Contributors should submit both hard and electronic copies, formatted in MS Word. Illustrations such as maps, diagrams and photographs should show their respective sources and evidence of copyright permission, where applicable. Captions should be short and clear.

Quotations of more than thirty words should begin on a new line, indented from the left-hand margin. Italics should be used only for titles of publications and for words in languages other than English. Footnotes, rather than endnotes or in-text notes, should be used in all submissions.

They should be numbered consecutively throughout the work. A separate bibliography is not required.

After an article has been accepted for publication and has been typeset, page proofs will be sent to the respective contributors for final corrections. Such corrections must be kept to a minimum and should not include introduction of new material into the work. Authors whose work is published in *Tanzania Zamani* will receive two free copies of the journal issue in which their articles are published.

### **Peer Review Process**

Upon receipt of a contribution, the editors will assess its scholarly quality and relevance to the journal. If the submission is found to be potentially publishable, it is subjected to a double-blind peer review process involving a minimum of two independent reviewers. Based on the reviewers' reports, the article is either accepted for publication, or sent back to the author with recommendations for improvements, or rejected effectively. Editors will normally inform contributors on the status of their articles within two months since the date of submission.

**TANZANIA ZAMANI**

Journal of Department of History,  
University of Dar es Salaam  
and  
Historical Association of Tanzania  
Published twice a year

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Yusufu Q. Lawi

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Bertram B. Mapunda

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS:**

- Albertus K. Onyiego - General Administration & Correspondence
- Frank Edward - Mobilisation of Articles, Book Reviews & Visibility
- Samwel Mhajida - Quality Control & Gate Keeping

**ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

- Prof. Abdul Sheriff - Former Secretary of the Historical Association of Tanzania and former Professor of History at the University of Dar es Salaam
- Prof. James L. Giblin - Professor of History, University of Iowa, USA

Prof. Gregory G. Maddox - Professor of History, Texas  
Southern University, USA

Prof. Arnold Temu - Professor of History, Tumaini  
University, Tanzania

Prof. Jamie Monson - Professor of History and Director  
of the African Studies Centre,  
Michigan State University, USA

### **EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS**

Prof. Juhani Koponen - University of Helsinki, Finland

Prof. Frederick J. Kaijage - University of Dar es Salaam,  
Tanzania

Prof. Jose Arturo S. Casco - El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico

Prof. Joseph Mbwiliza - Archbishop James University  
College, Tanzania

### **SUBSCRIPTION RATES PER COPY**

**Price:** Tsh. 5,000

**Annual subscription within Tanzania:** Tsh. 10,000,  
including postage.

**Institutions outside Tanzania:** USD 25 or its equivalent,  
including postage.

**Individuals outside Tanzania:** USD 15 or its equivalent,  
including postage.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Manuscripts, editorial correspondence, books for review, advertising, inquiries and subscription requests should be addressed to:

**Editor-in-Chief,**  
***Tanzania Zamani,***  
**Department of History,**  
**University of Dar es Salaam,**  
**P.O. Box 35050, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.**  
**Email: [history@udsm.ac.tz](mailto:history@udsm.ac.tz)**

## EDITORS' NOTE

The five articles included in issue of *Tanzania Zamani* vary widely in terms of themes, periodisation and geographical specificity. Three of them cover differing themes on the colonial and post-colonial history of Tanzania. Of the remaining two articles, one analyses the history of the topical phenomenon of oil politics in Nigeria. Although this article focusses exclusively on an area that is far removed geographically from the official cast of the *Tanzania Zamani* journal, the issues it explores are clearly relevant to the history of Africa in general, as further clarified below. The fifth article presents an aspect of the archaeology of rock art in central Tanzania. The editorial team considers this diversity of themes and geographical coverage to be a good opportunity for readers to gain access to a wide range of interesting historical issues within a single journal issue.

The first article by George Roberts provides biographical sketches of three Tanganyikan anti-colonialists, giving particular attention to activities they undertook during their official visit to India and other countries in 1956. The main official purpose of the journey was to seek, on behalf of TANU, which was then the leading nationalist party in the colony, higher education opportunities for Tanganyikans as the country prepared for self-rule. However, the author's ingenuity in this article is better demonstrated not by an account of what the TANU delegates accomplished during

the trip, but by his successful illustration of the fact that the delegates pursued other objectives which sometimes contradicted their prescribed official mission. Using intelligence information gleaned from documents relating to the journey, such as correspondence, bills, tickets and notes taken by delegates during meetings, the author demonstrates that two of the delegates evidently pursued a range of their own projects during the trip. These included 'organisation of pan-African conferences, creating transoceanic solidarities between Muslim organisations, securing patronage from Cold War powers, and advancing anticolonial causes in Africa's Indian Ocean basin.' By presenting this illustrative case, the author submits that anti-colonial struggles often went beyond narrow nationalism and involved leaders other than the well-known nationalist.

In the second article, Emma Minja and Maxmillian Chuhila discuss an aspect of Tanzanian postcolonial history, namely state development intervention in the name of Ujamaa policy and local people's initiatives. The authors use a case study approach in this article by focusing on two villages in the Kilombero valley in south-central Tanzania, namely Msolwa and Signali. The thrust of the article is an examination of how people in the study area conceptualized and implemented Ujamaa development strategies, and how the pertinent activities impacted on production and land use systems. While emphasizing that the Ujamaa strategy was variously perceived and implemented by people in different

parts of the valley, the authors argue that Msolwa and Signali villages stand out as good examples of how the policy's positive outcomes had been outstanding not only in the 1970s but even in recent years, long after the policy had lost currency at the territorial level. It is argued that indigenous peoples' positive inclination to the collectivisation initiative is accounted for by conditions that existed in the Kilombero Valley since the colonial days, including demographic, environmental and economic dynamics.

The third contribution by Bungaya Mayo examines the history of the Dar es Salaam based Friendship Textile Mill (FTM). The broader context for the article is post-independence government efforts to establish an industrial base for the country, starting with an import-substitution strategy. While the article focusses on the history of FTM, it also makes systematic reference to the major developments in the country's textile industry in general. The history of FTM is presented in three main phases, namely the public ownership phase, the neo-liberalism phase and the joint venture privatization phase. For each of the phases the author provides detailed analysis of the performance of the FTM, the factors influencing the noted development trends and measures taken by authorities in mitigating the negative factors. In terms of performance, the article shows that the textile industry in general and the FTM in particular recorded reasonable growth in the 1970s, but progress declined drastically in the 1980s, forcing the government to

privatise it under a joint venture arrangement. In the early 2000s the industry in general and FTM in particular recovered shortly, but soon started to decline again, coming to total stagnation and closure in 2018. The author concludes that the collapse of the FTM, and the textile industry in general, came about as a combined effect of government policy failure; the impact of the global economic crisis of the 1980s; the negative impacts of the economic liberalisation strategy adopted by government; and investor's destructive practices after privatisation.

The fourth article is rather atypical of *Tanzania Zamani* publications. It dwells entirely on a country other than Tanzania. The justification for its inclusion in this issue rests on the fact that the subject matter it examines, namely the origins and repercussions of the ongoing oil politics in Nigeria's Niger Delta, is of vital significance for Tanzania's history and future. This is particularly true in view of the currently evolving natural gas and other aspects of mining-based economy in Tanzania. In this article, Ugo Onumonu discusses how the concept 'Niger Delta' evolved historically, and why it ultimately became a central factor in Nigeria's politics of identity and regional control of economic resources. The author traces the development of this concept from the colonial days, when the Niger Delta hardly contributed to the dynamics of the then prevalent political struggles in the colony. In the post-colonial period up to 1980 the Delta became part of the broader Nigeria's south,

distinguishing itself from the now politically defined Nigeria's north. It was during this period that leaders of the central government, many of whom hailed from Nigeria's north, embarked on administrative measures that sought to exploit the southern oil resources to the detriment of economic and social development in the latter region. This resulted in the rise of agitation in the south, hence heightening of oil politics in Nigeria. Yet it was during the post-Biafra war period that Nigeria experienced a more profound political restructuring. In this period the Niger Delta split off from the rest of Nigeria's south and constituted a distinct region defined mainly as home to Nigeria's oil. This resulted in the galvanisation of Nigeria's oil politics as known today. The author's ultimate argument is that it was the rise of the Niger Delta as a distinct geopolitical entity which set off, and which still defines the country's politics in general.

In the fifth article, Makarius Itambu documents and analyses rock art in Central Tanzania's Ikungi District in Singida Region. The author justifies this study based on its originality, specifically its discovery of cupule and gong rock art, as well as documentation and analysis of previously discovered rock art features, named as rock engravings, cupules, hollows and gongs. The study leading to the production of this article entailed systematic reconnaissance surveys to discover and document rock art sites that were hitherto unknown to the scientific

community; ethnographic inquiries on the local interpretations of the noted artistic features; and extraction of relevant information from existing written sources. The author also reports that during fieldwork he devoted significant amount of time to engaging with local communities. Such engagement members of local communities aimed at heightening their knowledge of heritage significance of the rock art available in their areas and soliciting their support in the conservation of this heritage resource. The article contributes significantly to the historical archaeology of rock art in Tanzania.

## Table of Contents

EDITORS' NOTE.....	vii
TANU's Bombay Delegates: Stephen Mhando, Ali Mwinyi Tambwe, and the Global Itineraries of Tanganyikan Decolonisation <i>George Roberts</i> .....	1
Ujamaa in the Kilombero Valley: Msolwa and Signali Villages as Symbols of a National Project, circa 1960s – 1990s <i>Emma A. Minja &amp; Maxmillian J. Chuhila</i> .....	45
From Public Ownership to Joint Venture Privatisation of Parastatals: A History of the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Mill, 1968-2020 <i>Bungaya Dughangw Mayo</i> .....	80
The Concept of Niger Delta and Oil Politics in Nigeria from the Pre-colonial Era to the Recent Past <i>Ugo Paschal Onumonu</i> .....	133
Rock Art Recording and Documentation in Ikungi, Singida (Tanzania) <i>Makarius Peter Itambu</i> .....	181
Book Review: Joshua Grace. <i>African Motors: Technology, Gender and the History of Development</i> <i>Jethron Ayumbah Akallah</i> .....	217



# TANU's Bombay Delegates: Stephen Mhando, Ali Mwinyi Tambwe, and the Global Itineraries of Tanganyikan Decolonisation

George Roberts

*University of Sheffield and European University Institute,  
Florence*

## **Abstract**

*Despite the recent move to understand African decolonisation in more global and transnational terms, the history of TANU's struggle for independence remains understood primarily through a nationalist paradigm. Tanganyikans remain largely overlooked in the new historiography of 'Afro-Asian' connections in the 1950s. This article addresses this lacuna by sketching out the dual biographies of two less prominent TANU leaders, Stephen Mhando and Ali Mwinyi Tambwe. Using recently declassified colonial intelligence reports, it follows their journeys to the meeting of the Asian Socialist Conference in India in 1956 and subsequent travels around the Indian Ocean coastline. Through these life-stories, the article argues that activism under the auspices of African nationalism provided a platform for aspiring politicians to pursue their own projects in a decolonising world. These included the organisation of pan-African conferences, creating transoceanic solidarities between Muslim organisations, securing patronage from Cold War powers, and advancing anticolonial causes in Africa's Indian Ocean basin. By stepping away from a narrative focused squarely on a struggle for national independence, the article argues*

*for a more inclusive, globally connected and open-ended history of Tanganyikan anticolonialism.*

**Keywords:** Tanganyika, decolonisation, TANU, Islam, global history

## **1.0 Introduction**

In December 1956, Julius Nyerere addressed the United Nations in New York. In his message to the UN's Fourth Committee, which dealt with the question of 'trustee' territories, TANU's president set out the case against British colonialism in Tanganyika. Nyerere stressed the limited opportunities for Africans to receive an education in the territory, from primary schooling to university degrees. 'Our leadership and progress towards self-government depends on higher education', he argued. 'During the last five weeks I have been travelling in [the United States] trying to explore possibilities of obtaining scholarships for students from Tanganyika. At the same time the secretary of our organization has been doing the same thing in India.'<sup>1</sup>

That secretary – in fact, TANU's organising secretary-general – in India was Stephen Mhando. He headed a small delegation which had attended a meeting of the Asian Socialist Conference (ASC) in Bombay in November. After the meeting, Mhando and two other Tanganyikans – Ali

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Statement to the UN Fourth Committee, 1956', in Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity: A Selection from Writings and Speeches, 1952-65* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 42-46.

Mwinyi Tambwe and Lawi Sijaona – travelled across South Asia and beyond, in an arc which stretched from Burma to Sudan, by way of India, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Egypt. On the way, they formed a strikingly diverse set of connections with politicians, religious clerics, diplomats, and revolutionaries. We know all of this because of the surveillance activities of the colonial police. When Mhando and Tambwe eventually returned to East Africa in April 1957, their private papers were secretly photographed by the Special Branch. The correspondence, bills, aeroplane tickets, telephone directories, and scribbled notes on hotel stationery offer insights into the networks which TANU's Bombay delegates opened, extended, and deepened on their travels.<sup>2</sup>

This article builds on a wave of recent historiography on African anticolonialism which rejects the methodological nationalism of earlier work and instead draws attention to the significance of global and transnational connections in shaping a world after empire. Tanganyika's early political generation was a mobile one. As Emma Hunter observes, histories of TANU note the circulation of party representatives around Tanganyika in order to drum up support for the movement.<sup>3</sup> Yet these initiatives also

---

<sup>2</sup> The original papers themselves were unfortunately not retained; the archives contain only summaries of their contents.

<sup>3</sup> Emma Hunter, "The History and Affairs of TANU": Intellectual History, Nationalism, and the Postcolonial State in Tanzania', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 45 (2012), 365–83 (373–74).

stretched beyond the territory's borders. From the interwar years onwards, political activity in Tanganyika had a strong regional dimension. TANU's predecessor, the African Association, had branches outside of the territory's borders and drew on ideological currents from beyond the continent.<sup>4</sup> Makerere College in Uganda became a focal point for the formation of Tanganyikan anticolonialism elite.

By the 1950s, the horizons of this political geography widened. As colonised states in Asia won their independence and Cold War competition intensified in the Third World, African politicians became integrated into intercontinental 'Afro-Asian' revolutionary networks such as the Asian Socialist Conference.<sup>5</sup> Their incorporation into these networks brought new opportunities for Africans to travel in the name of anticolonial solidarity. Conference rhetoric was cemented by more transactional forms of support, especially in terms of the provision of scholarships – a motif which runs

---

<sup>4</sup> Ethan R. Sanders, 'James Aggrey and the African Nation: Pan-Africanism, Public Memory, and Political Imagination in Colonial East Africa', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 52 (2019), 399–424.

<sup>5</sup> Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective, 'Manifesto: Networks of Decolonization in Asia and Africa', *Radical History Review*, 131 (2018), 176–82. For examples relevant to East Africa, see Gerard McCann, 'Where Was the *Afro* in Afro-Asian Solidarity? Africa's "Bandung Moment" in 1950s Asia', *Journal of World History*, 30 (2019), 89–123; Ismay Milford and Gerard McCann, 'African Internationalism and the Erstwhile Trajectories of Kenyan Community Development: Joseph Murumbi's 1950s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 57 (2022), 111–35; Ismay Milford, *African Activists in a Decolonising World: The Making of an Anticolonial Culture, 1952–1966* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

through this article. Whereas Tanganyikans seeking a higher education had previously been confined to Makerere – or, for a select few, a degree in metropolitan Britain – subsequent scholarship places came from diverse sources. Yet Tanganyika’s anticolonialists did much more than act solely as representatives for TANU. This article argues that the connections they forged in Asia demonstrate how politicians could simultaneously act on behalf of the organisation *and* follow their own agendas, which frequently rubbed up against those of Nyerere and other party cadres.

This article also challenges a literature on Third World internationalism that often gravitates towards leading statesmen and prominent intellectuals. The political theorist Adom Getachew has popularised the notion of anticolonial ‘worldmaking’. She presents the intellectual visions of anticolonial leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere as attempts not just to attain formal independence, but to secure meaningful decolonisation through federal and pan-African projects.<sup>6</sup> Yet this focus on major figures masks the activities of lesser known anticolonialists, like TANU’s Bombay delegates. While these individuals certainly developed their own visions of a world after empire, this article instead focuses on the processes of building patronage networks and political alliances across borders and between institutions. As such, it pays less attention to grand

---

<sup>6</sup> Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

ideological statements made on conference platforms and more to encounters away from the public eye.<sup>7</sup>

This article examines these networks through the biographies of two TANU politicians who attended the Bombay conference: Stephen Mhando and Ali Mwinyi Tambwe.<sup>8</sup> Neither Mhando nor Tambwe published their own life story, so this article turns to colonial intelligence reports contained within the ‘migrated archive’ files held at the National Archives in London. The existence of these files came to light through a legal case against the British government brought by survivors of colonial violence against Mau Mau suspects in Kenya.<sup>9</sup> These files, with the reference ‘FCO 141/...’ include a wealth of previously undisclosed police reporting on anticolonial movements.<sup>10</sup> Despite ongoing

---

<sup>7</sup> Su Lin Lewis, ‘Skies That Bind: Air Travel in the Bandung Era’, in Stephen Legg, Mike Heffernan, Jake Hodder, and Benjamin Thorpe (eds), *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 234–51.

<sup>8</sup> In the text, I give his name in a standardised form of ‘Ali Mwinyi Tambwe’ for clarity. But he used many combinations and spellings of this name, in a fashion not atypical for Comorians. Colonial officials and other third parties were likewise inconsistent in rendering his name. During his earlier career, the inclusion of ‘Haloua’ or ‘Haluwa’ was commonplace; ‘Tambwe’ appeared only later; ‘Mwinyi’ was sometimes spelt ‘Mogne’.

<sup>9</sup> David M. Anderson, ‘Guilty Secrets: Deceit, Denial, and the Discovery of Kenya’s “Migrated Archive”’, *History Workshop Journal*, 80 (2015), 142–60; Riley Linebaugh, ‘Colonial Fragility: British Embarrassment and the So-Called “Migrated Archives”’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 50 (2022), 729–56).

<sup>10</sup> The catalogue of files for Tanganyika and Zanzibar (numbering over 600 in total) is available in an online finding aid:

campaigns to have these files repatriated to former colonised states, they remain only available to researchers in London. Their contents must be treated with caution. Often their focus reveals more about the anxieties of colonial officials than the intentions of the Africans who are their subject. Nonetheless, used critically, the depth of reporting allows us to explore TANU's politics in unprecedented detail.

Before beginning, it must be pointed out that there was a third TANU member in Bombay: Lawi Sijaona. Though his biography remains to be written, Sijaona's story is better known, as a politician in Mtwara, TANU Youth League leader, and holder of multiple cabinet positions after independence.<sup>11</sup> Sijaona's own travels in South Asia were less extensive than those of Mhando or Tambwe; in fact, as we will see, Sijaona's reports about their behaviour back to Dar es Salaam contributed to their temporary marginalisation within TANU.

---

[cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/migrated-archives-8-tranche-guide.pdf](https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/migrated-archives-8-tranche-guide.pdf), accessed 8 June 2022.

<sup>11</sup> See George Roberts, *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961-1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); J. Gus Liebenow, *Colonial Rule and Political Development in Tanzania: The Case of the Makonde* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971); James R. Brennan, 'Youth, the TANU Youth League and Managed Vigilantism in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1925-73', *Africa*, 76 (2006), 221-46.

## 2.0 Paths into TANU

Stephen Mhando was born in Moshi in 1918.<sup>12</sup> He attended Tabora Boys School and then continued his studies via a teaching diploma at Makerere – the same route later taken by Nyerere, his junior by four years. Designed to produce a class of colonial civil servants the region, Tabora and Makerere were key sites in the formation of a new African political elite. Mhando graduated from Makerere in 1939 and returned to Tanganyika, where he worked as a schoolteacher. He earned a reputation as a self-styled modern man: a contemporary-recalled story of him boldly rejecting the traditional *kanzu* and teaching instead in an all-white uniform.<sup>13</sup> Mhando's return to Tanganyika coincided with the reinvigoration of local political life through the relaunching of the African Association, which he joined in the 1940s. In 1951, he was briefly appointed president of the renamed Tanganyika African Association. He also took on multiple offices in Tanganyika's burgeoning scene of representative organisations: in 1952 he became secretary for both the African Government Servants' Association and the African Teachers' Association.

---

<sup>12</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the biographical information in this and subsequent paragraphs is drawn from Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 27 July 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17802/71 and 'Stephen Mhando', enclosed in Hart to Holmes, 6 June 1969, UKNA FCO 31/434/18.

<sup>13</sup> Erasto A. M. Mang'anya, *Discipline and Tears: Reminiscences of an African Civil Servant in Colonial Tanganyika* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1984), 118–19.

In a pattern that dogged his career, Mhando attracted allegations of financial misconduct. First, a partner in a small secretarial business in Dar es Salaam accused him of misappropriating the company's funds. More seriously, in September 1951 Mhando resigned his position as president of the Tanganyika African Association after just nine months, having been accused of taking money provided to him to tour the provinces. Finally, in 1953, Mhando was found guilty of embezzling funds from the African Government Servants' Association, which again he had been given to enable him to travel around Tanganyika. When the colonial government asked the headmaster at Tabora Secondary School about Mhando's activities, he replied that Mhando was a very good teacher, though a 'powerful character' with 'all the makings of a trouble maker'.<sup>14</sup>

Despite this reputation, Nyerere valued Mhando's political experience and acumen. Mhando did not immediately join TANU after its foundation in 1954, since civil servants were barred from membership. Nonetheless, he maintained contact with the organisation's leadership. Eventually, in March 1956, Mhando accepted an invitation to serve as TANU's organising secretary-general, a position which was vacant after Oscar Kambona took up a scholarship in London.<sup>15</sup> Mhando resigned from his teaching position at

---

<sup>14</sup> Director of Education to Member of Social Services, Secretariat, 13 October 1955, UKNA FCO 141/17938/26.

<sup>15</sup> Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 29 March 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17802/16.

Tabora and began work at TANU's headquarters in Dar es Salaam in August. At this time, TANU was experiencing growing pains. Its rapid expansion had stretched its organisational capacity and was creating severe financial problems. Mhando therefore began to restructure TANU by streamlining the hierarchies linking grassroots branches to the headquarters.<sup>16</sup> Mhando also sought to reform the Central Committee, which contained members of an older elite who still mistrusted Mhando due to his past financial impropriety.<sup>17</sup>

Ali Mwinyi Tambwe took a different path into politics. For a start, he was not originally from Tanganyika, having been born between 1916 and 1918 in the Comoros Islands, which was a French colony.<sup>18</sup> His family left Comoros for Zanzibar when he was a child. They joined a small but growing diaspora community, who were enticed by the business and employment opportunities available in the Sultanate. The Comorians occupied an ambiguous and contested niche within Zanzibar's colonial racial hierarchies. Though somatically similar to Africans, Comorians drew on

---

<sup>16</sup> Mhando to TANU Provincial Secretaries, 11 August 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17802/92A.

<sup>17</sup> Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 19 March 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17802/10; Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 14 September 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17802/104.

<sup>18</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the biographical information in this and subsequent paragraphs is drawn from 'Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 1 November 1955, UKNA FCO 141/17916/111; and Broadbent to various, 16 May 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17744/127.

genealogical and civilisational arguments to claim ‘non-native’ status, like the larger Arab population.<sup>19</sup> Tambwe’s background and education gave him command of English, French, and Swahili. After finishing secondary school, Tambwe moved to Tanganyika, where he began a peripatetic career in the civil service around the territory, which eventually brought him to Dar es Salaam.

In the capital, Tambwe became active in a vibrant but often fractious scene of Islamic associational life. In 1933, prominent African Muslims in Dar es Salaam formed the Jamiatul al-Islamiyya (Muslim Society of Tanganyika). They alleged that the city’s Muslim institutions were dominated by Asians, who failed to provide adequate education for Africans.<sup>20</sup> Sometime in the late 1930s, Tambwe became the organisation’s secretary. He did so at an inopportune time, as the society’s primary school had been closed by the colonial administration amid tensions among the Jamiatul’s members, especially concerning the role played by its president, the liwali of Dar es Salaam.<sup>21</sup> The liwali, who administered justice to the city’s ‘native’ population’, had

---

<sup>19</sup> Iain Walker, ‘The Comorians, the British, the French, and the Arabs: Struggle for Status in the Protectorate of Zanzibar’, *ZIFF Journal* (2007), 97–106.

<sup>20</sup> James R. Brennan, ‘Constructing Arguments and Institutions of Islamic Belonging: M. O. Abbasi, Colonial Tanzania, and the Western Indian Ocean World, 1925–61’, *Journal of African History*, 55 (2014), 211–28 (218–21); Ezekiel Kamwaga, ‘Ali Mwinyi Tambwe ni nani hasa?’, *Raia Mwema*, 5 July 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Said, *Life and Times*, 47–49; Ali Mwinyi Haluwa, letter to the editor, *Tanganyika Standard*, 20 December 1940.

become a controversial figure in urban political life. After its establishment in 1921, the office of the liwali was held exclusively by Arabs, to African criticism. Some urban elites, mostly Arabs and elder African townsmen (*wenye mji*), continued to support the liwali. But a younger, more assertive group of more recently arrived African migrants (*watu wa kuja*), including Tambwe, challenged the blatantly racial injustice of these arrangements.<sup>22</sup> Tambwe's activities also created unrest among Dar es Salaam's small Comorian community, the more conservative of whom associated themselves with 'Arab' interests. In 1946, Tambwe was held responsible for a split in Dar es Salaam's Comorian Association. In these overlapping controversies at the Jamiatul and among his fellow Comorians, Tambwe embraced the more racially circumscribed idea of African identity which increasingly formed the basis for political organisation in Dar es Salaam. This was strikingly different from the choice made by most Comorians, particularly in Zanzibar, who aligned themselves with Arab interests. These incidents also demonstrate how Tambwe had already developed a reputation as a divisive character, capable of building bridges in urban society while simultaneously burning others.

---

<sup>22</sup> James R. Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 66–69; Andrew Burton, 'Adjutants, Agents, Intermediaries: The Native Administration in Dar es Salaam Township, 1919–61', *Azania*, 36–37 (2001), 98–118.

Tambwe resurfaces in the archival record again in the early 1950s, as African political life picked up pace. He became active in the African Association in Mwanza, meeting with the British Minister of State for Colonial Affairs on his visit to Tanganyika in 1950.<sup>23</sup> Tambwe returned to Dar es Salaam in 1952, where he briefly worked for the Public Works Department. He resumed his involvement with the Jamiatul Islamiyya, where he again served as secretary-general.<sup>24</sup> Tambwe was also instrumental in the creation of the Central Society of Tanganyika Muslims in 1954. This organisation included Africans, Arabs, and Asians in an attempt to patch up the sectarian and racial differences within the country's Islamic community.<sup>25</sup> This initiative again brought him into conflict with the liwali, who was uneasy at the role played within the Central Society by younger, more radical African Muslims like Tambwe.<sup>26</sup> Tambwe renewed his battles with the Comorian Association, which cultivated good relations

---

<sup>23</sup> Note of African Association's interview with Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, Mwanza, 26 August 1950, UKNA CO 691/208/12.

<sup>24</sup> Based on interviews with Tambwe, Mohammed Said (*Life and Times*, 35) states that he was not a member of the African Association, but this is contradicted by multiple colonial documents.

<sup>25</sup> 'List of the management committee of the Central Society of Tanganyika Muslims – Dar es Salaam', enclosed in Hon. Secretaries, Central Society of Tanganyika Muslims, to Chief Secretary, 7 May 1956, TNA, acc. 226, ABJ 52. In minute 3 of 21 May 1956 to the same document, a colonial official noted that 'there was some difficulty in arousing enough enthusiasm to get this Society started.' See also Brennan, 'Constructing Arguments', 223–24.

<sup>26</sup> District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, Dar es Salaam, 8 October 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17858/47.

with the liwali.<sup>27</sup> The association's president called on the District Commissioner to expel Tambwe from Dar es Salaam.

Tambwe translated the political and social capital he had acquired through his involvement in both the African Association and Muslim political life into TANU's activities in Dar es Salaam. After being recruited into TANU by Zuberi Mtemvu, the new organisation's first secretary-general, in January, Tambwe was elected to the party's Central Committee in 1955.<sup>28</sup> His organisational acumen and language skills proved valuable resources for TANU. In June, Tambwe served as a translator and guide for John Hatch, an official from the British Labour Party, who left Tanganyika with a favourable official of TANU.<sup>29</sup> In December, Tambwe accompanied Nyerere on successful regional tours to expand membership of the party throughout Tanganyika.<sup>30</sup> As TANU sought to build support among a society scored by racial divisions, Tambwe emerged as a key broker between Dar es Salaam's African and Asian communities, drawing on his experiences in groups like the Central Society. He collected money on behalf of TANU from Dar es Salaam's Asian population and, for a brief period in early 1956, served as a paid informant of the Indian Commission in Nairobi on

---

<sup>27</sup> See Sule Herith, President, Comorian Association, to Chief Secretary, 30 March 1955, TNA, acc. 226, ABJ/9, f.1, in which the Comorian Association invited the Chief Secretary to a party in honour of the liwali.

<sup>28</sup> Said, *Life and Times*, 49n10.

<sup>29</sup> John Hatch, *New from Africa* (London: Dobson, 1956), 51–56.

<sup>30</sup> Said, *Life and Times*, 203.

developments in Tanganyika. Yet Tambwe also continued to court controversy. His role in Muslim politics caused disquiet among some TANU members, given the involvement in the Central Society of several Asians who were vocal opponents of the African nationalist cause.<sup>31</sup> Like Mhando, he was also accused of misappropriation of party funds.

Mhando and Tambwe took contrasting paths towards TANU but demonstrated their ability to forge connections in a political landscape marked by the proliferation of associational culture. Mhando's trajectory was that of the more conventional African nationalist. Tambwe's was more unusual and cosmopolitan, as revealed by the networks of relationships he forged in Dar es Salaam, which simultaneously bridged racial divides while triggering confrontations among the city's Muslim and Comorian communities. Yet the cards of both men were already marked with a chequered financial past which attracted the distrust of rival TANU leaders.

### **3.0 Tickets to Bombay**

As TANU's campaign for *uhuru* gathered steam, their contemporaries in Asia debated how to translate political independence into economic development. Indonesia proclaimed independence in 1945. Colonial rule ended in Burma, India, and Pakistan in 1947. Pushed to the political

---

<sup>31</sup> Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 3 March 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17801/11.

margins in their own states, Asian socialists channelled the spirit of internationalism to form the ASC, which held its first meeting in Rangoon in 1953. In a precursor to Tanzania's own African socialist policies, the ASC provided a forum for discussing models of development which were adapted to the realities of post-colonial state-making rather than derived from European blueprints.<sup>32</sup>

The ASC's political horizons stretched beyond Asia, as it found common cause in its support for the cause of African independence. It established an Anti-Colonial Bureau in Rangoon to coordinate these activities and produced newsletters to publicise African liberation struggles.<sup>33</sup> Concerned about the 'subversive' threat posed by the Asian socialists, the colonial administration in Tanganyika banned ASC publications. Nonetheless, TANU supplied news about its independence struggle to the ASC via Jim Markham, a Ghanaian member of the ASC's Anti-Colonial Bureau.<sup>34</sup> Through ASC channels, TANU also secured scholarship

---

<sup>32</sup> Su Lin Lewis, 'Asian Socialism and the Forgotten Architects of Post-Colonial Freedom, 1952–1956', *Journal of World History*, 30 (2019), 55–88; Talbot Imlay, 'Defining Asian Socialism: The Asian Socialist Conference, Asian Socialists, and the Limits of a Global Socialist Movement in 1953', *International Review of Social History*, 66 (2021), 415–41.

<sup>33</sup> Said (*Life and Times*, 123) suggests contact between the African Association and the ASC dated back to 1950, yet this was before the formation of the latter.

<sup>34</sup> Markham to [recipient unclear], 26 March 1955, UKNA FCO 141/17809/36A. On Markham, see McCann, 'Where was the Afro in Afro-Asian Solidarity?'

opportunities in Yugoslavia.<sup>35</sup> In September 1956, TANU accepted an invitation from the ASC to send eight delegates to Bombay as observers for its second meeting. At the time, Nyerere was in Britain and his own travel plans meant that he was unable to attend. This left responsibility with determining who would take up the invitation to the remaining TANU leadership in Tanganyika.<sup>36</sup>

The British administration was concerned about the impact which participation in the Bombay meeting might have on TANU, especially given the context of the Cold War. It registered its opposition to the participation of TANU members in the ASC meeting. 'We should be no more ready to allow our charges to attend it than we would a similar conference behind the Iron Curtain', wrote the deputy governor. The administration proposed denying new applicants' passports to prevent them from travelling.<sup>37</sup> But the Colonial Office was less certain, noting that the ASC 'has in the past shown itself explicitly anti-communist.' Nonetheless, it was wary of the links between Afro-Asian activism and the communist world. It therefore gave the green light for the Tanganyikan government to frustrate

---

<sup>35</sup> Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 13 April 1955, UKNA FCO 141/17809/36.

<sup>36</sup> 'Asian Socialist Conference', 24 October 1956, UKNA KV 2/3887/22A.

<sup>37</sup> Fletcher-Cooke to Lennox-Boyd, 26 September 1956, UKNA CO 936/351/46.

delegates from attending, provided this was done discreetly – actions which proved ultimately unsuccessful.<sup>38</sup>

In the face of colonial obstructions, TANU leaders scrambled to obtain passports and money for air tickets to India.<sup>39</sup> Although the ASC organisers proposed to pay for the delegates' expenses while in Bombay, the financial burden of travel proved too much for some TANU leaders.<sup>40</sup> One aspiring delegate in Tanga obtained access to local cinemas from their Asian proprietors free of charge as part of his branch's fundraising efforts, but still failed to raise sufficient funds.<sup>41</sup> In the end, only three TANU members travelled to Bombay. Mhando paid a £150 deposit to secure a passport. His air ticket, which was booked for him by the Anti-Colonial Bureau, was reportedly valid for a tour that took him through Nairobi, Bombay, Rangoon, Karachi, and Cairo. Sijaona already possessed a passport, so faced fewer bureaucratic hurdles. By virtue of his Comorian background, Tambwe held a French passport and so could travel

---

<sup>38</sup> Lennox-Boyd to Twining, 23 October 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17744/24.

<sup>39</sup> On air travel and Afro-Asian conferences, see Su Lin Lewis, 'Skies That Bind: Air Travel in the Bandung Era', in Stephen Legg, Mike Heffernan, Jake Hodder, and Benjamin Thorpe (eds), *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 234–51.

<sup>40</sup> Sipalo to Mhando, 16 October 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17744/22A.

<sup>41</sup> 'Extract from Tanganyika Intelligence Summary, November 1956', UKNA CO 822/859/133.

unhindered.<sup>42</sup> Yet he funded his journey privately, using sums pocketed from donations to TANU from Asian sponsors.

The three Tanganyikans arrived in Bombay on 5 November. They immediately involved themselves in the meeting, which was attended by a small number of other Africans, including the Kenyan Joseph Murumbi. As observers, the Tanganyikans did not have voting rights but were allowed to address the conference. Mhando and Sijaona participated in the sub-committee on African liberation. They left their mark on the meeting, which issued a resolution that called on Britain to declare that Tanganyika would be developed 'primarily as an African state', with the introduction of democratic elections without communal representation reserved for different racial groups. It also raised concerns about the alienation of Tanganyikan land by foreign settlers, especially from South Africa, so that 'the story of Kenya is not repeated' – a reference to the Mau Mau conflict.<sup>43</sup> Outside of the conference hall, Mhando addressed a rally to mark Dependent Peoples' Day on 11 November. He told a crowd estimated at 20,000 people that the rally was a 'grim

---

<sup>42</sup> Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 29 October 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17744/35; Twining to Lennox-Boyd, 5 November 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17744/42.

<sup>43</sup> 'Socialists want adult suffrage here', *Tanganyika Standard*, 12 November 1956. On fears about the creation of an East African federation to support settler claims, see Ismay Milford, 'Federation, Partnership, and the Chronologies of Space in 1950s East and Central Africa', *Historical Journal*, 63 (2020), 1325–48.

reminder' that millions of people remained under colonial oppression. Mhando stated that the goodwill he had experienced at the conference would inspire Africans in their struggle for independence.<sup>44</sup> All in all, then, the Tanganyikan contribution to the ASC was marginal. More generally, reports about the meeting in Bombay were drowned out by epoch-making crises elsewhere: the Soviet invasion of Hungary and the Franco-British-Israeli humiliation over the Suez Canal at the hands of Nasser's Egypt. But, as Mhando's and Tambwe's papers revealed, their time in Bombay was merely a landing stage for altogether more interesting itineraries.

#### **4.0 The rogue anti-colonialist? Mhando after Bombay**

After the conference, Tanganyika's Bombay delegates went their separate ways. Mhando was tasked with securing political and especially material support for TANU. He embarked on a journey which took him around South Asia, through the Middle East, and back into Africa. Yet though Mhando travelled as TANU's representative, the documents colonial officials copied on his return show that he did so while simultaneously pursuing his own political projects.

On his travels, Mhando worked closely with Munukayumbwa Sipalo, who had also attended the ASC conference. Sipalo was a law student from Northern Rhodesia, who came to India on a scholarship in 1954. He

---

<sup>44</sup> 'Asian socialists pledge full support', *Times of India*, 12 November 1956.

established an 'Africa Bureau' in Delhi, which was linked to the ASC headquarters in Rangoon. Sipalo also set up an 'African Liberation Committee', based in Cairo.<sup>45</sup> Mhando first travelled eastwards towards Burma at the invitation of the local government and with Sipalo's support. Touring Burma, Mhando was impressed with the functioning of co-operatives and the training of school leavers in practical skills, as well as Burma's enthusiasm for the cause of African liberation. Mhando told Nyerere that, in contrast to the assistance offered by India and Pakistan, Burmese commitments was 'genuinely given with no ulterior motive'. Burma's socialist leaders even proposed the installation of a TANU representative in Rangoon to coordinate this activity.<sup>46</sup> Sipalo helped Mhando to secure Burmese financial assistance for TANU and the donation of a printing press – an important gift, as the party sought to communicate with its growing membership across Tanganyika.<sup>47</sup>

After his visit to Burma, Mhando returned to India. He met up again with Joseph Murumbi, as the pair addressed a public meeting in Delhi through Sipalo's Africa Bureau.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Ismay Milford, "Just an African Radical"? A Zambian at the Edge of the Third World', in Laura Almagor, Haakon Ikononou, and Gunvor Simonsen (eds), *Global Biographies: Living History as Method* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), 105–23.

<sup>46</sup> Translation of Mhando's report to TANU, in Commissioner of Police to Ministerial Secretary, 11 November 1957, UKNA FC) 141/17776/6.

<sup>47</sup> Alijah Gordon, *On Becoming Alijah* (Kuala Lumpur: self-published, 2003), 292.

<sup>48</sup> 'The Mhando Papers', UKNA FCO 141/17938/51A.

Mhando spent the next month in India and Pakistan. In the former, he was particularly interested in the depth and vibrancy of trade union activity, while in the latter he observed the success of small-scale industries and craft workshops. In all these countries, Mhando sought out scholarships for Tanganyikan students – a goal which, given the excerpt from Nyerere’s speech to the UN quoted at the beginning of this article, appears to have been a key motivation behind TANU’s acceptance of the invitation to the Bombay conference.<sup>49</sup>

Mhando then began a prolonged journey home via the Arab world. After a fruitless stay in Beirut, he arrived in Cairo. At that time, the Egyptian capital enjoyed the status which Dar es Salaam itself later assumed as a mecca of anticolonial revolution in Africa.<sup>50</sup> Mhando claimed that the Egyptians initially treated him with scepticism, suspecting that he was a British agent. Once he had overcome these initial problems, he was provided with board and lodging, organised through Mohammed Fayek, head of the African department of Egypt’s military intelligence.<sup>51</sup> Mhando urged

---

<sup>49</sup> Translation of Mhando’s report to TANU, in Commissioner of Police to Ministerial Secretary, 11 November 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17776/6.

<sup>50</sup> Reem Abou-El-Fadl, ‘Building Egypt’s Afro-Asian Hub: Infrastructures of Solidarity and the 1957 Cairo Conference’, *Journal of World History*, 30 (2019), 157–92.

<sup>51</sup> See Mohamed Fayek, ‘The July 23 Revolution and Africa’, in Khair El-Din Haseeb, *The Arabs & Africa*, vol. 3 (London: Croon Helm, 1985), 90–128; Helmi Sharawy, *Political and Social Thought in Africa* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2014), 27–40.

the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to employ East Africans in order to liaise with the liberation movements in the region. He argued that ‘the time has indeed come for TANU to become militant without being violent, to organise non-cooperation without fighting our rulers’.<sup>52</sup> The Egyptians proposed that Mhando stayed in Cairo permanently, as TANU’s representative – an offer Mhando declined. Instead, on 1 April, he left for Sudan, but explained to TANU that ‘the people I hoped to meet were not present’ and so immediately left for Dar es Salaam.<sup>53</sup>

However, Mhando did not explain to TANU the real purpose of his Sudan visit. The most startling part of his papers detail plans for organising a ‘Pan-African Conference’ in Khartoum. Mhando proposed bringing together political movements from across Africa – he listed twenty-three in total – to coordinate the formation of a permanent secretariat, which would then seek to raise support for its anti-colonial cause around the world. At least initially he had the sponsorship of Sipalo’s Cairo-based African Liberation Committee. The pair proposed a meeting of East and Central African liberation movement leaders in Dar es Salaam in February 1957, to lay the groundwork for the main event in Khartoum.<sup>54</sup> This was not Sipalo’s first effort to organise a pan-African meeting in

---

<sup>52</sup> ‘The Mhando Papers’, UKNA FCO 141/17938/51A.

<sup>53</sup> Translation of Mhando’s report to TANU, in Commissioner of Police to Ministerial Secretary, 11 November 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17776/6.

<sup>54</sup> Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, 30 January 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17744/81.

Sudan. He had tried to hold an 'All African Youth Festival' in Omdurman in 1955, prior to Sudan's independence in November 1956, but during a transition period of self-government.<sup>55</sup> Just like Sipalo's earlier initiative, Mhando's proposed conference was blocked. The Sudanese government informed Britain that it had refused permission for any event supported by the African Liberation Committee.<sup>56</sup> It is telling that while the papers copied by Special Branch contains extensive information about these plans, there is no mention of them in an internal report which Mhando produced for TANU.

The solidarities which Mhando forged through his travels were fragile and could be quickly undermined by personal grievances. Sipalo had been instrumental in the genesis of the planned Pan-African Conference. But at some point in December 1956 and long before Mhando's arrival in Cairo, he appears to have fallen out with Sipalo. Mhando warned Special Branch in Tanganyika of Sipalo's intention to travel to the country for the preparatory meeting. Mhando explained that he had concerns about Sipalo's communist associations. 'Mr Sipalo has been to most of the capitals of Europe, including Moscow', he wrote. 'Not that a fleeting visit to Moscow does anyone any harm, but I have closely studied and watched Sipalo, and I am not happy about his political leanings.' Mhando believed it was in the interests of

---

<sup>55</sup> Milford, "Just an African Radical"?, 111-12.

<sup>56</sup> 'The Mhando Papers', UKNA FCO 141/17938/51A.

both TANU and the British government to prevent Sipalo from staying in Tanganyika; he claimed to have written to TANU headquarters to convey the same message.<sup>57</sup> Sijaona alluded to this split between Mhando and Sipalo in an intercepted letter to TANU's Central Committee, which asked the party to help Sipalo. 'Let us forget the people who sling mud at their fellow men', he wrote – most likely with reference to Mhando's own letter.<sup>58</sup> Thanks to Mhando, the Tanganyikan authorities were already aware of Sipalo's plans and declared him a prohibited immigrant. There is nothing in the archive to suggest what precipitated Mhando's denunciation of Sipalo to the colonial regime. But Mhando clearly knew what he was doing by flashing the threat of communism before the eyes of the police.

Indeed, British conclusions about Mhando's travels coalesced around questions regarding the extent of his own relationship to communism. As they pored over Mhando's papers, colonial administrators projected their own Cold War fears onto their fragmented content. The Special Branch report concluded that Mhando was 'a very ardent African nationalist' and 'prepared to approach any organisation or government which he supposes will be sympathetic to his aims'.<sup>59</sup> Mhando was 'certainly not a Communist or even a fellow traveller', yet his 'extremely naïve' ideas might make

---

<sup>57</sup> Mhando to Connolly, 17 December 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17744/57A.

<sup>58</sup> Sijaona to Mtamila, n.d. [early January 1957], UKNA FCO 141/17744/80A.

<sup>59</sup> 'The Mhando Papers', UKNA FCO 141/17938/51A.

him vulnerable to communist approach. Another official disagreed with this verdict: Mhando was neither naïve nor an extremist but rather attuned to the need to speak in different political tongues to secure support. Nonetheless, the official was also dismissive: ‘the reflection is more truly that TANU as a political organisation is juvenile by international standards.’<sup>60</sup> Despite this, the governor of Tanganyika, Edward Twining, informed the Colonial Secretary in London that Mhando as ‘a dangerous extremist who has been thoroughly indoctrinated in India and Egypt’.<sup>61</sup> All these conclusions were wide of the mark. Mhando’s political project – the Khartoum conference in particular – might have been ambitious paper dreams, but his courting of multiple sources of aid, especially to access scholarships, was in tune with TANU’s newfound confidence in a mobile revolutionary world, rather than its ‘juvenile’ nature. The conclusion which reached the Colonial Office – that Mhando was a pro-Nasser extremist – represented deeper anxieties about the direction of political change in Africa after the humiliation of the Suez Crisis.

Mhando finally returned to East Africa on 2 April 1957. By this point, he had incurred the wrath of TANU’s inner circles. There had been disquiet about Mhando’s leadership even before his departure for India; this was amplified by the money and time spent on his journey. TANU’s finances were

---

<sup>60</sup> [author unclear], 8 May 1957, UKNA FCO 141/1938, minute 52.

<sup>61</sup> Twining to Lennox-Boyd, 15 May 1957, UKNA CO 822/1361/61.

in a dire condition, as it struggled to pay off various debts. While in South Asia, Mhando complained that TANU had not provided adequate funds for his expenses. He then misspent money which was sent to him.<sup>62</sup> Sijaona informed the Central Committee that the money sent to the delegates to pay for their return air fare had been spent by Mhando 'on his own pleasures.'<sup>63</sup> Certainly, a trip to the 'matchless' Taj Mahal was hardly consummate with his political task.<sup>64</sup> Shortly after his return to Tanganyika, the Central Committee removed Mhando from his position. He was accused of embezzling party funds, although the colonial police decided that there was insufficient evidence for criminal charges.<sup>65</sup> Nyerere told an acquaintance in London that Mhando's misbehaviour had led to the loss of expected financial help from the ASC when it learnt that Mhando had informed the police of Sipalo's intended visit to Tanganyika. Nyerere was also disappointed by Mhando's loose talk about Egyptian military aid, which ran counter to TANU's image of moderation.<sup>66</sup> Amid these controversies, Mhando was

---

<sup>62</sup> Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary, UKNA FCO 141/17744/76.

<sup>63</sup> Sijaona to Mtamila, n.d. [early January 1957], UKNA FCO 141/17744/80A.

<sup>64</sup> Mhando to Connolly, 17 December 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17744/57A.

<sup>65</sup> Fletcher-Cooke to Mathieson, 30 May 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17938/66; Superintendent of Police to Assistant Commissioner of Police, 3 October 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17938/76A.

<sup>66</sup> 'Julius Nyerere and the Tanganyika African National Union (T.A.N.U.)', 19 June 1957, UKNA KV 2/3887.

rumoured to have considered forming a new party with other marginalised TANU members.<sup>67</sup>

Nothing came of these developments. Instead, Nyerere moved Mhando back into the TANU fold. Mhando's capacity for organisation, political acumen, and extensive range of contacts within Tanganyika and beyond was simply too great a resource to ignore. By March 1958, he was back at TANU's headquarters, this time as editor of its newsheet *Sauti ya TANU* – to the irritation of senior party cadres.<sup>68</sup>

### **5.0 Islamic internationalism? Tambwe's travels in Asia**

Like Mhando, Ali Mwinyi Tambwe merely started his journey in Bombay. He had not travelled as an official TANU delegate yet continued to present himself as the party's representative as he moved through South Asia. But whereas Mhando worked within the cadre of African nationalism, Tambwe's papers suggest that he pursued quite different aims: the development of transterritorial connections among the Muslim *umma* around the Indian Ocean. He juggled the promotion of TANU's struggle with the interests of Tanganyikan Muslims, especially by obtaining scholarships. His papers were replete with the details of Muslim religious leaders and the ambassadors of Muslim states.

---

<sup>67</sup> 'Extract from Tanganyika Intelligence Summary from November 1957', UKNA CO 822/1362/169.

<sup>68</sup> Commissioner of Police to Ministerial Secretary, 18 March 1958, UKNA FCO 141/17806/115.

After Bombay, Tambwe arranged a month-long stay in Pakistan, via its commissioner in Nairobi. Despite his previous contacts with Indian diplomats in East Africa, Tambwe turned his sympathies towards Pakistan. He spoke on national radio in support of the Pakistan's claim to Kashmir.<sup>69</sup> But it was Islam, not regional geopolitics, which drove Tambwe's agenda. Post-independence Pakistan had become a dynamic node of transnational Islamic politics and culture. Tambwe's correspondence shows that he took the opportunity while in Karachi to meet prominent Muslim clerics and politicians. He met Abdul Hamid Qadri Badayuni, a Muslim leader with a long record of anticolonial activism, initially in the interwar Khalifat movement and then later in the Muslim League. Tambwe claimed that he and Badayuni had agreed to form a sub-committee between their respective organisations, the Central Society of Tanganyika Muslims and the Jamiat Ulama-i-Pakistan. He also discussed the challenges of Muslim education with the well-travelled Algerian, Bashir Ibrahim.<sup>70</sup> In a letter to the Central Society, Tambwe claimed that Ibrahim had promised to secure 'us' scholarships at universities in the Middle East. Tambwe also appealed for support for the Central Society in letters written for publication in Pakistani newspapers.<sup>71</sup> His activities in Pakistan were evidently

---

<sup>69</sup> Broadbent to various, 16 May 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17744/127.

<sup>70</sup> See Allan Christelow, *Algerians without Borders: The Making of a Global Frontier Society* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012), 119–30.

<sup>71</sup> Broadbent to various, 16 May 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17744/127.

motivated by his desire to strengthen Muslim organisations in Tanganyika rather than furthering the cause of the independent struggle.

After Pakistan and an extended trip to Burma, Tambwe intended to travel even more widely in the Muslim world. He approached the Indonesian socialist, Sutan Sjahir, a founding member of the ASC, with a view of visiting Jakarta. When this fell through, Tambwe informed two Muslim interlocutors that he now hoped to go to Saudi Arabia.<sup>72</sup> It is unclear whether any of these endeavours yielded fruit: it is not improbable that Tambwe was exaggerating fleeting encounters in Pakistan with the likes of Badayuni and Ibrahim. Viewed from a distance, though, the reasons for Tambwe's eagerness to attend the ASC by using stolen money become clearer. It represented a chance to build pan-Islamic relationships with influential members of the *ulama* in South Asia as much as furthering a nationalist struggle.

Tambwe returned to Tanganyika in April 1957, shortly after Mhando. He received a similarly cold reception. Tambwe had been removed from TANU's Central Committee while still out of the country, due to his misappropriation of party funds.<sup>73</sup> Back in Dar es Salaam, Tambwe made a pro-Pakistan statement on the question of Kashmir. He told the *Tanganyika Standard* that whereas the Indian government had obstructed his efforts to visit contested territory of

---

<sup>72</sup> Broadbent to various, 16 May 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17744/127.

<sup>73</sup> Broadbent to various, 16 May 1957, UKNA FCO 141/17744/127.

Kashmir, the Pakistan government had placed no such barriers before him.<sup>74</sup> Nyerere responded indignantly. He clarified that Tambwe was not an official member of TANU's delegation to Bombay and that his statement on Kashmir in no way reflected TANU's policy.<sup>75</sup> Thus marginalised within TANU, Tambwe was undeterred in his support for Pakistan. He continued to align himself with the country's cause in Tanganyika, including by speaking at events held to mark the country's Independence Day.<sup>76</sup>

Muslim politics in Dar es Salaam remained fractious, especially as TANU increasingly dominated the city's public sphere. The Central Society of Tanganyika Muslims lost much of its energy in 1957, owing to disagreements between TANU-supporting African members and the body's Asian leadership, some of which aligned themselves to the United Tanganyika Party, which supported an official policy of multiracialism.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, Tambwe continued to advocate for improved Muslim education. In 1959, he publicly supported the financial commitment of the Aga Khan towards African Muslim education. Tambwe called on

---

<sup>74</sup> 'Situation in Kashmir Explosive – TANU Man', *Tanganyika Standard*, 20 April 1957.

<sup>75</sup> Julius Nyerere, letter to the editor, *Tanganyika Standard*, 22 April 1957.

<sup>76</sup> *Tanganyika Standard*, 14 August 1959.

<sup>77</sup> Brennan, 'Constructing Arguments', 224. The Society survived into at least 1958, where a list of Hajj committee members contains a mixture of influential Ismaili UTP members, more radical TANU members, and Tambwe's principal opponents: the liwali and the conservative Comorian leader Sule Herith. *Tanganyika Standard*, 6 June 1958.

Tanganyika's 'leading Muslims to take full advantage of the [Aga Khan's] offer, before it is too late, by creating a professional class amongst African Muslims.' He stressed that 'Tanganyika's immediate need is not mosques but professional people among [Muslim] Africans.'<sup>78</sup> Yet when his contemporaries turned towards partisan politics to redress such grievances by founding the All-Muslim National Union of Tanganyika (AMNUT), Tambwe kept his distance. AMNUT was led by the more conservative coastal elites with whom Tambwe had previously clashed; for similar reasons, the new party gained little traction in the face of TANU's dominance.<sup>79</sup>

## 6.0 Afterlives

Alongside a trickle of students who took up scholarships in India and Pakistan, more senior Tanganyikan politicians followed in the footsteps of Mhando, Tambwe, and Sijaona to conferences in India. In 1958, the trade unionist Rashidi Kawawa attended a meeting of the World Youth Organisation and Bibi Titi Mohamed participated in the All

---

<sup>78</sup> Ali Mogne Haloua, 'Offer for Muslim Education', *Tanganyika Standard*, 4 July 1959, 2. On Muslim education in Tanzania more generally, see Abdin N. Chande, 'Muslims and Modern Education in Tanzania', *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs Journal*, 14 (1993), 1–16.

<sup>79</sup> On AMNUT, see James R. Brennan, 'Print Culture, Islam and the Politics of Caution in Late Colonial Dar es Salaam: A History of Ramadhan Machado Plantan's *Zuhra*, 1947–1960', *Islamic Africa*, 12 (2022), 92–124 (117–24).

India Women's Conference at Kanpur.<sup>80</sup> But rather than pursue this history of TANU's South Asian connections further, the final section of this article turns to the trajectories of Mhando and Tambwe after their travels. Again, they turned in different directions. Mhando advanced his career via new sources of patronage in Eastern Europe. Tambwe, drawing on his Comorian background, turned towards unresolved questions of decolonisation off Tanganyika's Indian Ocean coast. In both instances, their connections outside of the country proved valuable assets in building their own careers and pursuing the party's – and later, the government's – political objectives.

Despite some colonial officials' fears that Mhando was an 'extremist' on his return from India, he appears to have had little contact with the communist world. This changed in the late 1950s, as the Soviet Bloc took a greater interest as the process of decolonisation gathered pace in Africa. In 1959, colonial intelligence reported that Mhando, who was working at the independent newspaper *Ngurumo*, was trying to contact Soviet African experts. He asked to be put in touch with Swahili teachers at Russian universities and

---

<sup>80</sup> 'Kawawa tells of his Indian visit', *Tanganyika Standard*, 12 September 1958; Ismay Milford, Gerard McCann, Emma Hunter, and Daniel Branch, 'Another World? East Africa, Decolonisation, and the Global History of the Mid-Twentieth Century', *Journal of African History*, 62 (2021), 394–410 (402–403).

offered to serve as a Soviet news correspondent.<sup>81</sup> While Mhando was unsuccessful in gaining Soviet support, he did secure an invitation to work in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Between 1961 and 1963, Mhando spent eighteen months in the GDR, where he taught Swahili. He married an East German and compiled a Swahili-German dictionary with a local linguistics expert.<sup>82</sup> He was suspected by the British of encouraging other Tanganyikans to study in the GDR. Just as securing scholarships for Tanganyikans had been a core element of his 1956–57 travels, Mhando now embraced new sources of educational aid, this time from a minor Cold War power.<sup>83</sup>

On his return to Tanganyika in 1963, Mhando took on a series of short-term jobs, then readily available as the government sought to Africanise its expanding administrative apparatus. He initially took up a teaching position at the newly founded University College, Dar es Salaam. Mhando then re-entered the newspaper sector: between 1965 and 1967, he first edited the TANU titles, *Uhuru* and the *Nationalist*, and then the trade union newspaper *Mfanyakazi*. Mhando next served as the managing director of the Tanganyika Sisal Corporation,

---

<sup>81</sup> Director of Intelligence and Security, Nairobi, to Director of Special Branch, 7 November 1959, UKNA FCO 141/17938/93A.

<sup>82</sup> Hildegard Höftmann and Stephen Mhando, *Suaheli-deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1963).

<sup>83</sup> Tanganyika Intelligence Summary, March 1961, UKNA, CO 822/2062/18.

where British diplomats believed he sought to engineer a new marketing scheme which would have principally benefited Eastern Bloc trading partners.<sup>84</sup>

Mhando's relationship with the GDR was instrumental in his surprise appointment to the position of minister of state for foreign affairs in November 1968.<sup>85</sup> This reshuffle came at a moment when Tanzania's relationship with the Eastern European socialist states was strained. Tanzania condemned the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 as a grave violation of the principle of national sovereignty. It also criticised the Soviet Union's support for the Nigerian federal government in its struggle against the separatist state of Biafra, which Tanzania chose to back. At the same time, Tanzania was deepening its relationship with China. Out of concern to maintain an image of non-alignment and to secure Eastern European support for the African liberation movements which were based in Tanzania, Nyerere turned to Mhando.

Mhando immediately set about rebuilding Tanzania's relations with the Eastern Bloc. At the time, Tanzania did not extend full diplomatic recognition of the GDR – the consequence of a complex set of Cold War dynamics. Behind the scenes, Mhando pressed the GDR's cause on his

---

<sup>84</sup> Biographical details here come from notes drawn up by British diplomats: briefing by East African Department, 18 December 1968, UKNA FCO 31/434/9; Hart to Holmes, 6 June 1969, UKNA FCO 31/434/18.

<sup>85</sup> President Nyerere retained the full foreign affairs portfolio himself.

colleagues and Nyerere himself. Mhando also served as the president of the GDR's 'All-African Initiative Committee', a group of African elites who worked to build 'friendship' with East Germany. Yet while his appointment improved Tanzania's relationships with Eastern Europe, Mhando had little success in improving the political standing of the GDR.<sup>86</sup> He was eventually dismissed from his position in November 1970, shortly after winning election as an MP for Tanga region.<sup>87</sup> After serving his five-year parliamentary term, Mhando faded from the political scene. He died in 1987.

Tambwe's career took a different trajectory. After his fall from grace in TANU, he had retreated to the margins of local political life. Yet his cosmopolitan background meant that he became an essential middleman between the Tanganyikan elite and anticolonialists in East Africa's Indian Ocean archipelagos. While usually explained separately, the independence struggles in Tanganyika and Zanzibar were closely entwined. After all, the African Association had been a transterritorial organisation, with an influential branch in Zanzibar.<sup>88</sup> As Zanzibar's racial associations transmuted into political parties in the late 1950s, TANU's leadership took an

---

<sup>86</sup> Roberts, *Revolutionary State-Making*, 122–25.

<sup>87</sup> Electoral Study Committee, University of Dar es Salaam, *Socialism and Participation: Tanzania's 1970 National Elections* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1974), 431–32. Mhando had served since 1965 as a nominated MP.

<sup>88</sup> Sanders, 'James Aggrey'.

active interest in events across the channel. Once attempts to reach an agreement between the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) and Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) broke down, TANU threw its support behind the ASP.<sup>89</sup>

Tambwe was a key broker in this relationship, mobilising local and international support for the ASP and assisting Zanzibari students who had received scholarships to study abroad via the ASP. He was among the leaders of the Zanzibar Association of Dar es Salaam, a de facto branch of the ASP. The Zanzibar Association was established in 1959 and set up an office inside TANU's headquarters in 1961. By this time, Tambwe was working in the same building, having resumed his membership of TANU's Central Committee, with a responsibility for education matters.<sup>90</sup> The ASP directed its scholarship holders towards Tambwe to receive

---

<sup>89</sup> On Zanzibar's racial politics, see Glassman, *War of Words*. One journalist noted that Nyerere accomplished the task of founding the ASP 'with the able assistance of Sheikh Ali Mwinyi Tambwe'. But the ASP was created in February 1957, while Tambwe was still in South Asia. The inclusion of his name nonetheless points to its lasting association with Tanganyikan involvement in Zanzibari politics. [Ahmad Saleh Yahya?], 'Hero or Humbug?', *Africa Events*, October 1986.

<sup>90</sup> Information about the Zanzibar Association is scarce, but see Zanzibar Protectorate, Central Intelligence Committee, Monthly Report – March 1961, UKNA CO 822/2068; Minael-Hossana O. Mdundo, *Masimulizi ya Sheikh Thabit Kombo Jecha* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1996), 90; Amina Ameir Issa, "From Stinkibar to Zanzibar": Disease, Medicine and Public Health in Colonial Urban Zanzibar, 1870–1963', PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal (2009), 310.

their travel documents.<sup>91</sup> Drawing on the same dynamics of Cold War competition that took Mhando to East Germany, Tambwe travelled around the communist world to scope out opportunities for Tanganyikan and Zanzibari students: in 1962, he visited China, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia for consultations about scholarship programmes. A Czechoslovak official observed that Tambwe ‘spoke of Zanzibari affairs as the internal affairs of Tanganyika’.<sup>92</sup> Tambwe also made regular visits to Zanzibar itself to channel financial assistance to the ASP especially around crunch election periods.<sup>93</sup>

Tambwe’s name crops up frequently in the debates which surround the Zanzibar Revolution and the Act of Union. Here, archival silences loom large. In the absence of documentary evidence, innuendo roams freely. At the time of the revolution, Tambwe was serving as an area commissioner for Tanga. These stories allege his involvement in trafficking Africans from the mainland to

---

<sup>91</sup> Ali M. Mwinyigogo, Secretary-General, Afro-Shirazi Youth League, to Mwinyimadi Khery, Dar es Salaam, 18 September 1962, reproduced in Mdundo, *Masimulizi ya Sheikh Thabit Kombo Jecha*, 67.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Záznam o styku s H. TEMBWA’ [‘Record of contact with H. TEMBWA’], 30 October 1962, Archiv bezpečnostních složek (Security Services Archive), Prague, 11700, ff. 213–14. I am grateful to James Brennan for sharing this document with me.

<sup>93</sup> Zanzibar Protectorate, Central Intelligence Committee, Monthly Report – January 1961, UKNA CO 822/2068; Zanzibar Special Branch Headquarters, Supplementary Intelligence Summary, 23 April–22 May 1961, UKNA CO 822/2068; Zanzibar Special Branch Headquarters, Intelligence Summary, 7–10 July 1963, UKNA CO 822/3063.

Zanzibar to carry out violence around elections and then to participate in the bloodshed which followed the ASP's seizure of power.<sup>94</sup> These claims remain unsubstantiated by the thin written evidence surrounding the revolution. Likewise, Tambwe's precise involvement in the act of union remains unclear. Contemporaries described him as a 'kingpin' who brokered the secretive negotiations.<sup>95</sup> Tambwe certainly acted as an intermediary between Oscar Kambona, Tanganyika's minister for foreign affairs, and Zanzibar's leadership. Kambona described Tambwe to American diplomats as his 'closest associate' on Zanzibari affairs.<sup>96</sup> Tambwe's involvement is cited in arguments that present the revolution and union as being masterminded by mainlanders, forestalling the future of an 'Afrabian' Zanzibari state.<sup>97</sup> But in the absence of concrete evidence, it is prudent to leave this an open question.

Having put his Zanzibari background to use in one political project, Tambwe drew on his Comorian roots to pursue another. In late 1962, a small group of Comorians in Zanzibar founded the *Mouvement de Libération Nationale des Comores*

---

<sup>94</sup> See for example 'Kisa cha Ali Mwinyi Tambwe', YouTube, 9 June 2017. [youtu.be/fg74SD8grbc](https://youtu.be/fg74SD8grbc), accessed 8 June 2022.

<sup>95</sup> Kamwaga, 'Ali Mwinyi Tambwe ni nani hasa?'

<sup>96</sup> Leonhart, US Ambassador, Dar es Salaam, to State Department, 18 April 1964, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, National Security Files, Country Files, Box 103.

<sup>97</sup> Harith Ghassany, *Kwaheri Ukoloni, Kwaheri Uhuru!* (Dubai: self-published, 2010).

(National Liberation Movement of Comoros, MOLINACO).<sup>98</sup> Through the support of TANU members with close links to the ASP, including Tambwe, MOLINACO established its headquarters in Dar es Salaam. Tambwe again used his cosmopolitan background to triangulate between MOLINACO, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the OAU's African Liberation Committee, which was chaired by Kambona. MOLINACO was a small, cash-strapped organisation; such personal connections mattered in maintaining a foothold amid Africa's international revolutionary networks. When in 1965 the Tanzanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked for a visa to be arranged for Tambwe (who had renounced his French nationality in 1962) to visit his family in Comoros, the French authorities denied the request, fearing that the mission had ulterior motives in drumming up support for MOLINACO.<sup>99</sup>

Tambwe played this instrumental role within MOLINACO while officially working for the Tanzanian government in Zanzibar. Under the terms of the union, Zanzibar ceded control of foreign relations to the mainland government. However, the major Cold War powers maintained consulates in Zanzibar. In June 1964, Nyerere therefore appointed

---

<sup>98</sup> Ahmed Ouledi, *Abdou Bakari Boïna: Une figure emblématique du MOLINACO* (Moroni: Editions Komedit, 2016); George Roberts, 'MOLINACO, the Comorian Diaspora, and Decolonisation in East Africa's Indian Ocean', *Journal of African History*, 62 (2021), 411–29.

<sup>99</sup> Francois-Poncet to de Bourdeille, 24 February 1965, Archives Nationales (AN), Paris, AG/5(F)/3523.

Tambwe as a junior minister for foreign affairs, but based in Zanzibar rather than Dar es Salaam, in order to keep the islands' government in check as it continued to strike deals with the Eastern Bloc and China. Despite Tambwe's long-standing connections with the ASP leadership, his relationship with President Abeid Karume and other party hardliners seems to have deteriorated rapidly. In early 1965, he resigned his ministerial position and returned to Dar es Salaam. The CIA reported that he was disappointed by Zanzibar's resistance to greater integration into the union.<sup>100</sup> In any case, the post-revolutionary regime Zanzibar was hostile to the islands' Comorian community, which had predominantly supported the ZNP. These frictions reached their zenith in 1968 when the government announced that Comorians who refused to naturalise as Zanzibari citizens and renounce their French nationality would henceforth be regarded as foreigners.<sup>101</sup>

Just as in the mid-1950s, Tambwe's fall from power owed to the loss of confidence of influential figures within the party. In an apparent bid to establish a political career on the mainland, Tambwe attempted to stand as an MP in the seat of Lindi East in the 1965 elections. But, despite heading the nominations in the district party conference, TANU's National Executive Committee passed over him. According

---

<sup>100</sup> CIA, 'Zanzibar: The Hundred Days' Revolution', 21 February 1966, 122. [cia.gov/readingroom/docs/esau-28.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/esau-28.pdf), accessed 8 June 2022.

<sup>101</sup> Toibibou Ali Mohamed, 'Les Comoriens de Zanzibar durant la "Révolution Okello" (1964-1972)', *Africanistes*, 76 (2006), 137-54.

to US diplomats, this was the outcome of an intervention by Kambona, the minister of foreign affairs and TANU's secretary-general. Kambona was reportedly unhappy at Tambwe's insubordination when he refused to return to his position as a minister in Zanzibar.<sup>102</sup> After leaving government and taking up positions working for an import-export house and then an international minerals firm, Tambwe continued his work with MOLINACO. However, in 1969 he was suddenly extradited to Zanzibar and accused of participating in a treason plot against the government. Though Tambwe survived the fate of the former ASP leaders Othman Shariff and Abdullah Kassim Hanga, who were executed without public trial, he was nonetheless imprisoned. Reliable details of these events are again scarce. By late 1971, he was again working for MOLINACO, though he seems to have withdrawn from political life thereafter.<sup>103</sup> Tambwe died in 2003.<sup>104</sup> No CCM politician was present at his funeral.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Liebenow, *Colonial Rule*, 313; Lionel Cliffe (ed.), *One-Party Democracy: The 1965 Tanzania General Elections* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), 385; Millar to State Department, 12 October 1965, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, Record Group 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-66, Box 2690, POL 14.

<sup>103</sup> Head of the Office for Studies and Intelligence, Moroni, to Head of the Section for Studies and Intelligence, Department for Overseas Territories and Departments, Paris, 14 November 1971, AN, 19940163/36.

<sup>104</sup> I am grateful to Abdallah Miraj and Mohamed Said for clarifying this detail for me.

<sup>105</sup> Kamwaga, 'Ali Mwinyi Tambwe ni nani hasa?'

## 7.0 Conclusion

The itineraries of TANU's Bombay delegates reveal an alternative history of Tanganyikan decolonisation beyond a simplistic story of nationalist triumph. For sure, both Mhando and Tambwe were committed anticolonialists and strong advocates of TANU's struggle for independence on their travels. But they combined their official duties with the pursuit of personal projects, which ranged from attempts to set-up rival pan-African organisations to building transoceanic connections among the Muslim *umma*. Later, both men projected their political and social capital in different directions: in Mhando's case, towards the Eastern Bloc; in Tambwe's into the cascading causes of African nationalism in the Indian Ocean.

In doing so, Mhando and Tambwe utilised new sources of political support to construct their own transactional networks of patronage, as the geographies of Tanganyika's decolonisation extended beyond the East Africa region. Their itineraries demonstrate that by the mid-1950s, a higher education at Makerere was perceived to be increasingly inadequate and surpassed by new opportunities in Egypt, South Asia, and Eastern Europe. Anticolonial entrepreneurs like Mhando and Tambwe grasped how by securing scholarships they could not just further the nationalist cause, but also cement their own political power. The purpose here is not to induct such individuals into a Tanzanian pantheon of anticolonial heroes. Rather, it is to offer a more open-

ended and globally connected history of decolonisation and elite formation, which takes TANU as a multifaceted and fractious movement rather than an irresistible monolithic force.

**Ujamaa in the Kilombero Valley: Msolwa and Signali Villages as Symbols of a National Project, ca. 1967 – 1990s**

Emma Athanasio Minja  
*Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy, Tanzania*  
&

Maxmillian Julius Chuhila  
*University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*

**Abstract**

*In central southern Tanzania, the Kilombero Valley is a potential economic zone. Villagers in this area have witnessed the changing landscape of development efforts from colonial to postcolonial times. Kilombero's development story is one of government initiatives as well as local people's processes shaped by environmental and policy factors. This study explains how development was conceived, implemented, and impacted the valley's production and land use systems. We indicate that distinct circumstances resulted in different outcomes when Ujamaa was implemented. The paper uses the cases of Msolwa and Signali to show how the two communities stood out as success stories amid a larger concern about Ujamaa's ineffectiveness not only in the valley, but also in Tanzania as a whole. This research examines the dynamics of development initiatives in Msolwa and Signali villages using archival and oral sources.*

**Keywords:** Rural transformation, *Ujamaa*, Land use, Kilombero Valley, Local Agency, Msolwa, Signali.

## 1.0 Introduction

The Kilombero valley's land use change is rooted in a long history of rural development molded by government policy and local participation. Between the 1960s and the 1990s, Tanzania and Kilombero in particular witnessed several approaches to development, with a particular focus on rural change. Soon after independence, the administration became overly focused on industrial growth, attracting investors before focusing on agricultural development. Despite the fact that this method did not work, the government's obligations were maintained. Frustrations with the country's early attempts at growth prompted the government to issue the Arusha Declaration in 1967, which served as a defining philosophy and guideline for Tanzania's development and enhancement of people's well-being. The administration pushed rural transformation based on the *Ujamaa* program, which was achieved through collectivization. *Ujamaa* brought together dispersed communities to boost agricultural production by introducing modern farming technologies and enlisting the help of extension officers or persons with similar abilities.<sup>1</sup> With land being publicly owned for the benefit of all, agriculture became the backbone of economic development and rural

---

<sup>1</sup> Cranford Pratt, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania 1965-1968, Nyerere and the Emergence of Socialist Strategy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 63

transformation.<sup>2</sup> Collectivised farming aimed to eliminate rising commercial agriculture, which was seen as imperialistic and exploitative at the time, characteristics that socialist beliefs did not condone. The postcolonial approach to development differed from one region to the next, as did the effects. Rural settlement in the past was centred on community settlements, with a strong emphasis on the agricultural sector to maintain food security, according to historical studies. Agriculture has been designated as a national initiative with the goal of transforming rural development and people's well-being by fostering collective and smallholder farming systems.

Yet, the government intervention on developing the rural people was not a new invention of the postcolonial period but a continuation of the colonial approaches though with varying policies. During the British era for example, state intervention in rural development included the 'grow more crops' campaign, tsetse fly reasserting programme, compulsory native concentration procedures and anti-erosion schemes just to mention a few of them.<sup>3</sup> The Second

---

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Coulson, *Tanzania: A Political Economy*, 2<sup>nd</sup>Edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 174

<sup>3</sup> Jamie Monson, *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 20; N.N Luanda, "Rural Development in Colonial Tanganyika: An Overview", *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol.1, No.2, (1992), 1.

World War effects on the economy<sup>4</sup> that were characterized by shortage of food and edible oil forced Britain to encourage the establishment of large scale farming in the territory<sup>5</sup> that culminated into opening up of the Kilombero valley because it was already spotted as a potential area.<sup>6</sup> Peasants in the valley witnessed substantive efforts of the British colonial state to encourage production for example rubber in Kalunga forest area in Mang'ula, sugarcane and rice in Msolwa and Signali villages.<sup>7</sup> Peasants in these villages had a sense of commercial farming and the benefits coming from it.

The development of agriculture in the Kilombero valley, which used modernization strategy as a result of *Ujamaa* in Tanzania managed to confront and manipulate more land in different ways and thus led to land use changes in the 1960s

---

<sup>4</sup> Bonaventure Swai, "Tanganyika and the Great Depression 1929 - 1936", *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 9, No.1 (2), (1980), 197-198

<sup>5</sup> D.P Bowels, "The Political Economy of Colonial Tanganyika 1939-1961" in Kaniki M. (ed.), *Tanganyika Under Colonial Rule* (London: Longman, 1979), 170; Joseph Kuzu Mabuga, "The Effects of Dissolving Cooperative Unions" on Cash Crop Production in Tanzania: The Case of Cotton Production in Musoma - District" (MA Dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, 1988), 20

<sup>6</sup> Monson, *Africa's Freedom*, 20; Jonathan Jackson, "'Off to the Sugar Valley': The Kilombero Settlement Scheme and 'Nyerere People', 1959-1969," *Journal of East African Studies*, Vol.15 (3), (2021), 505-526.

<sup>7</sup> Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) Library Dodoma, 5/1008/15, *Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru*, 1971; Interview with Mzee Meza and Khamis Kaminuka at Signali, 27.10.2019; Nicholas Westcott, "The Impact of the Second World War on Tanganyika, 1939-49", in Killingray D, Rathbone R. (Eds.), *Africa and the Second World War*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), 191.

and 1980s.<sup>8</sup> The changes in the newly created *Ujamaa* villages in general, among others, involved clearing of bushes and forests for agricultural development, which resulted in change of land use from shifting cultivation to communal cultivation.<sup>9</sup> This paper examines these dynamics, and the impacts of *Ujamaa* programs on land use changes from the traditional systems to commercial landholdings in Msolwa and Signali villages. We indicate that there were continuities and change in the way development was modelled in the colonial and postcolonial periods. The two villages are used to demonstrate successful *Ujamaa* villages amidst narratives of failure that has taken a huge proportion in the *Ujamaa* literature. As a postcolonial historiography, the two villages demonstrate what independence meant to them in the context of social and economic aspects.

## 2.0 Contextualising the Valley

Kilombero valley comprises of the most fertile lands, which attracts diverse economic activities with ethnic composition from different parts of Tanzania. Its geography makes it convenient for agricultural activities specifically for food crops dominated by rice and cash crops dominated by cotton and sugar cane. <sup>10</sup> The mixture of wetlands, lowlands,

---

<sup>8</sup> Monson, *Africa's Freedom*, 72-83.

<sup>9</sup> Yusufu Q. Lawi, "Tanzania's Operation Vijiji and Local Ecological Consciousness: The Case of Eastern Iraqwland, 1974 - 1976", *Journal of African History* 48, (2007), 69 - 93.

<sup>10</sup> United Republic of Tanzania, hereafter URT, Morogoro Regional Planning Office Report, 1995

woodlands, agricultural lands, and closed canopy forests makes agricultural activities a primary consideration on the list of people's livelihood options. In addition to agricultural potentials, Kilombero district lays along the valley, which forms part of the Rufiji River basin. This is the largest river basin that makes up the largest seasonally freshwater lowland flood plain in East Africa and is attractive for permanent settlement.<sup>11</sup> These qualities have made the land so fragile and activities dynamic responding to changing needs and opportunities in both the colonial and postcolonial periods.

Central to cultivation, peasants have used formal and informal ways to obtain land and sustain it through continuous use. Inheritance, bush clearance and purchase inform the moral economy of peasant's livelihoods and promote farming activities commercially and in subsistence forms.<sup>12</sup> Market opportunities in the valley since the colonial days to the early independence days necessitated transitions from subsistence to commercial farming and the reverse when market flows became unpredictable. Rice and sugarcane switched in turns in the fields in response to the

---

<sup>11</sup> John Connors, "Agricultural Development, Land change and Livelihood in Tanzania's Kilombero Valley" (PhD Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2015)

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Hamis Meza and Khamis Kaminuka at Signali, 27.10.2019; Rebecca Smalley et al, "The Role of State and Foreign Capital in Agricultural Commercialization: The Case of Sugarcane in Kilombero Valley," Working Paper 106, PLAAS, (2014), 20.

advantages presented and government interventions to modernize the rural economy.<sup>13</sup>

The post-colonial party and government leaders tried different strategies to modernize the peasantry sector with success and failures at the same time. For example, emphasis on small-scale farming proved to be yielding less than expected while large-scale investment and labour intensification seemed to be not only expensive but also challenging to supervise. Communal approach adopted by the *Ujamaa* policy encouraged rural people to join collective agriculture regardless of its productivity for development of the rural sector.<sup>14</sup> Although we have sufficient evidence to suggest that unlike other areas where *Ujamaa* was implemented with little success in Tanzania while the villages of Msolwa and Signali succeeded with this exercise, still, it was not a smooth road. In its early days, things like shortage of food and labour to the established villages were common.<sup>15</sup> Coupled with other challenges like starting life in

---

<sup>13</sup> National Records Centre (NRC), Dodoma, 450/CCU/S100/III, *Ujamaa Villages General, 1972-1973*; Monson, *Africa's Freedom*, 2

<sup>14</sup> NRC, Dodoma, Semina ya Mkuu wa Wilaya na Wenyeviti TANU Kuhusu Siasa ni Kilimo na Uuzaji wa Mazao katika Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kilombero, 08.08.1972, 4; Nyerere, *The Arusha Declaration Ten Years After*, (Tanzania: Government Printers, 1977), 2; Interview with Abdullah Mpoka at Mkamba, 3.11.2019.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Njakamoto and Abdullah Mpoka at Msolwa Ujamaa, 2.11.2019; Deborah Bryceson, "Peasant Commodity in Post-Colonial Tanzania", *African Affairs*, 81 (25), (1982), 547-567; Monsoon, *Africa's Freedom*, 77; Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa*, 96; Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s* (Dar es Salaam, 2011), 6.

new environments, forging new social networks and institutions, societies in these villages had a daunting start only their persistency paid later. It took commitment and sacrifices to arrive at what remains as a notable example of an exercise that seem to have passed like a sweeping thunder in the cloud of hopes and expectations of a young nation.

During the difficulty decade of Tanzania's economy, 1970s and 1980s rural mobilisation was considered a solution for self-sufficiency. Government intervention in the supervision of food and cash crops production and marketing told a story of the struggles with internal and external pressures on the economy. Internally, ideological fight within the context of the cold war politics and the identity that Julius Nyerere had established defined and juxtaposed Tanzania's economic ideals within a globally challenging environment. Externally, pressures related to economic policies were also mounting to persuade and sometimes force internal policy changes. It was a period marked by intensive implementation of *Ujamaa* projects and it was during this period also where forced villagisation came about.<sup>16</sup> Production of both food and

---

<sup>16</sup> NRC, Dodoma, 450/CCU/S100/III, *Ujamaa Villages General, 1972-1973*; Lawi, "Tanzania's Operation", 69 – 93; Maxmillian Chuhila, "To plan is to choose': Navigating Nyerere's Economic and Political Thoughts, 1961-1980s" in Artwell Nhemachena and Tapiwa V. Warikandwa (Eds.), *From African Peer Review Mechanisms to African Queer Review Mechanisms? Robert Mugabe, Empire and Decolonization of African Orifices* (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2019), 387-404; Helge Kjekshus, "The Tanzanian Villagisation Policy: Implementational Lessons and Ecological

commercial crops was given impetus in order to boost the economy. While food crops subsidised importation of food, commercial crops added into the growing demand of foreign exchange highly needed at the time.

In areas like the Kilombero valley, production expanded in anticipation of the available demand for agricultural produces. This motivated peasants to open up more land for farming of the most wanted crops. The interview from Signali village attests that ‘we changed our farms for commercial farming. In Msolwa they produced sugarcane while in Signali we produced rice’.<sup>17</sup> This reveals the importance accorded to environmental provisions in response to market opportunities available. It was out of the local people and governments’ investment in agriculture in Msolwa that makes it the most successful symbol of *Ujamaa* projects in Tanzania. Even when, *Ujamaa* declined after 1985, Msolwa continued with communal activities that have made it to stand out as an icon of *Ujamaa* in the whole of Kilombero and Tanzania at large.<sup>18</sup> It remains a typical

---

Dimensions”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines* 11, no. 2, (1977), 269-282.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Mzee Meza at Signali Village, Abdullah Mpoka at Kidatu, 24.10.2019.

<sup>18</sup> CCM Library, Dodoma, File No, 100/A5, Vijiji Vya Ujamaa Kando Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru; NRC, Dodoma, File No. 764, Msolwa Farmers, 1961-64; NRC, Dodoma, File. No, 1737, Msolwa Growers Cooperative Ltd, 1973; NRC, Dodoma, File. D.40/s, Uchaguzi wa Vijiji vya Mfano na Maendeleo Wilayani, 1984; NRC, Dodoma, File. UMC/16/44, Muhtasari wa Mkutano wa Maafisa Ujamaa na Ushirika Mkoa wa Morogoro, Feb,

*Ujamaa* village in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where the societies of Tanzania have completely forgotten what it means by living in *Ujamaa* values.

Local articulations from Msolwa and Signali indicate that people's participation in rural development was more voluntary and the response to government interventions reflected their readiness. Villagers were self-motivated into cash crop production given that reliable market existed. Production of sugarcane followed the expansion of the Kilombero Sugar Company Limited (KSCL) in the 1970s, which attracted more out-growers into the sugarcane industry. Commercial farming improved peasant's wellbeing and attracted more of them into farming. In the end, the government had little to do to motivate them. Contrary to the success stories, in the villages where market systems were unpredictable, cash crop farming activities lagged behind and the *Ujamaa* exercise was seen as a barrier to progress.<sup>19</sup> For example, with the nationalisation of land, all the settlement schemes were banned following the launch of *Ujamaa* in villages.

Unlike other areas in Tanzania such as Songea, Handeni and Ismani, *Ujamaa* in Msolwa was implemented within the

---

1979; Interviews with Ali Mkapila at Signali Village, 22.10.2019 and Mzee Mmari at Kidatu, 4.11.2019.

<sup>19</sup> UCM/16/44 Ofisi ya Mkuu wa Mkoa, Muhtasari wa Mkutano wa Maafisa *Ujamaa* na Ushirika Mkoa wa Morogoro, 1982; interview with Mzee Meza at Signali and Abdullah Mpoka at Nkamba, 10.11.2019

already established patterns. In areas where new structures were created, the experiences of the exercise is quite different to that demonstrated in Msolwa and Signali villages.<sup>20</sup> Evidence further indicates that land dispossession targeted those who owned large plots of land in favour of communal farming. For example, the current location of Msolwa village was acquired from a former TANU member by the name Raju Sadru.<sup>21</sup> Julius Nyerere under *Ujamaa* preferred communal activities than privately owned firms whether small or large enterprises. From the land that Raju Sadru gave, after allocation of the village and village farms, the other part was portioned and given to smallholder peasants and more than four hundred hectares became under the Kilombero Sugar Company in 1974. This made villages and cooperatives centres of economic production and rural transformation.<sup>22</sup>

After the independence of Tanzania, the government and TANU party aimed at resettling five hundred urban people into the valley to clear land and engage them in farming

---

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Maximillian Julius Chuhila, "Maize Farming and Environmental Change in Iringa District: The Case of Ismani, 1940s-2010s", (MA Dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, 2013); Herbert Ndomba, "Ruvuma Development Association and Ujamaa in Songea District, 1960s- 1990s" (MA Dissertation, University of Dar es salaam, 2014), 116.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Abdullah Mpoka and Alex at Kidatu, 22.10.2019, and Lutengano Mwambona, 08.11.2019 at Msolwa Ujamaa.

<sup>22</sup> Julius Nyerere, *Socialism and Rural Development*, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 1976)

activities.<sup>23</sup> If successful this would be a good pilot scheme to inform the development discourse of a postcolonial nation. Campaigns were used to attract and push urban dwellers into the rural areas for agricultural activities especially to participate in smallholder sugarcane production for the Kilombero Sugar Company.<sup>24</sup> In order to encourage more cultivators, the government provided incentives in terms of farm inputs and services on credit to boost agricultural production.<sup>25</sup> Although before the implementation of the policy communities had their own way of production, little evidence indicates whether the pre-*Ujamaa* move in the valley was successful. Settlements remained scattered and production based on individual initiatives.<sup>26</sup>

After the introduction of *Ujamaa* villagisation in 1973, peasants participated in its implementation at several sites along the road from Kidatu towards the eastern part of Ifakara at the existing population centres and adjacent

---

<sup>23</sup> NRC, Dodoma, 450/CCU/S100/III, *Ujamaa Villages General, 1972-1973*; NRC, Dodoma, 548/R.20/1 *Village Settlement Republic of Tanzania 1963-1965*, 1; Coulson, *Tanzania*, 22.

<sup>24</sup> Chama Cha Mapinduzi, "Tathmini ya Azimio la Arusha, 1967- 1987" (1987), 1-2; Monsoon, *Africa's Freedom*, 74; Kato Futoshi, *Development of Major Rice Cultivation area in the Kilombero Valley, Tanzania*, African studies Monograph, (2007), 3-18.

<sup>25</sup> E.L.M. Sprenger, *Sugarcane Outgrowers and Kilombero Sugar Company in Tanzania*. (Nijmegen: Third World Centre, 1989)

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan Jackson, "'Off to Sugar Valley': the Kilombero Settlement Scheme and 'Nyerere's People', 1959-69," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 15, no. 3 (2021), 505-526.

cultivated lands.<sup>27</sup> The party and the government were determined and convinced that using existing population centres would make the implementation of *Ujamaa* projects less stressful. In the villages of Msolwa and Signali it was easy to introduce *Ujamaa* because people were already used to the environment following the establishment of the villages before *Ujamaa* became a compulsory – countrywide undertaking. Most of the population that participated in the programme came from migrant railway workers who settled after construction of the railway was completed. *Ujamaa* policy converted the settlement scheme and railway construction camps into new structures of the rural economy.

### **3.0 Ujamaa in the Kilombero Valley, 1960s – 1970s**

In 1962, Tanzania launched the first postcolonial land settlement program with targets to improve settlement and agricultural patterns. Therefore, what came during *Ujamaa* resettlements was not new but another turn of rural mobilization strategy for development.<sup>28</sup> In his speech before the parliament on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1962, President Nyerere mentioned the importance to live in village communities. He did this in anticipation of cooperation of smallholder farmers

---

<sup>27</sup> CCM Library Dodoma, 5/1008/15, *Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru*, 1971; interview with Khamis Kaminuka and Khamis Meza at Signali, 27.10.2019; Jacob Abel, *Foreign Aid in Agriculture: Introducing Israel's Land Settlement Scheme to Tanzania*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 188.

in order to increase productivity.<sup>29</sup> After this call from the president, by 1965 there were already twenty-three established settlements with a total of 3,400 families as a pilot scheme countrywide.<sup>30</sup> This was an indication of what was expected next and what was coming in the 1970s. More than ten years later after the president's call, more than eighty per cent of people lived in established villages as *Ujamaa* development communities countrywide. Morogoro region had 397 such villages in Kilombero, Kilosa, Mahenge Ulanga and Morogoro Districts by March 1973 with a population of 123,256 that made it on top of the regions with *Ujamaa* development.<sup>31</sup> In the Kilombero valley, Msolwa and Signali were the first established villages that got the advantage because of the main road from Kidatu to Ifakara, the KSCL plantations and the railway construction camps. Village communities dealt with subsistence farming and in other areas growing of sugarcane became common due to market forces in place.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> CCM Library Dodoma, *Nyerere's Speech*, December 1962

<sup>30</sup> See '476 Ujamaa villages established - Kisumu', *The Nationalist*, 15.07.1969; Kikula, *Policy*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Ofisi ya Waziri Mkuu na Makamu wa Pili wa Raisi, *Maendeleo ya Vijiji*, (Dodoma: Idara ya Ujamaa na Ushirika Sehemu ya Maendeleo ya Siasa na Utafiti), Juni, 1975

<sup>32</sup> CCM Library Dodoma, 5/1008/15, *Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru*, 1971; see also, Baum, "Land use in the Kilombero Valley: From Shifting Cultivation Towards Permanent Farming," in H. Rutenberg (ed), *Smallholder Farming and Smallholder Development in Tanzania: Ten case studies* (Munich: Weltforum Verlag), 1968, 23-24.

Farming in the villages of the Kilombero valley went on both fertile and unfertile lands, dry and irrigated areas to sustain the increasing number of people. The demographic data from National census reports and other sources showed parallel expansion of population and settlement during *Ujamaa* especially to those villages along TAZARA corridor from 1978. Population levels grew at an accelerated pace in some areas after 1988. For example, Signali village in Kiberege ward grew at an annual rate of 5.35 per cent while the general rate in Tanzania was 2.8 per cent. Other areas such as Kibaoni grew by 4.37 per cent, Idete 5.9 per cent and Msagati ward grew by 1.53 per cent. The rate of population growth during *Ujamaa* was 4.7 per cent from 1978 to 1988.<sup>33</sup> Cultivation expanded to the Miombo forest and continued to the vicinity of the road where other land uses existed.<sup>34</sup> Conversion of this land for agriculture and settlement increased pressure on land in the Kilombero valley. It opened up opportunities for more migrants to come and start new farms.

Farmers in this area practiced individualized, shifting cultivation, which combined fallow with traditional

---

<sup>33</sup> URT, National census Report, 1978 and 1988, Kilombero District File D.40/2/Vol.2.

<sup>34</sup> NRC, Ofisi ya Waziri Mkuu na Makamu wa Pili wa Raisi, *Maendeleo ya Vijiji*, (Dodoma: Idara ya Ujamaa na Ushirika Sehemu ya Maendeleo ya Siasa na Utafiti), Juni, 1975; Tanzania National Archives (TNA), Morogoro/ Kilosa District Book; Andrew Coulson, "A Simplified Political Economy of Tanzania," ERB Paper, 74.9, UDSM, (1974), 1-10.

irrigation, which gradually gave way to permanent farming and settlement. These developments were aided by the Agriculture Credit Agency that was established by the government to provide loans and credits to peasants.<sup>35</sup> The intensity of land use and productivity depended on the farm time devoted by peasants and not necessarily the fertility of the soil. Time spent well in planting and weeding justified how much was to be harvested in the end of the season. Famous among other crops in the valley was cassava that was grown in areas where rice and sugarcane could not grow. On economic scales, growing different crops on different lands was an intensive land use as all potential arable land was under cultivation. Notably, such farming went without interference as no crop could grow in another area where a different crop sustained. Competition on land was therefore not between agricultural crops but between agriculture and other land uses such as conservation and pastoralism.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the mixed land use functions in the Kilombero valley as conservation, pastoralism, and arable land, expansion of farming activities as central to rural modernisation continued. Challenging the agricultural potential of the valley commonly known as one of the grain-baskets of Tanzania is the unpredictable infrastructure networks

---

<sup>35</sup> TNA, 2/Ar. F1/30: Correspondence General

<sup>36</sup> CCM Archives, Dodoma, Box 5, File 1008/14, “Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru”

especially during the rain season.<sup>37</sup> Apart from the infrastructure constraints the Kilombero valley stood as an important agricultural zone in Tanzania. Land use experienced changes during *Ujamaa* period because farmers were persuaded to embark on intensive communal farming rather than individual farming. The target was each village to have a communal farmland “*Mfumaki*” – *Mfuko wa Maendeleo Kijijini* – where commercial crops grew. The slogan was “Living together, working together for the benefit of all that aimed at eliminating individual interests”.<sup>38</sup> This was the implementation of the collectivisation strategy adopted as a framework of villagisation effort.

Under “*Mashamba ya Vijiji or Mfumaki*”, villagers were required to work on communal farms and share the proceeds according to what they contributed in production.<sup>39</sup> *Mfumaki farms* were created along the railway and farmers participated to generate income for the village development fund.<sup>40</sup> The operation-involved areas that already had concentrations of population and adjacent cultivated rice and sugarcane fields mostly using migrant labourers from

---

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Abdullah Mpoka at Kidatu, 22.10.2019, and Lutengano Mwambona, 08.11.2019.

<sup>38</sup> NRC, Dodoma, S/100/2/79, Ex- Settlement Schemes Report, Commissioner for Cooperative Development Morogoro Region, July 1970; TNA, 550/A/1382/71/IS/I/329, *Wito wa Kuanza Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru*, 1971.

<sup>39</sup> NRC, Dodoma, 450/CCU/S100/III, *Ujamaa Villages General*, 1972-1973

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Abdullah Mpoka at Mkamba, 3.11.2019.

the railway construction camps.<sup>41</sup> The result of communal work in Msolwa and Signali unlike other areas was a success story because production increased. This attitude was built on by Nyerere's vision, which put emphasis on working together for the benefit of all.<sup>42</sup>

Again, the farmers were supposed to stay and produce along TAZARA in order to serve as first line of defence against sabotage.<sup>43</sup> The railway was constructed within an ideological struggle shaped by cold war politics where the Americans supported road construction and at the same time the Chinese from the East supported railway construction. Sabotage was an ideological speculation from mutual suspicion of American and Chinese supported projects as each represented a major bloc in the cold war. At the time when people were invited to settle along the railway, the land use patterns started to change because farmers were persuaded to embark on an intensive communal farming rather than individual farming.<sup>44</sup> Msolwa and Signali were suitable locations for rice and sugar cane production. Farmers participated fully in the *Ujamaa* programs, which resulted into land use changes from

---

<sup>41</sup> TNA, 550/A/1382/71/IS/1/329, *Wito wa Kuanza Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru*, 1971

<sup>42</sup> TNA, 967/82, also Nyerere, *Socialism and Rural Development*

<sup>43</sup> Monson, *Africa's Freedom Railway*, 74

<sup>44</sup> CCM Library Dodoma, 5/1008/15, *Vijiji vya Ujamaa*, also, interview with Mzee Khamis Kaminuka, Signali Village, 27.10.2019

shifting cultivation to permanent and communal kind of farming.<sup>45</sup>

Although *Ujamaa* period was portrayed as difficult in people's lives in the country, in Msolwa *Ujamaa* and Signali villages it was a blessing. It was a turning point in the history of Msolwa and Signali in terms of crop production and livelihood supporting mechanisms.<sup>46</sup> For instance Sugarcane was cultivated marginally for household needs and little surplus for selling from the colonial period to 1960s.<sup>47</sup> With *Ujamaa* program sugar cane production increased to an average of 129,675 tons in 1975 from the 5,175 tons produced in 1967 in Msolwa village.<sup>48</sup> This increase was progressive year-by-year making the village a good example of *Ujamaa* efforts.

The major reason for this increase was people's commitment to work and that the government was prepared to play an active role in economic development through improvement in the agricultural sector. The agricultural policy interventions resulted into massive transformation of the rural sector from 1967 to 1980s. Again, Sugarcane production was especially important in the valley where mechanized

---

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Mwambona Lutengano and Alex at Kidatu, 30.10.2019

<sup>47</sup> NRC, Dodoma, *Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru, 1973-1975*; Baum, *Land Use*, 1968, 25-26

<sup>48</sup> NRC, Dodoma, Agriculture, Food and Advisory Services Division, 16<sup>th</sup> July 1969-75

agriculture was proposed.<sup>49</sup> Government commitments to engage people in communal work and through provision of fertilizers; skills to farmers and equipment attracted many farmers to produce sugar cane in Msolwa village.<sup>50</sup> By emphasis on sugarcane production, the village became self-sufficient. Rice provided enough of the food they wanted and surplus rice was sold. At the same time, in the postcolonial period sugarcane was grown in a large scale for commercial purposes.

Nevertheless, this strategy began to record some failures especially when the government changed the political ideology from *Ujamaa* to government farms and then to *bega Kwa bega*. Through *bega Kwa bega* slogan, farmers were given individual two-acre parcels of farming plots where they spent too much time on them while neglecting the communally owned farmlands.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, living and working together especially to the locals was fundamental notwithstanding the productivity of such effort. There are wide-ranging narratives of the *Ujamaa* exercise in some parts of the valley. Summarized in brief, its organization was labour intensive while its output unrelated to the investment done. Oral articulations put it that, had it been not a

---

<sup>49</sup> Monson, *Africa's Freedom*, 22-23.

<sup>50</sup> TNA, *Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru*; interview with Khamis Kaminuka, Pascali Mkakala and Mzee Meza at Signali, 25.10.2019

<sup>51</sup> NRC, *Dodoma, Semina ya Mkuu wa Wilaya na Wenyeviti TANU Kuhusu Siasa ni Kilimo na Uuzaji wa Mazao katika Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kilombero*, o8.o8.1972, 4.

compulsory project many would have deserted the villages or the exercise, as they did not like the *bega kwa bega* approach. The interview from Signali indicates;

Resettlement was compulsory for us to work in *Ujamaa* projects. We were all committed to work in our villages however, in some instances what we produced was not rewarding. Those who resisted living and working in collective villages were punished. It was difficult to work with strangers while leaving behind your family. Because of the difficulties in the new villages, some started to run away from them.<sup>52</sup>

Still, such challenges were not strong enough to act as barriers to development projects like what was the case in other areas of Tanzania. While the exercise had a general failure in the valley, the experiences from Msolwa and Signali were different because the implementers of the policy were mostly migrants and ex-workers of TAZARA who accepted *Ujamaa* and implemented it energetically. Despite the failure of *Ujamaa* ideology national wide, people at Msolwa and Signali village practice *Ujamaa* values to date. For instance, the area of *Kidogobasi* there is a village farm that all members of the village work communally and the fruits of that labour is used for the development of the village. There were a number of rules in place from local village leaders or “*Mnyakigoda*” as regard to collective works and social

---

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Mzee Khamis Kaminuka, Signali Village, 27.10.2019

welfare. Although the top-down authority to the later villagisation programme opposed this kind of authority where leadership was interpreted as something to empower<sup>53</sup> still the villages proved to be different because leaders were and are a part of the village and most importantly peasants themselves.<sup>54</sup> In case of sickness, these leaders made sure that the sick fellow was taken to the hospital and that the bills were settled by the village funds in case he could not pay by himself. In turn the villager has to pay back by working in the farm after recovery.

Implementation of the *Ujamaa* program in Msolwa and Signali promoted large-scale production of sugarcane and rice that led into clearance of large areas of land for farming in Msolwa and Signali while leaving much to be desired in other villages.<sup>55</sup> This was a big boost for agricultural development in the valley because the experience was different in other areas where *Ujamaa* was a stumbling block.<sup>56</sup> Although, some informants would point failure of *Ujamaa* in their villages, Msolwa's experience comes up as a success story from within the village or from people in other

---

<sup>53</sup> Gerrit Huizer, "The Ujamaa Programmes in Tanzania: New Forms of Rural Development," in *Studies of Comparative International Development*, Vol 8, No.2 (1973)5; also, Scott, *Seeing like a State*, 223-224

<sup>54</sup> Interviews with Abdullah Mpoka at Kidatu, 29.10.2019 and Pascal Mkakala at Signali, 29.10.2019.

<sup>55</sup> Monson, *Africa's Freedom*, 74-75, CCM Library Dodoma, 5/1008/15, *Vijiji vya Ujamaa*; interview with Mzee Meza, Mzee Kaminuka at Signali Village, 27.10.2019.

<sup>56</sup> See for example, Maxmillian Chuhila, "Agrarian Change and Rural Transformation in Isimani, ca. 1940-2010," *Utafiti* Vol.14(1), (2019), 1-22.

villages.<sup>57</sup> This means *Ujamaa* projects were not uniform. No generalized experiences on the failure or success but depended on mixed contributions of policy issues, the environment and people's feelings to part of the broader implementations.

For the case of success of *Ujamaa* in Msolwa and Signali than other villages in the valley was the high importance given to social activities that strengthened the feeling of togetherness among the villagers. For instance, village meetings were conducted and ended with a communal dinner, singing or dancing, the fact that kept villagers together as a kind of a one big family.<sup>58</sup> Such events agreed with the spirit of Nyerere on family-hood as the basis of African socialism. The spirit of communal farming in these villages was important for promoting production activities. Before 1960s, the whole area was heavily forested and wild animals threatened agricultural production. With *Ujamaa*, people especially migrant labourers who ended their employment with TAZARA construction and decided to settle in the valley lived together in groups, and the control over wild animals towards destruction of crops was closely maintained and brought high yield in return.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Paskali Mwingizi at Sanje village, 20.10.2019

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Mzee Meza and Hamis Kaminuka at Signali village, 27.10.2019; see also NRC, Dodoma, File. UMC/16/44, Muhtasari wa Mkutano wa Maafisa Ujamaa na Ushirika Mkoa wa Morogoro, Feb, 1979

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Mzee Khamis, Kaminuka at Signali Village, 27.10.2019

Yet, in other areas of the country production was contrary to what was observed in Msolwa and Signali. For instance, in Handeni District, the average of communal land for cultivation was only 0.3 acres during 1973 to 1974, which resulted into poor produces. Weak spirit of family-hood and inability of the villagers to generate reasonable amount of money from *Ujamaa* production accounted for the varied success of the programmes.<sup>60</sup> As of this, it seems, what determined success were not the plans imposed from above. Through the example we get from Msolwa and Signali, people's committed participation influenced success and failures. Besides, unlike other *Ujamaa* villages in the valley such as Chita and Itete the spirit of *Ujamaa* in Msolwa and Signali was stronger because most people who participated in the program were migrants and former construction workers who decided to settle and join *Ujamaa*. Government intervention added value to the already spirited peasants and did not come as a newly imposed system of production and living.<sup>61</sup>

During harvests peasants in Msolwa and Signali shared their experience on what made them successful to other neighbouring villages as a mechanism to catalyse them to

---

<sup>60</sup> Zaki Ergas, "Why Did the Ujamaa Village Policy Fail: Towards a Global Analysis", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18, no. 3 (1980), 387-410

<sup>61</sup> See 'Msolwa Morogoro's Best village', *Daily News*, 17.05.1978; 'Juhudi za Msolwa Kuelekea Ujamaa', *Uhuru*, 17.02.1982.

produce collectively.<sup>62</sup> Cooperative unions in Msolwa and Signali played pivotal role to enhance connection between farmers along the main road from Kidatu to Ifakara because of the advantages of communication networks, that is the road and railway linking them, production areas and the market.<sup>63</sup> A branch of railway, which was constructed from Kilosa on the central line to Mikumi for the purpose of transporting sugar from KSCL, was likewise important to transport other crops. Railway as a cheap means of transport encouraged more farming through construction of irrigation schemes and reliability of cheap transport for sugarcane and rice produced in Msolwa and Signali villages.<sup>64</sup> Msolwa and Signali were and even today have been recognized nationally as good examples of *Ujamaa* villages. Particularly, the history in Msolwa indicates that until recently it has retained its structural components of *Ujamaa*.<sup>65</sup>

This was catalysed by the fertile flood plains of Ruembe River and the eastern edge of Udzungwa mountains with rich landscapes of green fields suitable for agricultural

---

<sup>62</sup> Interviews with Mzee Meza at Signali village 29.10.2019 and Abdullah Mpoka at Kidatu, 08.11.2019

<sup>63</sup> NRC, Dodoma, File no.125. Pub.1934, Kilombero Ujamaa Cooperative society, 1971; Interviews with Aloyce Nguwani at Signali, 18.10.2019 and Alfa Hekeno at Signali, 2.11.2019

<sup>64</sup> NRC, Dodoma, File no.580.ACCS/A, Maendeleo ya Vijiji vya Ujamaa Tanzania Bara

<sup>65</sup> NRC, Dodoma, Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi Wilaya, Taarifa ya Miaka Hamsini ya Uhuru, Halimashauri ya Wilaya ya Kilombero, 2011, 39-40; interview with Innocent Magesa (Acting DAS) – Kilombero District Council, 03.10.2019

development played a decisive contribution towards development in the valley.<sup>66</sup> Unlike other areas, Msolwa and Signali had another added advantage of labour that comprised of migrants from within and outside the valley. Majority of the new farmers were those who had migrated into the valley for wage labour and later became interested to become peasants in the area. In the end, they developed a pattern of peasant wageworkers and traders living closer to the railway.<sup>67</sup> The TAZARA railway workers who had ended their employment were joined by *Ujamaa* arrivals and decided to stay, clear more land and settle as farmers, a situation that resulted into high sugarcane production.<sup>68</sup>

Unlike the nationalization of private enterprises in other parts of Tanzania in the 1960s, large-scale sugar farming was encouraged on private basis in Kilombero. Sugarcane farming gained more recognition as the socialist government was aiming for self-sufficiency in sugar and was planning to build the second plant of the KSCL (K2 plant) in support of its Second Five-Year Plan and the establishment of the Sugar Development Corporation.<sup>69</sup> Following the growing importance of sugar in the country, farmers in this area grew

---

<sup>66</sup>Interview with VEO at Kidatu, 22.10.2019; TNA, A/1382/71/IS/1/329, *Wito wa Wito wa Kuanza Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru, 1971*

<sup>67</sup> TNA, A/1382/71/IS/1/329, *Wito wa Kuanza Vijiji vya Ujamaa Kando ya Reli ya Uhuru, 1971*

<sup>68</sup> TNA, 550/A/1239/71IS/1.379, *Habari Kutoka Mkoani Morogoro: Reli ya TAZARA Mali Yetu, 1971*

<sup>69</sup> URT, *First Five-Year Development Plan, 1964-1969* (Dar es Salaam; Government Printers, 1964).

more sugarcane to supply to KSCL for sugar production. This was made possible because the area had the advantage of communication networks both roadway and railway for the transportation of goods and services. Nonetheless, this situation was reversed in 1980s with the adoption of Structural Adjustment Policies, which weakened *Ujamaa*.<sup>70</sup>

Msolwa Ujamaa and Signali villages are better off economically than any other villages in the Kilombero valley. There are two primary and two secondary schools at each village that were built by the villagers in the 1970s and they still exist. While Tanzania had initiated country campaigns for the establishment of ward secondary schools, these two villages already had two secondary schools, which are still maintained by the villages. This success was in fact because the villages maintained the *Ujamaa* spirit.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, while we have experience from other parts of Tanzania where villagers contribute to school development, in Msolwa village the money for such contributions come straight from shared income accrued from village farms until today. Villagers also have a shared social responsibility. Village income can assist anyone failing to pay medical bills or facing a social problem that he cannot manage. This is

---

<sup>70</sup> See for example, Emmanuel Sulle, 'Social Differentiation and the Politics of Land: Sugar Cane Outgrowing in Kilombero, Tanzania', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 3 (2017), 517–533; TNA, 548/R.20/1 Village Settlement Republic of Tanzania 1963–1965, 1; interview with Lutengano Mwambona at Kidatu, 28.10.2019

<sup>71</sup> Interview with village chairman, Msolwa Village 29.03.2022

however not entirely for free as the beneficiary is required to pay back by working on collective projects to compensate the expenses used on them.

#### **4.0 The valley in the 1980s**

By the early 1980s, it was clear that Tanzania was into a great economic crisis. As a strategy to restructure its economy, it embarked on the adoption of structural adjustment policies to agitate the conditions that had to be followed in order to get foreign aid.<sup>72</sup> Rural communities along the Kilombero valley were beginning to experience the effects of the new economic policies based on market liberalisation and structural adjustments.<sup>73</sup> The transition from *Ujamaa* and later the implementation of liberal policies from 1980s led to social and economic reforms in Tanzania such as removal of subsidies in agricultural inputs by the government and the encouragement of private farms which among other factors paved a way to the disintegration of *Ujamaa*.<sup>74</sup> Following the policy change in the valley, the development of villages was affected significantly because the country had to liberalize her economy and cut off expenditure on service provision as well as devaluating her currency. The economic remedies

---

<sup>72</sup> Goran Hyden & Rwekaza Mukandala, "Studying Foreign Aid Organisations: Theory and Concepts" in Goran Hyden & Rwekaza Mukandala (Eds.), *Agencies in Foreign Aid; Comparing China, Sweden and the United States & Tanzania* (New York: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), 10.

<sup>73</sup> Smalley et al, "The Role of the State," 8-9.

<sup>74</sup> Jamie Monson, "Defending the Peoples Railway in the Era of Liberalisation: TAZARA in Southern Tanzania", *African Socialisms and Postcolonialism* 76 (2006), 113-114

introduced in the 1980s caused more stress on the rural economy than was expected to be solutions to an ailing economic situation.

In Msolwa and Signali villages, there were noticeable impacts on land use patterns where the *Mfumaki* farms changed its status to become available for private development and that farmers started to rent for private farming.<sup>75</sup> Importantly, Subsidies on agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and equipment suffered cut-offs, a situation that transformed the villages into individual farms.<sup>76</sup> During this time, more people in this area started to rely on the informal sector to make a living. On the other hand, rice farming was becoming prohibitively expensive because of the steep increases in prices of agricultural inputs, such as chemical fertilizers and the removal of subsidies.<sup>77</sup> In response, Msolwa and Signali villages became a target destination for a new wave of migrants after the mid-1980s.<sup>78</sup> Migrants from within and outside the valley mostly from Iringa and Singida were seeking relief from increasing pressures on both urban and rural livelihoods. Newcomers sought to benefit from rice

---

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Ezra Mwekeno, Pascal Mkakala and Mzee Meza at Signali village, 3.11.2019

<sup>76</sup> Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi Wilaya, Taarifa ya Miaka Hamsini ya Uhuru, Halimashauri ya Wilaya ya Kilombero; Smalley at al, "The Role of the State," 39-40; interview with Aloys Nguwani, Khamis Meza and Khamis Kaminuka at Signali village, 25.10.2019,

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Aloys Nguwani and Mzee Meza at Signali Village, 25.10.2019; Monsoon, "Defending the Peoples Railway", 122.

<sup>78</sup> Monson, "Defending the Peoples Railway", 123.

farming in Signali, sugarcane in Msolwa and small-scale trade available in the valley as a whole. Thus, liberalization had a dual effect for the communities in these villages in terms of economic hardships for some families, especially those who migrated in search of a new livelihood. At the same time, liberalization allowed intensive private agriculture, an expansion of small-scale trade and informal economic activity that was facilitated by the operation alongside the railway.<sup>79</sup>

The period from late 1980s to early 1990s marked the period of outgrowing land use pattern that expanded production. For example, in Msolwa village people were given two acres of land by the village government, which made the households to increase in number. At the same time plots were also made available for newcomers to lease.<sup>80</sup> The number of households in Msolwa village increased from 490 in 1980 to more than 1,200 in 2013.<sup>81</sup> This meant an increased pressure on land. On the government's average of six members (2 parents, 4 children) per household it indicates that more land would be required to feed the increasing population and to get other livelihood supplies by selling cash-crops.

Allocation of farmland took place with the support of the

---

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 123-124

<sup>80</sup> NRC, Dodoma, MGR 61, Msolwa Society, 1987; Interview with Lutengano Mwambona, 20.10.2019; Smalley et al, "The Role of State," 6-8

<sup>81</sup> Kilombero Sugar Company, 2019

Kilombero Sugar Company Limited with back up of loans for farmers from National Micro Finance Bank (NMB), in order to ensure the supply of sugarcane. Due to the support and encouragement of KSCL, *Ujamaa* producing societies transformed and joined out growers' schemes in the 1990s. Others were reported to have joined the scheme because they were impressed with the income and reliable market for their produce while others were attracted by the progress that was achieved by their fellow villagers who joined the scheme therefore felt obliged to change their food crop plots into cash crops especially sugarcane.<sup>82</sup> This resulted in high productivity that shot from 100,000 tons of cane in 1994/1995 to more than 500,000 tons of cane by 2004/2005 season. In addition to that the total area cultivated by out growers also increased from below 2,000 hectares in 1990 to 16,000 hectares in 2010.<sup>83</sup>

Between 2007 and 2012 seven block farms were established in Kilombero with the average size of 67 acres. Two among these block farms with average plot size of 2.3 acres per farmer were at Msolwa village. Initially, these blocks were financed by the European Union but now the blocks have established other block farms, which are financed by Tanzanian local Banks such as CRDB and NMB.<sup>84</sup> Others are under the support of Private Agricultural Sector Support

---

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Maneno Mpangala, at Msolwa Ujamaa, 30.10.2019

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Khamis Kiwanuka at Signali, 27.10.2019; SBT, *Area Under Cane and Production Data*, 2014 from [www.sbt.go.tz](http://www.sbt.go.tz)

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

Trust from the Royal Danish support, which help farmers to develop business proposals to access loans from financial institutions and guarantee loans. The establishment of blocks is a result of large farms being split up then redistributed to villagers by the village government in regular parcels as well as the continuation of *Ujamaa* institutions in the village.<sup>85</sup> What is seen in this area is that the company has promoted block farming and that its impact to land use is the fact that the individually owned plots of land are demarcated to fall under a single block and are cultivated together. This is similar to *bega Kwa bega* mentioned earlier as well as block farms established by the company for groups of small holders in the early 1990s.

The spirit of communal farming in these villages made them to appropriate farming activities in a positive way. Consequently, the formerly forested area in Kiberege area turned into a settlement with people in agriculture. Kiberege forest area had wild animals that without clearing would not be suitable for agriculture. With the spirit of communal work from villagers, people lived together in groups, and the control over wild animals towards destruction of crops was closely maintained which resulted into high yield in return.<sup>86</sup> Although it was a custom for these people to live together and help each other, the family hood was stronger than any cooperative element. This is because they had the spirit of

---

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Abushiri Kazimoto at Msolwa Ujamaa, 30.10.2019

<sup>86</sup> See 'Msolwa Morogoro's Best village' *Daily News*, 17.05.1978; interview with Khamis, Kiwanuka at Signali Village, 27.10.2019

working together especially in planting more sugarcane than it was needed by the household and to sell to the Indians since 1920s.<sup>87</sup> However, in other areas of the country production was observed to decline with the implementation of *Ujamaa* programmes. For instance, the villages of Handeni District given as examples in this paper demonstrate how the *Ujamaa* exercise was not a uniform undertaking in terms of advantages and disadvantages.<sup>88</sup> In areas where peasant farmers were not motivated enough to open more areas for cultivation because little was earned from what they produced, *Ujamaa* lagged behind. We understand that the exercise was uniform in way it was conceptualized but in practice it varied depending on a combination of factors put together.

## 5.0 Conclusion

From the 1960s through the 1990s, this research looked at the *Ujamaa* program and the dynamics of land use in the Kilombero valley, ranging from traditional systems to commercial landholdings. People in this area were impacted by policy changes and continuities in land use, which had an impact on their livelihood, according to the findings provided in this study. The government's intervention, particularly during the *Ujamaa* implementation phase, was largely responsible for land use changes, particularly the

---

<sup>87</sup> NRC, Dodoma, File No. 4368, Msolwa Cooperative Society Ltd, 1983/84; Baum, *Land Use*, 25-27.

<sup>88</sup> Ergas, "Why Did the Ujamaa Fail", 387-410

conversion of open land into agricultural land. However, the combination of other variables such as population growth, the introduction of modern farming practices, and market impact were also factors driving land use changes. Conflicts and ambiguous land ownership, as well as a desire for increased income among the villagers, were also factors in the changes. Communities were compelled to convert and reclaim significant areas of the land as a result of this circumstance. Economic factors such as crop price incentives have prompted a shift from conventional to extended cropping methods, as well as the conversion of cultivated land to protected territory. As a result, this research contributes significantly to the narrative of agrarian transformation in the Kilombero valley. The study's main contribution is that it has revealed evidence that the *Ujamaa* exercise was not a uniform undertaking, as the ramifications and experiences varied from village to village. The villages of Msolwa and Signali are used to illustrate the nature of this variation. *Ujamaa* programs failed and thrived in the same ecological and socioeconomic environments of the Kilombero valley. There is no way to generalize *Ujamaa's* impact; rather, a deductive approach will yield a variety of results from different locations where it was applied.

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors gratefully acknowledge the research funding from the Collaborative Research Centre in the Ao2: Past Futures Project, which was coordinated by the University of

Bonn, Germany. Fieldwork in Kilombero and archival research in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam were made possible by the money. We also like to express our gratitude to the residents of Msolwa *Ujamaa* and Signali villages for sharing their life histories with us unconditionally.

## **From Public Ownership to Joint Venture Privatisation of Parastatals: A History of the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Mill, 1968-2020**

Bungaya Dughangw Mayo  
Mkwawa University College of Education, Tanzania

### **Abstract**

*In 1968, the Tanzanian government inaugurated the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Mill (FTM) which was built by using a Chinese interest-free loan. Built in the context of import substitution industrial strategy and the policy of socialism and self-reliance embodied in the Arusha Declaration of 1967, the FTM recorded a high productivity in the 1970s and declined in the 1980s. After the adoption of neo-liberal policies in the 1990s, the FTM was privatised to a Chinese company through a joint-venture contract (JVC) and it was renamed Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Company (FTC). In the early 2000s, FTC recovered shortly before it started to decline again until it stopped production in 2018. The extant literature fails to acknowledge interplay of both internal and external forces in FTM decline and they have not assessed the efficacy of joint venture privatisation. In addressing this lacuna, this paper argues that while the failure of government policies coupled with the impact of the global economic crisis of the 1980s to bring the textile industry to stand still in the 1990s, negative impact of economic liberalisation and the investor's deleterious practices after privatisation were the final nails in the coffin.*

**Key Words:** Textile Industry, Socialist Industrialisation, Neoliberalism, Joint-Venture Privatisation, Tanzania-China, Friendship Textile Company.

## **1.0 Introduction**

On July 6, 1968, the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Mill (FTM), the first large textile mill in Tanzania was opened in the commercial city of Dar es Salaam as a result of diplomatic ties between Tanzania and China. With the promulgation of the Arusha Declaration in 1967 and emphasis on state-led import substitution industrialisation strategy, the textile industry in general and FTM in particular performed well in the first decade. However, this trend was revised in the 1980s as the textile industry declined and by September 1994, the National Textile Corporation (TEXCO) its group companies were liquidated except FTM. Following the economic crisis of the 1980s, Tanzania adopted trade liberalisation as part of economic reforms particularly the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). In 1996 Tanzania inaugurated *the Sustainable Industrial Development Policy (SIDP-1996-2020)* and hence the country's industrial policy changed from import substitution industrialisation strategy to market-driven export-oriented industrialisation led by the private sector. In line with the *Tanzania Development Vision 2025*, it was anticipated that Tanzania would revive the

manufacturing sector and achieve the status of a middle-income country by 2025 with a semi-industrial economy.<sup>1</sup>

The FTM was privatised to Chinese investor through a joint venture contract (JVC) in 1996 and its name changed to Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Company (FTC). From 1996 onwards, the Tanzanian textile industry in general experienced a recovery as production increased by 78 per cent from 31.614 million square metres recorded in 1995 to 146.600 million square metres in 2006. The FTC recovered by 98 per cent from 0.281 million square metre in 1996 to 16.604 million square metres in 2006. But this trend was reversed again as country's textile production decreased by 47.8 per cent from 146.600 million square metres in 2006 to 76.436 million square metres in 2016. At FTC, production declined by 75 per cent from 16.604 million square metres in 2006 to 3.486 million square metres in 2017.<sup>2</sup> This paper documents a history of FTM in two main phases; first, from 1968 to 1995 when the company was under public ownership and management and; second, from 1996 to 2020 when the company operated under joint venture privatisation. It

---

<sup>1</sup> United Republic of Tanzania, hereafter URT, *Tanzania Development Vision 2025*, 13; Edson Mwabukojo, "Mapping the Development Progress in Tanzania Since Independence", *MPRA Paper*, University of Bucharest, 2019, 38; Andrew Coulson, "Cotton and Textile Industries in Tanzania: The Failure of Liberalisation", *Review of African Political Economy*, 43, No. 51, (2016), 48; Jagadeesan Vasinathan, "Future of Textile Industry", *Daily News*, September 6, 1996, p. 6

<sup>2</sup> Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, hereafter JMT, *Hali ya Uchumi wa Taifa* (Dar es Salaam, 2005)177; *idem* (2010), 209; *idem* (2016), 206

focuses on how interplay of both internal and external forces shaped the company over time.

## **2.0 Conceptual discussion**

### **2.1 Public Ownership of Parastatals**

Public ownership of parastatals can be understood as possession of parastatal or an enterprise by the government on behalf of the people.<sup>3</sup> It was the main feature of most Sub-Saharan African countries between the 1960s and 1980s.<sup>4</sup> In Tanzania, the expansion of the public sector took place in two main ways after the Arusha Declaration in 1967. First, it was through establishment of new parastatals under the Companies Ordinance Act, Cap 212 of 1932 which was amended in 1964 and 1967. All the textile companies which were established between 1967 and 1980s were created under this act. The second approach was through nationalisation which put all major means of production under public ownership. For purposes of identifying enterprises eligible for nationalization, all sectors of the economy were classified into three main groups. The first consisted of banking, insurance, major import-export houses and major grain milling organisation all of which were to be wholly owned by the state. The second category was comprised of such sectors as land, forests, mineral resources, water, oil, electricity, communication, transport, whole sale business, steel, machine tools, arms, motorcar, cement, fertiliser factories

---

<sup>3</sup> [PUBLIC OWNERSHIP | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary](#)

<sup>4</sup> Tony Killick, *Development Economics in Action: A Study of Economic Policies in Ghana*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn (London: Routledge, 2010)

and manufacturing industries. These would not be wholly owned by the government. Instead, the government would control them through majority shareholding.<sup>5</sup> Integrated textile mills fell into the latter category. Although the public sector performed well in the 1970s, it collapsed in the 1980s and 1990s. The adoption of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) under the guardianship of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) marked the rise of neo-liberalism.

## 2.2 Neo-liberalism and Joint Venture Privatisation

With adoption of SAPs and neo-liberal policies the significance of market forces and the primacy of the private sector as opposed to state controlled economies became dominant feature of development discourses.<sup>6</sup> As defined by David Harvey neo-liberalism refer to a political and economic theory which proposes that human well-being can be advanced by maximisation of entrepreneurial freedom characterised by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets and free trade.<sup>7</sup> Raewyn Connell<sup>8</sup> also provided

---

<sup>5</sup> United Republic of Tanzania, hereafter URT, The National Development Corporation (NDC) Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1967, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Osimiri, "An Ethical Critique of Neo-Liberal Development in Africa", *Covenant Journal of Politics and International Affairs* (CUJPIA) 1, No. 1 (2013), 62

<sup>7</sup> David Harvey, "Neo-Liberalism as Creative Destruction", *Geographical Annals*, 88 B (2) 2006, 145.

<sup>8</sup> Raewyn Connell, "Understanding Neoliberalism" In *Neoliberalism and Everyday Life*, edited by S. Braedley & M. Luxton (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 22-23.

relatively similar definition but added the aspect of social transformation under the umbrella of free market that has come to dominate global politics. Neo-liberalism is built in the conviction that unconstrained market forces will naturally bring prosperity, liberty, democracy and peace to the society.<sup>9</sup> To the above definitions, Herod & Aguiar<sup>10</sup> added the aspect of privatisation of state-owned assets. From these definitions, the main features of neo-liberalism are, among others, the supremacy of free market forces, removal of government constraints on movement of goods and capital, rolling back the state, privatisation and trade liberalisation.<sup>11</sup>

In industrialisation, neo-liberalism assumed that with adoption of market approach, minimal government interventions and the government setting favourable environments for the private investments to take place, foreign direct investments would flow into various industrial sectors.<sup>12</sup> However, the main weakness of the neo-liberal perspective is that it over emphasize the role of internal forces particularly industrial policies and their

---

<sup>9</sup> Jan Scholte, *Globalisation: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 38.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Herod & Luis Aguiar, "Introduction: Geographies of Neoliberalism", *Antipode* 38, no. 3 (2006), 436-437

<sup>11</sup> Ray Kiely, *Clash of Globalisations: Neo-Liberalism, the Third Way and Anti-Globalisation* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 63.

<sup>12</sup> Cosmas Masanja, "The Extent to Which Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Contribute to the Growth of Host Economies: Evidence from Tanzania", *University of Dar es Salaam Journals* 21, no. 1 (2018), 4-5.

implementation while denying the role of the external environment in explaining the failure of African industrialisation and the diminution of the role of the state in orchestrating industrial development.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, neo-liberalism has been viewed as hegemonic weapon which aims to concentrate power and wealth into the hands of Multinational and Trans-National Corporations (MNCs and TNCs).<sup>14</sup> In this regard, neo-liberal practices such as privatisation of manufacturing firms in Africa are viewed as hegemonic forces because instead of developing the domestic industries they contributed to their collapse.<sup>15</sup>

Joint venture privatisation is the type of privatisation in which the public and private sector partners accept the idea of shared risk and reward.<sup>16</sup> As Harrigan puts it, joint venture approach is used as a way of diversifying and entering new markets, introducing new products and acquiring

---

<sup>13</sup> Charles Soludo, "Industrialisation and Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: Is the Asian Experience Useful?" In *African Voices to Structural Adjustment Programme: A Companion to Our Continent, Our Future* edited by Thandika Mkandawire & Charles Soludo, (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2003), 104.

<sup>14</sup> Niels Hahn, "Neo-liberal Imperialism and Pan African Resistance", *Journal of World System research*, XIII, 2 (2008), 144

<sup>15</sup> Murtala Muhammad, *et al.*, "The Impact of Chinese Textile Imperialism on Nigeria's Textile Industry and Trade, 1960-2015", *Review of African Political Economy*, (Routledge: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 6-7.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Bennett, *et al.*, "Joint Venture Public-Private Partnership for Urban Environmental Services", *Working Paper Series*, Vol.2 (New York: Yale University, 2000), 10.

technology.<sup>17</sup> While joint ventures are in most cases expected to benefit both parties, Hyder and Ghauri show that they face a high failure rate for three main reasons. First, resources are brought in by partners with different organisational, social and cultural backgrounds which do not necessarily fit to the project. Second, the environments in which joint venture operates are in most cases unknown to the foreign partner. Third, the multinational firms fail to understand the dynamism in inter organisational relationships.<sup>18</sup> In Tanzania, the implementation of neo-liberal policies in the 1980s and 1990s went hand in hand with change of country's industrial policy from a state led import substitution industrialisation strategy to an export-oriented strategy driven by the private sector.<sup>19</sup>

Public enterprises were privatised in an attempt to increase efficiency, achieve international competitiveness and economic self-reliance. The government implemented massive restructuring of the economy, privatised the parastatal sectors and provided incentive packages to attract foreign direct investments (FDI) through Tanzania

---

<sup>17</sup> Kathryn Harrigan, *Managing for Joint Venture Success*, (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Akmal Hyder & Pervez Ghauri, "Managing International Joint Venture Relations: A Longitudinal Perspective", *Industrial Marketing Management* 29, no. 3 (2000), 206.

<sup>19</sup> Jamal Msami & Samuel Wangwe, "Industrial Development in Tanzania", in *Manufacturing Transformation: Comparative Studies of Industrial Development in Africa and Emerging Asia*, edited by Carol Newman, et al., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 165.

Investment Centre (TIC).<sup>20</sup> If industrialisation failed in the 1980s due to poor government policies as reiterated by the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), one could expect their booming in the 2000s following their privatisation from 1995 onwards. However, scrutiny of the available literature<sup>21</sup> on the textile industry both in Tanzania and other African countries indicate that although privatisation has brought relatively positive improvements in the manufacturing sector, yet sectoral analysis shows that such economic growth was insignificant and that the growth has been skewed towards extractive, tertiary (service) and food and beverage sectors only. Although the textile industry recovered in the early 2000s, it has since then continued to decline and lag behind both in terms of performance and in attracting foreign direct investments (FDI). The fact that 35 out of 37 textile establishments were closed down in Tanzania after liberalisation<sup>22</sup> and the few which remained in

---

<sup>20</sup> Masanja, "The Extent to Which FDI Contribute to the Growth of Host Economies: Evidence from Tanzania", 4-5

<sup>21</sup> Wumi Olayiwola & Johansein Rutaihwa, "Trade Liberalisation and Employment Performance of Textile and Clothing Industry in Tanzania", *International Business Research* 3, No. 3 (2010), 52; Godius Kahyarara, "Market Competition and Performance of Tanzanian Manufacturing", *Journal of business and Economics* 4, No. 1 (2013), 49; Hazel Gray, "Industrial Policy and Political Settlement in Tanzania: Aspects of Continuity and Change Since Independence", *Review of African Political Economy* 40, No. 136 (2013), 186.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Wangwe, "Economic Reforms, Industrialisation and Technological Capabilities in Tanzanian Industry", in *The Industrial Experience of Tanzania*, edited by Adam Szirmai and Paul Lapperre (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 364; Steve Onyeiwu, "The Modern

production downsized their operations is a clear indication that the efficacy of privatisation in general and the joint venture privatisation in particular was highly questionable. Similar trends were notable throughout the continent as textile production dropped by 50 per cent while employment went down by 80 per cent due to job losses caused by retrenchment and capacity utilisation was as low as 30 per cent.<sup>23</sup>

A study by Rutaihwa and Olayiwola<sup>24</sup> indicates that trade liberalisation caused decline of employment in the Tanzanian textile industry. Another study which challenged privatisation in the Tanzanian textile industry was made by Damian Gabagambi<sup>25</sup> who studied the nature of privatisation in the Tanzanian textile industry. He found that in contrast with Vietnam which cautiously and strategically privatised their textile industries, Tanzania embarked on privatisation

---

Textile Industry in Nigeria: History, Structural Change and Recent Developments”, *Textile History* 28, no. 2 (1997) 244; Olayiwola & Rutaihwa, “Trade Liberalisation and Employment Performance,” 52

<sup>23</sup> Herbert Jauch & R. Traub-Merz (Eds), *The Future of the Textile and Clothing Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2006), 17; S. Akinrinade & O. Ogen, Globalisation and De-Industrialisation: South-South Neo-Liberalism and the Collapse of the Nigerian Textile Industry, *The Global South, Vol. 2, No. 2,* (2008), pp. 164-165; Muhammad *et al*, The Impact of Chinese Textile Imperialism on Nigeria’s Textile Industry and Trade, 1960-2015”, 17

<sup>24</sup> Olayiwola & Rutaihwa, “Trade Liberalisation and Employment Performance,” 47-49.

<sup>25</sup> Damian Gabagambi, “Post Liberalisation Paradox in Textile Industry: A Comparative Study of Vietnam and Tanzania”, *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences* 4, No. 8 (2013), 194.

more abruptly and haphazardly. Such unplanned privatisation led to poor performance while other factories were turned into go-downs by the investors. A study by Andrew Coulson<sup>26</sup> attributes the continued failure of textile industry in Tanzania to the failure of liberalisation. Another study by Keregero Moses<sup>27</sup> indicate that with trade liberalisation and increased importation of second-hand clothing, domestic textile industries are collapsing and investors are quitting the sector. Although these studies are significant in understanding the nature of the textile industry in the aftermath of liberalisation, there is a paucity of studies which examines the ways in which changes of government policies from state-led import substitution to an export-oriented industrialisation strategy under the private sector have affected the performance of the textile industry. Furthermore, the extant literature has just managed to show that the textile industry continued to lag behind after privatisation, but failed to make an investigation of the ways in which investors practices contributes to the collapse of the textile industry after privatisation.

In an attempt to fill this gap, this paper used information collected from archives, newspapers, official government reports and from oral interviews to examine the impact of changing policies and their implementation on the

---

<sup>26</sup> Coulson, "Cotton and Textile Industries in Tanzania", 54

<sup>27</sup> Chirongo Moses, "A Study on the Performance of Textile Sector in Tanzania: Challenges and Ways Forward" *Multidisciplinary International Academic Research Conference*, (2016), 51-64.

Tanzanian textile industry by using the case study of Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Company. Archival information was collected from the University of Dar es Salaam Main Library, Tanzania National Archives in Dar es Salaam, Dodoma Record Centre, the Treasury Register Office in Dar es Salaam and the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Company (FTC). From these centres, materials such as government reports, policy documents, circulars, official correspondence, parliamentary Hansard and newspapers were surveyed. Oral testimonies were collected from employees and management of Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Company (FTC) and retired ex-officials who had worked at the mill, Tanzania Textile Corporation (TEXCO) and other textile companies.

The paper is divided into even main chronological sections. The next section provides a conceptual discussion on public ownership, neo-liberalism and joint venture privatisation. The third section historicises diplomatic and friendly relationships that were developed between Tanzania and China which led to the establishment of Tanzania-China Friendship Textiles Mills (FTM). It also elucidates the performance of the FTM up to 1976, just one year after the departure of Chinese expatriates and one year before the implementation of expansion programme which started in 1976. The fourth section documents the outcomes of expansion programme and economic crisis of the 1980s to the performance of FTM. In section five, I look at the rehabilitation programme that was conducted between 1990

and 1995. Section six discusses the impact of implementation of neo-liberal policies through joint venture privatisation of the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Mill (FTM) which was accompanied by a change of name to Friendship Textile Company (FTC). Section seven concludes the paper. This paper examines ways in which a change of industrial policy from state led import substitution industrialisation to export oriented private sector led industrialisation strategy affected the performance of the present-day Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Company (FTC) between 1968 and 2020.<sup>28</sup>

### **3.0 The Tanzania-China Friendship and the Friendship Textile Mill (FTM), 1960s-1976**

Although trade and investment relations between China and African countries can be traced back to the ancient times, the first formal diplomatic relations started with Egypt in 1956 and from then onwards other countries joined.<sup>29</sup> In the present-day Tanzania, the formal political and diplomatic ties with China started on December 9, 1961. Such a friendship was developed in the context of cold war and the anti-Western sentiments, being united by common ideology

---

<sup>28</sup>This name started after the joint venture privatization of the former Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Mill (FTM) in 1996.

<sup>29</sup> Abel Kinyondo, "Is China Recolonising Africa? Some Views from Tanzania", *World Affairs* 182, no.2 (2019), 3; Abdul Sheriff, "The East African Coast and Its Role in Maritime Trade" in *Ancient Civilisation of Africa*, General History of Africa, Vol. II, ed. G. Mokhtar, (California: UNESCO, 1981), 551-554; Maho Fujita, "Chinese Involvement in Tanzania and its Local Impacts", Honour's Thesis, (Bucknell University, 2017), 12.

of socialism.<sup>30</sup> After the army mutiny and the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964, Tanzania strengthened her relations with China by signing the treaty of friendship in 1965.<sup>31</sup> Among others, the treaty “conformed to the fundamental interests of the people of the two countries, helps promote the solidarity between them as well as among Asian and African people and the common struggle against imperialism, and conduces to peace in Asia, Africa and the World.”<sup>32</sup> From then onwards, Tanzania received grants and loans from China to facilitate the construction of Tanzania-Zambia railway line (TAZARA), Tanzania- China Friendship Textile Mill (FTM), Police College training at Moshi, Ubungo farm implements factory, Ruvu state farm, a joint Sino-Tanzania shipping line, medical services and military training just few to mention.<sup>33</sup>

The Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Mill (FTM) was established by using an interest-free loan of 50 million shillings from the Government of the People’s Republic of China and an equity capital of 10 million shillings which was

---

<sup>30</sup> Jean-Pierre Cabestan & Jean-Raphaél Chaponnière, “Tanzania-China All Weather Friendship from Socialism to Globalisation: A Case of Relative Decline”, *Discussion Paper* No. 1, (2016), 6

<sup>31</sup> Huruma Sigalla, “Changing Trends in Tanzania-China Relationships: A Sociological Inquiry into the Mixed Perceptions of the Tanzania-China Relationships on the Eve of Globalisation, *Österreich Z Soziol* 39 (2014), 62

<sup>32</sup> *Peking Review*, No. 9, February 26, 1965, 9, quoted in Fujita, 2017, 17

<sup>33</sup> Martin Bailey, “China and Tanzania: A Friendship between Most Unequal Equals” *Millennium, Journal of International Studies* 2, no.1 (1973), 17-31.

provided by the government of Tanzania through the National Development Corporation (NDC). The foundation stone for the construction of FTM was laid by the country's first President Julius K. Nyerere on July 29, 1966 and the construction of the building and erection of the machinery was completed within eighteen months. On July 6, 1968 the mill went into commercial production with an annual production capacity of 24 million square metres and 1,000 tonnes of yarn.<sup>34</sup> With the trade mark of "Urafiki" and freedom torch on manufactured clothes, the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Mill (FTM) was named to symbolise the friendship between the two countries.<sup>35</sup> During the FTM's opening ceremony, Nyerere congratulated the Chinese government in general and their experts in particular for their painstaking efforts and called for Tanzanians to follow the example of the Chinese hard working spirit towards self-reliance as he said:

Our meeting here to open this textile mill is a matter of great pleasure and pride. This ceremony represents another example of our progress towards self-reliance; in addition, it illustrates that we are prepared to accept assistance which aids our development from other

---

<sup>34</sup> URT, *Tanzania Trade and Industry*, No. 17, July-September, 1966, 16; see also URT, NDC Annual Report and Accounts, 1968, 52 and 1969, 60

<sup>35</sup> 'Urafiki' is a *Swahili* meaning of the word "friendship". The names such as Urafiki Police Station or Urafiki bus stop drew from the presence of FTM.

countries. ... such assistance will enable us to be more self-reliant eventually.<sup>36</sup>

Nyerere's speech focused on clarifying two main issues. First, between 1964 and 1967 there were series of foreign companies from Europe, America and Asia which had shown interest to invest in the Tanzanian textile industry.<sup>37</sup> One of these companies was the American based Riegel Textile Company had requested to establish a textile factory in Tanzania.<sup>38</sup> But Nyerere declined the request by Riegel's as well as other companies from Hong Kong, India and other countries. Instead, he went for Chinese loan because it had the potential to help Tanzania own its textile industry on the basis of self-reliance instead of being locked into an industrial development strategy that relied on foreign direct investment by capitalist companies. Although it was difficult to establish the terms of Riegel's investment proposal from the archival sources at hand, the report of the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Mines and Power on President Nyerere's decision to decline Riegel's request indicated that they had more difficult terms.<sup>39</sup> Thus Nyerere's speech on

---

<sup>36</sup> URT, "Friendship Textile Industry: A Symbol of Friendship", *Tanzania Trade and Industry*, No. 23, (December, 1968), 10

<sup>37</sup> TNA, Acc. 596: D3210-1-A, Textile General, Ref. no. CIC-61/033/24, June 23, 1965

<sup>38</sup> TNA, ACC. 469: CIC 5/49/0113 (B) Textile Industry, Scheuer & Co., Ltd., 1963-64, From PS, Ministry of Mines and Power to PS Treasury, August 14, 1964.

<sup>39</sup> TNA, ACC. 469: CIC 5/49/0113 (B) Textile Industry, Scheuer & Co., Ltd., 1963-64, From PS, Ministry of Mines and Power to PS Treasury, August 14, 1964.

the inauguration of FTM was an attempt to send a clear message to the world, of the desire by Tanzania to be self-reliant and on socialist basis. The second major issue was that the principles of socialism and self-reliance embodied in the Arusha Declaration were not yet understood not only by foreign countries, but also by Tanzanians themselves including officials in the ruling party, Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). Some of officials seemed to have misunderstood the notion of self-reliance to mean rejection of foreign assistances. When he was addressing the members of TANU in 1967, Nyerere clarified the position of Tanzania and the philosophy of socialism and self-reliance in relation to foreign assistance:

For the Arusha Declaration does not say that Tanzania refuses outside aid or that there is something wrong in receiving it... We are not saying that we will not accept or even that we shall not look for money from other countries for our development... but if we get assistance to carry out our purposes decided by us, then we shall welcome that assistance.<sup>40</sup>

It was therefore imperative to be cautious and selective in picking up foreign assistance as well as foreign investments. By looking at the terms of the agreements signed in January, 1965, the Chinese loan on FTM was economically appealing to the best choice because loan was interest free and was to

---

<sup>40</sup> Julius Nyerere, "After Arusha Declaration", Presidential Address to the TANU National Conference held in Mwanza, October, 1967, 3

be paid within a period of ten years, after a grace period of ten years.<sup>41</sup> In the first seven years since its inauguration in 1968, FTM was managed by Chinese expatriates until 1974 when the management of the mills was handed over to the local management team.

In The first ten years FTM's production increased by 31.6 per cent from 9.9 million square metres to 31.6 million square metres.<sup>42</sup> At the national level, textile production increased by 30 per cent from 28.87 million square metres in 1968 to 96.13 million square metres in 1981 while the number of textile establishments increased from nine in 1966 to thirty-seven in the 1985. At its peak in the early 1980s, the contribution of the textile industry to manufacturing output and provision of employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector had reached 25 per cent while providing employment to about 50,000 people.<sup>43</sup> As indicated in table 1, FTM contributed between 27 and 35 per cent of total textile production in the country and produced about one third of all textile products in the country and achieved its production target by a range of between 91 and 107 per cent.<sup>44</sup> Although this seems to be higher achievement, the reality was that production was increasing

---

<sup>41</sup> Peter Matutu, "An Analysis of Labour Productivity Trends in Selected Textile Firms in Tanzania, 1976-1988", M.A. Dissertation, UDSM, 1991, 10; URT, NDC Annual Report and Account for the year 1966, 51

<sup>42</sup> For detailed citations see table 1 and Table 3 in this paper.

<sup>43</sup> Vasinathan, "Future of Textile Industry", *Daily News*, September 6, 1996, 6

<sup>44</sup> FTM Company's Production Report, 1

at a decreasing rate as the company had reached the peak of its installed capacity. This is indicated by a sharp decline of production percentage changes as shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Contribution of FTM to Total Textile Production, 1968-1976.**

Year	Total National Production ('000 sqm)	FTM Production ('000 sqm)	% of FTM to Total Production	% Change of FTM Production
1968	28,871	9,991	34.3	-
1969	46,260	15,391	33.2	54
1970	58,119	15,690	27	1.9
1971	67,010	19,779	29.5	26
1972	74,136	21,461	28.9	8.5
1973	80,764	24,219	29.9	12.9
1974	86,399	24,815	28.7	2.5
1975	87,435	24,022	27.4	-3
1976	82,716	28,905	35	20.3

Source: Company Production Records

Furthermore, there was a steady growth in the rate of employment which started with about 2000 in 1968 and by 1976 it had reached 5,185 workers. As compared to the rest of the mills, the per cent of FTM's contribution to total employment in the textile industry was between 19.7 and 21.4

respectively, or about one-fifth of all workers in the textile industry. Also, as indicated in table 2, the increase in the levels of employment at FTM did not result in an increase in the percentage of total employment in the textile industry attributable to employment at FTM because other textile establishments were also increasing their levels of employment.

By 1973 FTM production had reached the peak of its installed capacity. At the national level, the total textiles' installed capacity was 90 million square metres in 1976 while domestic demand for textiles was 120 million square metres and total production stood at 82 million square metres. Such a demand was projected to increase further to 160 million square metres by 1980 and 196 million square metres by 1985.<sup>45</sup> In order to meet such a demand the government was compelled to undertake expansion programme in order to expand the mill's production capacity by installing more machinery and employing more people. The following section focuses on the efficacy of expansion programme

**Table 2. Contribution of FTM to Total Employment in the Textile Industry**

Year	Total Employment in The Textile	FTM Employment	% of FTM to Total Employment in the Textile	% Change FTM Employment
------	---------------------------------	----------------	---	-------------------------

---

<sup>45</sup> JMT, Taarifa Rasmi za Bunge, (Hansard), Mkutano wa 7, Sehemu ya 2, Juni 29, 1977, 815

	Industry		Industry	
1969		2,711		
1970	15,460	3052	19.7	12.6
1971	16,845	3,303	19.6	8.2
1972	16,898	3,623	21.4	9.7
1973	19,520	3,846	19.7	6.1
1974	22,303	4,815	21.6	25.2
1975	24,200	4,905	20.2	0.02
1976	26,350	5,185	19.6	5.7

Sources: Company Production Records and NDC Annual Reports; Nyoni, p. 38 & 49

#### **4.0 FTM Expansion Programme and Economic Crisis, 1976-1989**

Between 1976 and 1980 Tanzania embarked on a textile expansion programme which was implemented in two ways. First was through expansion of the capacity of the existing four mills namely FTM, Mwatex, Kiltex and Sunguratex. The second approach was through establishment of new mills such as Mbeya Textiles, Musoma Textiles and Morogoro Polyester which were opened in the 1980s. As stated earlier, some of the establishments like FTM had reached the peak of their installed capacities. Furthermore, with increased population, increased exports and restricted imports in the early 1970s, both local and export demands for textiles were projected to exceed production capacities.<sup>46</sup> This would result in domestic shortages, missed export opportunities

---

<sup>46</sup> JMT, Hansard, Mkutano wa 7, Sehemu ya 2, Juni 29, 1977, 815

and increased imports. It was also noted by the government that while Tanzania produced more than 450,000 bales of cotton annually, only about 20 per cent was utilised locally.<sup>47</sup> Thus there was a need to convert locally produced cotton into finished yarn, fabrics and manufacture cloth and bags in order to promote a dynamic garment industry.

The need to address those challenges compelled the National Development Corporation (NDC) to contract Kurt Salmon and Associates, Inc. (KSA) to conduct a long-term textile rationalisation study in order to develop an overall expansion plan, which was then translated into the plans of the individual mills. The NDC used the KSA rationalisation study report to plan for the future expansion possibilities, work out cost estimates and the timing of each mill.<sup>48</sup> Also, with realisation of the need to expand the textile industry, the government through the Presidential order of 1973 established the National Textile Corporation (TEXCO) in January, 1974.<sup>49</sup> TEXCO was formed as an independent parastatal organisation whose aim was to promote, manage and supervise all sectoral activities of its group companies

---

<sup>47</sup> *Daily News*, Tuesday, October 18, 1977, 5; *Daily News*, Tuesday, October 25, 1977, 5

<sup>48</sup> TNA, Acc. 596, File No. D/3210/2/1, Textile Rationalisation General Correspondence, 1972, From AG Director of Operation (NDC) to Exchange Controller (BOT), October 2, 1972.

<sup>49</sup> Lazaro Swai, 'Public Enterprises' Board of Directors and Performance: The Case of Zana za Kilimo (ZZK) Ltd. Mbeya, National Development Corporation (NDC) and Textile Corporation (TEXCO)', (M.A. Dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, 995), 136

such as production distribution, marketing, pricing, exports and imports. These functions were previously handled by NDC. After the KSA rationalisation study, the government through the TEXCO appointed Gherzi Textile Organisation (GTO) of Zurich, Switzerland to carry out investigation on a market and marketing of textiles both in Tanzania and other neighbouring African countries and Europe as the basis for future textile projects in the country.<sup>50</sup>

Main problems associated with appointment of Gherzi have been well documented by Rugumamu<sup>51</sup> in that their appointment to undertake the study as well as implementation of their recommendations which resulted in the expansion programme was highly controversial. First, the programme was implemented at a wrong time when economic crisis was just beginning. Second, the World Bank and Multinational Corporations were behind the programme, thus driving force behind the project was more of their profitability instead of interests of Tanzanian textile industry. Third, their recommendations failed to address the high costs of production and overvalued currency which negatively affected the competitiveness of the mills.<sup>52</sup> The fourth problem was that the report failed to address the

---

<sup>50</sup> URT, Market, Marketing and Feasibility study for Tanzania's Textile Industry, TEXCO, November, 1976, p. 1;

<sup>51</sup> Severine Rugumamu, "The Textile Industry in Tanzania", *Review of Radical Political Economics* 21, No.4, (1989), 64-68.

<sup>52</sup> Rugumamu, "The Textile Industry in Tanzania", 65

financial and manpower supply constraints which hindered local textile mills as Rugumamu further points out that:

... all the existing textile mills were run by foreign management companies and no comprehensive training programmes were in place.... By the early 1970s, several loan repayments were rescheduled because of poor production performances.... Given the above factors, and all other things being equal, the expansion and export recommendations of the Gherzi report were, to say the least, prescriptions of disaster.<sup>53</sup>

Although the expansion programme was important, it was not an outcome of the development of domestic textile industry as the local conditions in which the programme was to be implemented were downplayed. Rather, it was an outcome of ambitious politically driven government plans which merged with the motives of the World Bank and textile transnationals Corporations who dictated the details of how, when, where as well as the financing of the programme.<sup>54</sup> After the expansion programme the textile industry's installed capacity increased from 90 million square metres between 1976 and 1979 to 200 million square metres in 1980 and then to 252.1 million square metres from 1985 onwards. It should be noted that the expansion programme was implemented at the time when the existing mills were already operating below their installed capacities. Therefore, expansion programme just increased the installed capacities

---

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 66

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 64

but not the actual production which by then had started to decline.

The FTM expansion programme started in 1976 and was completed in 1977. It involved an instalment of an additional 216 looms and a modern printing machine.<sup>55</sup> After the implementation of expansion programme it was anticipated that the mill would increase production from 26 to more than 35 million square metres per year and textile production at the national level production would reach 105 million square metres in 1978.<sup>56</sup> However, as indicated in table 3, the country's textile production in 1978 was only 69 per cent of the installed capacity. Actually, from 1978 onwards, while the installed capacity increased as a result of the implementation of the expansion programme, total textile production in the country including at FTM was declining subsequently. At the FTM, production declined by 99 per cent from the highest score of 31.614 million square metres in 1978 to 0.281 million square metres in 1996.

**Table 3: Comparative Figures on Installed Capacity and Production Levels at FTM and the Textile Industry as a Whole, 1977-1995**

Year	Total Production ('000 sqm)	Total Capacity (Million m <sup>2</sup> )	FTM Capacity (Million m <sup>2</sup> )	FTM Production ('000 m <sup>2</sup> )	% of FTM to total Production	% Change of FTM Production
1977	78,869	90	35	26,169	33.2	

<sup>55</sup> "Industries Supplement: The Textile Sector", *Daily News*, October 25, 1977, 5

<sup>56</sup> JMT, *Majadiliano ya Bunge (Hansard)*, Juni 29, 1977, 824.

1978	72,932	90	35	31,614	43.3	20.8
1979	85,070	90	35	30,251	35.5	-4.3
1980	93,123	200	35	29,748	31.9	-1.7
1981	96,133	200	35	27,015	28.1	-9.2
1982	86,275	200	35	24,179	28.0	-10.5
1983	59,656	200	35	19,654	32.9	-18.7
1984	57,300	200	35	19,525	34.1	-0.7
1985	63,069	252.1	35	17,087	27.1	-12.4
1986	61,883	252.1	35	14,553	25.4	-14.8
1987	66,600	252.1	35	17,292	26	18.8
1988	57,100	252.1	35	14,552	25.4	-15.8
1989	70,897	252.1	35	13,816	19.5	-5.1
1990	63,279	252.1	35	14,795	23.4	7.1
1991	62,820	252.1	35	13,662	21.7	-7.6
1992	73,195	252.1	35	11,681	15.9	-14.5
1993	60,316	252.1	35	11,532	19.1	-1.3
1994	51,357	252.1	35	7,472	14.5	-35.2
1995	31,201	252.1	35	1,904	6.1	-74.5
1996	33,178	252.1	35	281	0.8	-85.2

Sources: Company Production Records. See also, Peter Matutu, 1991, p. 15; URT *Statistical Abstracts* for the Respective Years; URT: *Economic Surveys* for Respective Years

At the national level production declined by 67 per cent from its highest production of 96.133 million square metres in 1981 to 31.201 million square metres in 1995.<sup>57</sup> From the late 1970s, several forces were at play in hampering the development of manufacturing firms and the textile industry in particular.

---

<sup>57</sup> These statistics are well presented in tables 3 & 4 in this paper.

The crisis was manifested in extreme shortages of commodities, crippling shortage of foreign exchange and low-capacity utilisation and low productivity of the public firms.<sup>58</sup>

The collapse of the manufacturing sector in general and the textile industry in particular has been attributed to several factors. According to the World Bank Report<sup>59</sup> the failure of government policies which were characterised by excessive state interventions, overprotective industrial policies, poor management of exchange rates and delays in making macro-economic adjustments were the main reasons for the decline of industrial sector in Tanzania.<sup>60</sup> These explanations came with the proposed alternative measures which called for implementation of economic reforms which among others it included the adoption of market driven economy as the best approach to economic prosperity. Countries which were regarded as bad performers were blamed for failing to adapt to the demands of globalisation as they were regarded as

---

<sup>58</sup> Brian Van Arkadie, "Economic Strategy and Structural Adjustment in Tanzania", *World Bank PSD Occasional Paper* No. 18, (1995), 3; Samuel Wangwe & Haji Semboja, "Impact of Structural Adjustment on Industrialisation and Technology in Africa", In *African Voices on Structural Adjustment: A Companion to Our Continent, Our Future*, edited by Thandika Mkandawire & Charles Soludo (Ottawa: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003), 163

<sup>59</sup> *World Bank*, "Tanzania: An Agenda for Industrial Recovery June 30, (1987), 15-16

<sup>60</sup> *World Bank*, "Tanzania: An Agenda for Industrial Recovery", 15-16

pursuing bad policies.<sup>61</sup> In putting an emphasis on the failure of government policy, Samuel Wangwe cites:

Inward looking import substitution industrialisation policies shielded firms from competitive pressure. Investors were securing niches and preventing rivals from entering domestic or regional markets. ... Profitability was assured irrespective of the level of efficiency... The exchange rate was overvalued, rendering imports cheaper than under free market conditions... Resource allocation favoured expansion rather than efficient utilisation of the capacities which had already been created.<sup>62</sup>

Apart from policy issues, other factors which constrained the development of industrialisation in Africa were the impact of global oil crisis, impact of Kagera war, collapse of East African Community, inadequate institutional capacities, weak linkages between an industry and other sectors, inadequate infrastructure, low levels of human developments and low investments in technology and technology learning.<sup>63</sup> Other forces were unreliable power,

---

<sup>61</sup> Kiely, *Clash of Globalisation*, 2; Soludo, "Industrialisation and Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: Is the Asian Experience Useful?" 103

<sup>62</sup> Wangwe, "Economic Reforms, Industrialisation and Technological Capabilities", 357-358.

<sup>63</sup> URT, National Economic Survival Programme, 1981/82, p. 1; George Kahama, *et al. The Challenge for Tanzania's Economy*, (London: James Currey, 1986), P. 95; Coulson, *Tanzania* (2013), 354; *World Bank*, "Tanzania: An Agenda for Industrial Recovery, 15-16; Gray, "Industrial Policy and the Political Settlement in Tanzania, 190; Msami & Wangwe, "Industrial Development in Tanzania" 2016, p. 170; Benno Ndulu, "Stabilisation and Adjustment Policies and Programmes: Country Study,

communication systems, workers with inadequate education and health protection and arbitrary regulations and judicial systems.<sup>64</sup> Scrutiny of these factors suggests that in comparison with other parts of the world, Africa faced difficulties in attracting investment in manufacturing sector.

The global economic crisis resulted in shortage of spare parts, chemicals, raw materials and financial resources. During the crisis, the textile establishments faced the problem of high financial charges caused by two major issues. First, the mill paid high interest rates for its bank overdrafts and other loans at the same time as production was already declining. The company's cash flow and profitability were thus gravely undermined. Second, the payment of fines to the government due to delayed payments of sales tax, also due to liquidity constraints, was another setback. For example, between 1989 and 1991 the Company paid TAS 203.9 million to the government as a penalty for non-payment of sales tax.<sup>65</sup> Apart from the impact of the crisis, FTM was faced with the problem of

---

Tanzania", *World Institute for Development and Research* 1987, 11; Wangwe, "Economic Reforms, Industrialisation and Technological Capabilities in Tanzanian Industry", 2001, 358-363.

<sup>64</sup> Fredrick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 102.

<sup>65</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/I.20/6 Tanzania-China Friendship Company Ltd., A Speech by FTM GM to CCM General Secretary and Minister H. Kolimba, dated June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1992, 4

outdate machinery which needed major rehabilitation.<sup>66</sup> However, for the period between 1977 and 1984, FTM's production accounted for more than one-third of the total textile production in the country. This meant that although there was a downward trend in production, still the mill was doing better than the other mills for two main reasons. First, the technology and machinery of FTM was friendlier than those of other mills such as Mwatex. As pointed out by Coulson, although FTM machinery was much more labour intensive than that of Mwatex which was more capital intensive the former produced more efficiently and at low cost than the latter.<sup>67</sup> Second, because FTM was fully owned and managed by the state, it was likely to have received more government intervention than the rest of the mills in the country.

Another impact of the crisis was the hiking prices of power. Just to cite one case, the price of electricity bills increased from 12.6 million shillings per month in July 1992 to over 43.0 million shillings per month in July 1993.<sup>68</sup> This means that the price increased by 342 per cent, while the selling price of the produced textiles remained unchanged. The FTM General Manager had the view that increasing the prices of

---

<sup>66</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/B.10/7, Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), 1988-1993, External Recurrent Requirement, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Planning, May, 1986, 11

<sup>67</sup> Coulson, *Tanzania* (2013), 330.

<sup>68</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/20/6, Tanzania-China Friendship textile Company, A Correspondence from FTM General Manager to Principal Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Trade, August 11, 1993.

textiles could not help rescue the situation because of importation of second-hand clothing which had already started following the implementation of trade liberalisation. The situation was the same with the case of water supply interruptions.

Furthermore, the crisis led to increased indebtedness from various sources which paralysed company's operations. As indicated in table 5, by the end of December, 1992, the FTM had a total outstanding debt of Tanzanian shillings 3.2 billion owed to various creditors. Because of devaluation of the local currency against dollar and other major currencies, debt servicing was inflated, making it difficult for the company to pay foreign loans. Instead, the FTM and several other textile establishments were forced to reschedule debts on the basis of the exchange rate ruling. Although the management of TEXCO had called for government intervention to carry the burden of paying the additional debts which arose from the devaluation of currencies, the government was also unable to repay.<sup>69</sup>

**Table 5: Friendship Textile Mills Indebtedness as of 31 Dec. 1992**

S/N	Debt Item	Debt (Tshs)
1	Creditors and current account	673,801,789
2	Sales Tax recoveries	879,420,564

<sup>69</sup> "TEXCO Companies' Foreign Debt is 50bn/- Report", *Daily News*, September 27, 1989, 3

3	Interests on loans	174,091,439
4	Sales tax penalties	582,488,294
5	Moller fund	86,508,650
6	Bulgarian fund	82,680,000
7	Current maturity of long-term loan	230,840,123
8	Treasury (short term loan)	25,950,000
9	Long term loan (TIB)	159,016,820
10	Bank overdraft	320,344,972
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,215,142,651</b>

**Source:** National Textile Corporation: Input to Textile Policy Paper, 1994, Annexure C

The FTM responded to the crisis through retrenchment of workers from 5,671 employment level in 1978 to 3,863 in 1990 and to further 2000 workers in 1996 in an attempt to minimise operational costs of the company.<sup>70</sup> The impacts of retrenchment were two folds. First, some of the retrenched workers resorted to use legal measures to demand for their rights.<sup>71</sup> Second, those who remained on employment had irregular payment of salaries which resulted in frequent industrial riots. One remarkable incidence was that of

<sup>70</sup> "Urafiki Saved um Through Redundancy", *Daily News*, May 15, 1985, 3; *Daily News*, April 26, 1985, 3

<sup>71</sup> "Urafiki Officials Testify on Redundancy", *Daily News*, April 26, 1985, 3; "Urafiki Redundancy Dispute, PLT Winds Inquiry, *Daily News*, May 22, 1985, 3

November 22, 1991 when workers rioted against delayed salaries. The attempt by the factory's management, the police and the District Commissioner to reconcile them failed. They initially mobbed the gate to block the management from leaving the premises. When the police tried to threaten them by using dogs and firing the bullets the workers responded by throwing stones which hit vehicles and broke windows of some of the factory buildings.<sup>72</sup> The existing archival evidence indicates that whenever workers-management conflict arose, the general impression of the workers was that the mill was being sabotaged by the management team who were conducting a series of unproductive meetings in which they get paid allowances which costs the mill.<sup>73</sup>

**Table 4: FTM Employment Compared to Total Employment in the Textile Industry, 1977-1989**

Year	Total Employment	FTM Employment	% of FTM to total Employment
1977	28,500	5,268	18.4

<sup>72</sup> "Urafiki Riot Over Pay", *Daily News*, Saturday, November 23, 1991, 1

<sup>73</sup> "Wafanyakazi Wadai Uongozi Uondolewe", *Uhuru*, Tuesday, September 13, 1994, 1 & 7.

1978	30,697	5,671	18.4
1979	30,962	5,383	17.3
1980	32,977	5,383	16.3
1985	32,789	4,243	12.9
1986	35,907	4,221	11.7
1987	39,505	4,264	10.8
1988	32,503	4,029	12.3
1989	30,649	3,859	12.6
1990	31,668	3,863	12.2

**Source:** FTM Company Employment Records; Peter Matutu, 12;  
Timothy Nyoni, 49

### 5.0 FTM Rehabilitation Programme, 1990-1995.

One of the policy responses of the post-1986 economic reforms was the need to improve the utilisation of the existing industrial capacities instead of creating new ones. This policy was implemented through financing of rehabilitation of the machinery and infrastructures of the respective state owned industries including the textile industry.<sup>74</sup> It was in this context that on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1990, Tanzania and China signed an agreement on Economic and technical cooperation in Peking in which China agreed to provide an interest-free loan of RMB Yuan 50,000,000 (equivalent to \$8.5 million) to FTM for a rehabilitation programme within five years from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1990 to 30<sup>th</sup> June,

---

<sup>74</sup> Humphrey Mushi, "The Impact of Reforms in Tanzania: The Case of Privatised Manufacturing Industries" In *The Industrial Experience of Tanzania*, edited by Adam Szirmai and Paul Lapperre, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 343

1995.<sup>75</sup> The rehabilitation was an outcome of consultations between the two countries on best approach to modernise the mill.<sup>76</sup> In this agreement, the government of China agreed to help the government of the United Republic of Tanzania rehabilitate the equipment of the Friendship Textile Mill. According to the agreement, the rehabilitation was expected to cover three main areas. In the first place, it covered replacement of equipment for twenty thousand spindles in the spinning section. Second, it was aimed to provide spare parts for overall repair of the spinning, weaving and printing-dyeing equipment, and appropriate maintenance of the public utilities of boilers, refrigeration and air conditioning. Furthermore, it aimed to supply the maintenance equipment and tools to raise the capacity of maintenance.<sup>77</sup>

According to the implementation contract signed on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1992, the loan was not supposed to be provided in monetary form, but rather in the form of machineries, spare parts and expatriates technical personnel. Regarding the latter, the Chinese government was obliged to dispatch fifty

---

<sup>75</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/C/20/6, Tanzania-China Friendship Co. Ltd, Correspondence from Ps. Ministry of Finance to GM- FTM, "Protocol Between Tanzania and China", Ref. No. TYC/450/2, September 23, 1990.

<sup>76</sup> JMT, Hansard, Agosti 17, 1993, 4565; "Urafiki Gears Up for Competition", *Daily News*, Wednesday, July 7, 1993, 5

<sup>77</sup>Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/C/20/6, Tanzania-China Friendship Co. Ltd, Protocol between URT and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Provision of Equipment and Spare Parts for the Rehabilitation of FTM, Article I, P. 1.

engineering and technical personnel to come to Tanzania to organise the implementation of the project.<sup>78</sup> On its part, the Tanzanian government was responsible for completion of the formalities of customs declaration, clearance, duty-free status, store keeping and claiming of goods after their arrival at Dar es Salaam port. The government was further obliged to aid in purchasing local materials, fuel, free water, electricity, as well as housing and utilities.

Both oral testimony and archival sources shows that rehabilitation of FTM was implemented under a very difficult situation because of inadequate funding from the government. Since the government was responsible for financing local procurement, implementation of this commitment was constrained by the economic crisis of the time which faced the country. In the government budget for the financial year 1993/1994, phase one of the project was allocated TAS 542 million, but during implementation the government manage to disburse only 150 million shillings.<sup>79</sup> The FTM management resorted to using its own funds to fill the gap, with expectation that the government would refund

---

<sup>78</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/C/20/6, Tanzania-China Friendship Co. Ltd, Protocol Between URT and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Provision of Equipment and Spare Parts for the Rehabilitation of FTM, Implementation Agreement

<sup>79</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/F.40/7; TEXCO Finance, Correspondence from TEXCO Management to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Trade, dated 24<sup>th</sup> August, 1994; Also a correspondence from PS, Ministry of Industry and Trade to Executive Secretary, Planning Commission, dated 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1994.

the money within a short time.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the first phase ended with a total local expenditure of TAS 409, 328, 902 shillings. But the government was not in a position to provide the funds as expected. By 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1994, the first phase of the rehabilitation which involved installation of the spinning and weaving machines on mill number one was completed as planned. However, since the management had reallocated the working capital to finance rehabilitation which the government failed to refund, they failed even to buy cotton worth 285 million shillings. This led to a delay of commissioning of the mill number. The outcome of such decisions was that while mill number one was closed for eleven months for rehabilitation, mill number two failed to operate because of liquidity problems. All these problems led to a drop of production by about 40 per cent.<sup>81</sup>

Phase two of the rehabilitation programme involved mill number two which was also for spinning and weaving. The total cost for this phase was 629 million shillings, out of which the government allocated only 100 million shillings which was used to purchase cotton. This amount could not take the programme anywhere. When a Parliamentary committee visited the mill in June, 1994, the General

---

<sup>80</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/C/20/6, Correspondence from FTM GM to Director, TEXCO, dated November 4, 1993

<sup>81</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/F.40/7; TEXCO Finance, Correspondence from TEXCO Management to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Trade, dated 24<sup>th</sup> August, 1994; Also, a correspondence from PS, Ministry of Industry and Trade to Executive Secretary, Planning Commission, dated 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1994

Manager pleaded for the disbursement of 600 million shillings to complete rehabilitation:

We call for urgent disposal of funds to run the industry, short of which we will be forced to close down. ... The working capital is still very low, and we are put off from seeking loans from banks because the interest rates have escalated.<sup>82</sup>

The General Manager's request came at the time when the entire textile industry in the country was on the verge of collapse. Within one month since the visit of the Parliamentary Committee to FTM, the National Textile Corporation (TEXCO), together with other textile establishments such as Mwatex, Mutex, Kiltex and Sunguratex were placed under receivership by Loans and Advances Realisation Trust (LART). All the management and technical services hitherto offered by TEXCO to its group companies ceased effectively from July 21<sup>st</sup> 1994.<sup>83</sup> The liquidation of TEXCO and its group companies was disastrous to FTM because it was at this time that the latter needed financial and administrative support to accomplish rehabilitation. It can be argued therefore that rehabilitation was completed under a difficult condition.

---

<sup>82</sup> "The Mill Needs 600/-m", *Daily News*, Monday, June 20, 1994, 3

<sup>83</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/I. 20/6, Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Company Ltd., 1989-1999, Correspondence from E. Banduka (TEXCO) to FTM General Manager, September 15<sup>th</sup> 1994.

Towards the end of the rehabilitation, the management of FTM was optimistic that production and profitability of the mill would increase from the annual rate of 15 million square metres during the late 1980s to 27.5 million square metres.<sup>84</sup> However, throughout the period of rehabilitation there was no sign of recovery. One of the reasons which were put forward by the Chinese Ambassador during the handing over ceremony after the completion of rehabilitation programme was that between 1990 and 1995 some of the machines which were not involved in the rehabilitation did not operate and hence caused a great loss.<sup>85</sup> If this argument was to be acceptable, then one could expect FTM to recover immediately after completion of rehabilitation. In contrast, production declined sharply from 7.472 million square metres in 1994 to 1.9 million square metres in 1995 and further to 0.281 million square metres in 1996.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, contribution of FTM to the total textile production in the country declined from 14.5 per cent in 1994 to 0.8 per cent in 1996, while the rate of decline rose from negative 35 per cent in 1994 to negative 85 per cent in 1996.

Thus, despite the implementation of rehabilitation programme, the company failed miserably due to aged machinery, liquidity problems, indebtedness, utility

---

<sup>84</sup> "Uzalishaji Urafiki Kuongezeka" *Uhuru*, Ijumaa, October 7, 1994, 5

<sup>85</sup> "Urafiki Kuingia Ubia na Wachina", *Uhuru*, Jumamosi, Septemba 2, 1995, 3

<sup>86</sup> See table 3.

problems, lack of spare parts and chemicals.<sup>87</sup> At this juncture, it is worth noting that rehabilitation programme had nothing to do in improve performance of FTM but had subjected the government to non-payable foreign loan. Tanzanian government was expected to make repayment of the loan in ten equal annual instalments over a period of ten years, from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2000 to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2010.<sup>88</sup> However, oral sources from the mill indicate that out of the ten instalments, it was only one or two instalments that were made by the Tanzania government. The rest of the loan reportedly remained unpaid to date.<sup>89</sup>

After the completion of rehabilitation programme, the FTM's annual installed capacity had reached 28 million square metres. But the company failed to perform well due to liquidity problem. Thus, completion of rehabilitation programme in 1995 marked a turning point in the history of FTM as the government started negotiations with Chinese government on its privatisation. As a result, the company was privatised on a joint venture basis in 1996 to a Chinese based Company. The next section examines the impact of

---

<sup>87</sup> URT PSRC Research Study on Privatisation Impact, 2004, 2

<sup>88</sup> Dodoma Record Centre, WVB/C/20/6, Tanzania-China Friendship Co. Ltd, Protocol between URT and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Provision of Equipment and Spare Parts for the Rehabilitation of FTM. Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the URT and the Government of the People's Republic of China, Article 1-3

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Thomas Mushi, at Friendship Textile Company, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

implementation of neo-liberal policy, particularly the joint venture privatisation on FTM between 1996 and 2020.

### **6.0 Friendship Textile Company (FTC) after Joint Venture Privatisation, 1996-2020**

Politically, the year 1995 was an important landmark in understanding privatisation policies in Tanzania. The year was marked by Benjamin William Mkapa coming into power as President of Tanzania. In contrast with his predecessor, Mkapa was well renowned for promoting and pushing privatisation agenda. Within one year of his presidency, Tanzania inaugurated the *Sustainable Industrial Development Policy* (SIDP-1996-2020) which was followed by the *Tanzania Development Vision 2025* in 1998. These policy documents changed the country's trajectory of industrial policy by putting an emphasis on private sector led export-oriented industrialisation. The SIDP came in as a successor to Basic Industrialisation Strategy (BIS-1974-1994) which had failed miserably. Thus from 1996 onwards Tanzania implemented privatisation policy more vigorously.

At the FTM, the completion of rehabilitation programme marked the beginning of new era. During the handing over ceremony after rehabilitation, the Chinese ambassador convincingly declared that joint venture privatisation would change FTM from loss making to high productivity and give rise to production of quality goods that would attract

customers and hence make profit.<sup>90</sup> Thus privatisation of FTM through a joint venture was made in anticipation of improved production, rise in employment, provision of training and development of human resources, rehabilitation of the factory, increased government revenue, improved technology and a boost of the company's profitability. However, despite expectations for recovery, the FTC continued to make losses throughout the period of its privatisation and hence failed to discharge the national economic reform objectives as well as the Company objectives for which the joint venture contract (JVC) was signed. In the following paragraphs I examine each of the joint venture agreement and assess whether its implementation was successful or not.

The first objective of the JVC was to increase employment opportunities and the training and development of human resources whereby retrenchment was regarded temporary phenomenon. It was expected that more workers would be employed after taking serious rehabilitation measures and making appropriate investments. Before privatisation, FTC had a labour force of about 2,800 workers out of which 1,250 workers were on work while 1530 were on leave without pay.<sup>91</sup> However, in the first ten years of JVC, FTC remained with only 1,250 workers, the number which represents the

---

<sup>90</sup> "Urafiki Kuingia Ubia na Wachina", *Uhuru*, Jumamosi, Septemba 2, 1995, 3

<sup>91</sup> URT, Presidential Parastatal Sector Reform Commission (PSRC) Report on Privatisation Impact Study, 2004, Pp. 40-42

inherited at the time of the contract. Although statistics on table 6 shows that by 2004 there were 1,533 workers, which contradicts with the 2004 PSRC report which indicate 1,250 workers, oral sources indicate that statistics of manpower displayed in the reports includes casual workers<sup>92</sup> while the PSRC report excluded the casual workers. This means that those who were on leave without pay were declared redundant and were never recruited again. From then onwards the number continued to decrease and by 2018 the company had below 500 workers.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, because there was no new technology that was acquired, there was also no training of employees and the existing infrastructure for training was closed.<sup>94</sup>

The second objective in the JVC was to increase production and profitability. The Company's production records indicate that in the first ten years of privatisation, production increased by 98 per cent from 0.281 million square metres in 1996 to 16.604 million square metres in 2006. However, the trend was reversed as production declined by 79 per cent from 16.604 million square metres in 2006 to 3.486 million square metres in 2017. As shown in table 6, yarn production in the spinning department increased from 1,393,000 kilograms in 1997 to 1,863,000 kilograms in 2004 but from

---

<sup>92</sup> An interview with Thomas Mushi, FTC, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

<sup>93</sup>URT Presidential Parastatal Sector Reform Commission (PSRC) Report on privatisation Impact Study (2004). Phillip & Co.

<sup>94</sup> URT, Proposal for Divestiture of Friendship Textile Company Ltd., 2018, p.4

then onwards it declined to 795,000 kilograms in 2017. In the weaving department production increased from by 47 per cent from 7 million metres in 1997 to 13 million metres in 2004 and from then onwards it declined sharply by 75 per cent to 3 million square metres in 2017. The decline in production correlates with decline in profitability as between 1996 and 2017 the Company made accumulated losses of TAS 33 billion in twenty years from 1997 to 2017.

Furthermore, this study found that using production figures as a benchmark for examining performance of FTC would lead to wrong conclusion because instead of producing grey fabrics locally, the Company imported grey fabrics which were used in the finishing stage.<sup>95</sup> By 2016 the FTC had closed its production processes<sup>96</sup> except for the finishing section which continued to operate until 2017 by using fabrics imported from China. In the finishing stage, the fabrics undergo design, colouring and printing to suit customers' preferences.<sup>97</sup> Importation of fabrics is not only an FTC case, but both a national and an African phenomenon as reiterated by Siraju Kaboyonga, the Member of the Parliament (MP) in 2007 when contributing on the budget speech for the Ministry of Industry and Trade:

---

<sup>95</sup> URT, Proposal for Divestiture of Friendship Textile Company Ltd., 2018, p. 6

<sup>96</sup> URT, National Five-Year Development Plan, 2016/2017-2020/2021, June 2016, P.30

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Thomas Mushi, Ludovick Moshi and Mariam Machemba at Friendship Textile Company, Dar es Salaam, April 23, 2021.

. . . *tunacho kiwanda kimoja kinaitwa Karibu Textiles hapa Tanzania. Kweli kinatengeneza khanga na vitenge, lakini suala la kujiuliza wanatengeneza khanga na vitenge kutokana na grey cloth gani? Ukweli ni kwamba wanatengeneza khanga na vitenge kwa grey cloth ambayo imeagizwa Kutoka nje... na huko nje wametumia cotton iliyotoka Tanzania... halafu sisi tunasema tunatengeneza khanga na vitenge.*<sup>98</sup>

The English translation of this phrase is as shown below.<sup>99</sup>

. . . we have one industry called *Karibu Textiles* here in Tanzania. It is true that it produces khanga and vitenge, but a question to ask ourselves is that they produce khanga and vitenge by using which grey cloth? The truth is that they produce khanga and vitenge by using imported grey cloth... and at abroad they make grey cloth by using cotton from Tanzania, and we say we are producing khanga and vitenge.

The argument here is that one may proudly use production statistics to show that the factory is working in the general picture of an integrated textile mill which in actual sense it is not. An integrated textile mill is the one which spins cotton to produce yarn, and weave yarn to produce grey fabrics and finally the fabrics is used to produce textile materials such as khanga, vitenge or any other type of cloth.<sup>100</sup> As pointed by

---

<sup>98</sup> JMT, Majadiliano ya Bunge (Hansard), Mkutano wa 8, Kikao cha 33, July 27, 2007, 115-116.

<sup>99</sup> Researchers own translation

<sup>100</sup> URT, Bureau of Statistics, 1965, p. 7

Tang Xiaoyang, majority of cotton in Africa is exported to Asia while the apparel sector imports all its fabrics from Asia.<sup>101</sup> This practice is more or less similar with the famous statement used to describe colonial economy in Africa that *we produce what we don't consume and consume what we don't produce.*

What the investors do after privatisation is only the last phase of production which does not fit to be regarded as integrated textile mill and may partly explain the failure of the mill. From 2018 to the present, the FTC has ceased production in all three departments of spinning, weaving and finishing. All employees were sent home except for the heads of departments and some few assistants. Oral informants at the mill pointed out that instead of being retrenched, those who were on permanent employment contracts continued to be paid their salaries even when they did not work. This was due to fear by the management that workers had to be paid terminal benefits if they get retrenched, a decision which could not be afforded by the Company.<sup>102</sup> Instead the company has to wait until an employee reaches retirement age. One of the officials at FTC pointed out that retirement of an FTC worker is a relief to the company because we do not employ new workers.”<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> Tang Xiaoyang, “The Impact of Asian Investment on Africa’s Textile Industries”, *Carnegie-Tsinghua Centre for Global Policy*, August, 2014, 25

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Thomas Mushi, at Friendship Textile Company (FTC), 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2022.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

The Third objective was rehabilitation and expansion of the factory. It was initially agreed that all 162 machines in the spinning Mill II to be removed and disposed in the year 2006 and to install new modern machines. However, that plan has never been implemented and the place has been turned into a go-down. On November 1, 2011, members of the Parliamentary Committee on trade and Industry toured FTC and described what they saw as “deliberate sabotage”.<sup>104</sup> The investor was allegedly reported to be dismantling the machinery and was selling it as a scrap metal. It further pointed out that the management had failed to explain how it spent the \$27 million that was advanced by the government to renovate the factory. After touring the factory premises, one of the MPs, Ms Chiku Abwao said, “from what we have observed, the current investor has invested nothing. A select committee should be formed to investigate the matter.”<sup>105</sup> Another MP, Hamoud Abuu Juma remarked, “you can tell from the workers faces and how they are dressed that things are not well.” When it reached the time to ask workers, one of them disclosed information that the factory had been dormant and that what the management did on a particular visit by MPs was to make a show off by calling engineers to resumed operations to hoodwink the MPs.<sup>106</sup> Hoodwinking tendencies are not uncommon in public projects. For example, in one incidence, the Prime Minister

---

<sup>104</sup> “Ailing Urafiki Baffles MPs”, *Daily News*, November 2, 2011, 1

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* 3

<sup>106</sup> *Daily News*, *Ibid.*

went to launch water project in Hedaru in 2019 but just to find that water was not flowing from the pipe.<sup>107</sup> In another case, an electricity project that was launched by the Minister for energy in Uyui District in 2015 during election campaigns did not continue after the contractor left after election.<sup>108</sup> Turning back to the case of FTC, it can be argued that the investor had no intentions and was not prepared to rehabilitate the factory.

**Table 6. Friendship Textile Company (FTC) Manpower and Production Trend, 1997-2017**

Year	National Textile Production ooo m <sup>2</sup>	FTC Manpower	FTC Production Department		
			Spinning ooo kgs	Weaving ooo Mts	Processing ooo Mts
1997	41,706	2,000	1,393	7,063	6,928
1998	45,546	1,943	1,310	6,817	7,089
1999	49,757 <sup>109</sup>	1,763	1,232	7,380	6,975
2000	73,566	1,624	1,135	7,809	8,361
2001	84,325	1,345	1,249	7,990	9,808
2002	106,305	1,294	1,513	10,586	11,600
2003	116,714	1,410	1,471	10,187	12,129
2004	111,637	1,533	1,863	13,532	14,472
2005	102,532	1,514	1,699	12,400	15,133

<sup>107</sup> [Waziri Mkuu, Kassim Majaliwa amsimamisha kazi Mhandisi wa Maji Wilaya ya Same | JamiiForums](#)

<sup>108</sup> [www.parliament.go.tz/polis/members/636/supp-answers](http://www.parliament.go.tz/polis/members/636/supp-answers). Accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2022

<sup>109</sup> JMT, *Hali ya Uchumi wa Taifa, Mwaka 2005*, 177

2006	146,600 <sup>110</sup>	1,576	1,766	12,481	16,604
2007	139,000	1,512	1,681	12,031	13,538
2008	140,000	1,142	997	6,812	10,709
2009	91,501	1,132	1,130	7,310	8,000
2010	120,000	1,086	1,130	8,076	8,549
2011	101,820 <sup>111</sup>	656	268	1,809	1,915
2012	81,437	694	615	3,888	3,599
2013	97,522	818	730	4,733	5,301
2014	119,458	913	603	4,787	4,886
2015	100,491	861	687	4,723	4,974
2016	76,436	826	635	4,043	4,150
2017		795	546	3,391	3,486

**Source:** URT, Proposal for Divestiture of Tanzania-China Friendship Textile Company (FTC), 2018, pp.8-9; Hali ya Uchumi wa Taifa, 2005, p. 177; 2010, p. 209; 2016, p. 206.

The fourth objective of the JVC was to enhance transfer of technology and management skills from Chinese experts to Tanzanian nationals but this objective was never implemented. While the world has moved from using shuttle-looms technology to shuttle-less technology for weaving, FTC was still using shuttle looms. Instead, FTC continued with out-dated technology. Furthermore, the Chinese management was supposed to hold the top positions but, as part of the succession plan and be deputized by Tanzanians. However, for more than 20 years of the company's operation, this objective has not been effectively

<sup>110</sup> JMT, *Hali ya Uchumi wa Taifa, Mwaka 2010*, 209

<sup>111</sup> JMT, *Hali ya Uchumi wa Taifa. Mwaka 2016*, 206

implemented.<sup>112</sup> Also, the joint venture aimed to maximize government revenue through taxes and dividends. However, because of low production, losses and retrenchment of workers no dividends have been paid to the government. Surprisingly, the audit report for 2015 indicates that the Chinese shareholder received dividends during the second year of investment without knowledge of those concerned on the Tanzanian side.<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, although the joint venture was intended to promote environmentally friendly production facilities and to bring effluent treatment and waste disposal to internationally accepted levels by preventing spillage and ensuring conservation of natural resources, this objective was not implemented since effluent treatment ponds were not constructed.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, the investor compromised the dimensions of *Khanga* and *Vitenge* fabrics by reducing their dimensions from 116 to 107 centimetres which made customers complain about their small size. They also bypassed necessary procedures during processing of finished products which led to poor quality. For example, they were not using steam in desizing which resulted in poor dye penetration.<sup>115</sup> The company was also faced with the lack of maintenance of machines and failure to acquire modern testing sets of equipment whose outcome was failure to

---

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* 4-5

<sup>113</sup> URT, Proposal for the Divestiture of FTC, 5

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.* 6

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

properly test the quality of products to be exported and hence rejection by importing countries.<sup>116</sup>

Following these failures on the part of the investor, the Tanzanian government prepared a proposal in 2018 for the divestiture of FTC with three options. The first option was based on conversion of debt into equity. If implemented, the shareholding structure between Tanzania and the Chinese investor would have been 67% and 33% respectively. The second option was conversion of debt and accumulated losses in which Tanzania would have owned 73% of shares while Chinese investor would have remained with 27%. The Third option was to convert debt, accumulated losses and the additional loan of RMB Yuan 5 million received by Changzhou Office. If implemented, this approach would bring 72% of shares on the part of the government and 28 for Chinese investor.<sup>117</sup> In March 2019, the two parties held a meeting in Dodoma to discuss the government's proposal for the divestiture of FTC. The Tanzanian government pressed for removal of the Chinese investor, but the Chinese investor proposed replacement of the investor with another Chinese investor.<sup>118</sup> If this proposal were to be agreed upon, it would have been just like the replacement which was made in 2003 in which the Company remained in the hands of the Chinese but a new investor took over the company. The Dodoma

---

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 7

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, 10-11

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Adam Zuku, Dar es Salaam, November 10, 2021.; Thomas Mushi (FTC), Dar es Salaam, November 11, 2021.

meeting ended without a consensus. Oral sources indicate that since then no measures have been taken following the outbreak of covid-19 in 2020.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

This paper has documented a history of the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile mills from 1968 to 2020 in the context of changing policies and their implementation. Both archival and oral sources strongly indicate that FTM performed well between 1968 and 1980 despite some challenges which faced the country at the time. The good performance during this period can be partly attributed to government's provision of subsidies in an attempt to meet the objective of the Arusha declaration, to increase productivity and acquisition of services to the public. The expansion and rehabilitation programmes were implemented at the time when the country was facing economic crisis, hence instead of reviving the mill, they partly led to its failure. Because the programmes were implemented through foreign loans, the mill was unable not only to repay the loans, but also to cover its normal operation to the extent of depending on bank overdraft until it was no longer eligible. After implementation of neo-liberal policies and particularly the joint venture privatisation, the recovery was short-lived. On the one hand, the negative impact of globalisation such as importation of second-hand clothing as well as internal problems had a stake in causing the decline of FTC. However, on the other hand, the investor's deleterious practices of importing the ready-made fabrics which were

supposed to be made locally crippled the factory. These practices support Hyder and Ghauri's view that in most joint venture arrangements, foreign partners tend to expand their activities in local markets of the host country.<sup>119</sup> The implication of importation of fabrics is that FTC was no longer operating as integrated mill since the two initial stages of spinning and weaving were not conducted. This has resulted in unemployment and lack of value addition to locally produced cotton. As FTM has stopped production since 2018, its future is uncertain. Its revival will depend on the way the government will revisit her textile development policies under the prevailing globalisation and the hostile international competition.

---

<sup>119</sup> Hyder and Ghauri, "Managing International Joint Venture Relations: A Longitudinal Perspective," 205

## **The Concept of Niger Delta and Oil Politics in Nigeria from the Pre-colonial Era to the Recent Past**

Ugo Paschal Onumonu  
*Adeleke University, Nigeria*

### **Abstract**

*Nigerian Niger Delta is known across the globe due to its economic importance related to oil exploration by multinational companies and the related massive coverage of news about the region by international press. A lot has therefore been written about the region, but scholarship is yet to systematically examine the history of the Niger Delta and oil politics in the area during the post-colonial era. This paper therefore critically examines how the concept of the Niger Delta developed and how it has been a factor in the Nigerian politics. The paper adopts an historical-analytical approach, relying on information obtained from primary and secondary sources from archives, newspapers, oral interviews, online sources, and different publications. The paper sheds light on various challenges in the region which over the years have heightened the discourse on the Niger Delta. It argues that the firm grip exacted on the concept of Niger Delta by many forces clearly demonstrates the resilience of multiple stakeholder interests over the region. Although the article focusses on Nigeria, the thrust of its analysis and argument is relevant to Africa in general, and specifically to countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, Southern Sudan and Kenya, where an extraction-based economy has been evolving in recent decades.*

**Keywords:** Niger Delta, Oil Politics, Nigeria, Nigerian Civil War

## **1.0 Introduction**

The concept of Niger Delta is a very important theme in the academic discourse and political lexicon of Nigeria. The concept was originally deployed for the purpose of describing a particular region in Nigeria. However, the economic value of the area (Niger Delta) has made its meaning deeper and complex since the discovering of oil on a commercial quantity in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In other words, it is believed that the oil deposit in the region is a factor that defines and drives Nigerian politics since the discovering of oil on a commercial quantity in the region.<sup>1</sup>

The oil politics of Nigeria is deeply rooted on oil. Nigeria is no doubt a complex country owing to its ethno-religious composition, huge population and colonial heritage. Nevertheless, it is evident that beyond these realities, the oil factor or politics as the case may be, has been its major challenges as a nation. In line with the argument of this paper, different geo-political areas in Nigeria consider it expedient belonging to Niger Delta mainly for economic benefits even when they are not contiguous to the “original” Niger Delta geographical zone. Therefore, it is considered

---

<sup>1</sup> An interview with Professor C.B.N. Ogbogbo of the Department of History, University of Ibadan, At Ibadan, 10.05.2022.

being part of Niger Delta guarantees huge fiscal revenue (national cake) from the federal government of Nigeria.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the foregoing, the concept of Niger Delta has a political undertone exploited by the political class of Nigeria. Apart from the political class, the masses in the Niger Delta also see their perceived privileged class as a special status or badge exclusively used as an identity marker. Be that as it may, it has been argued that when fossil oil becomes irrelevant in the global economy; the struggle over the concept of Niger Delta would definitely loss its saltiness.<sup>3</sup>

Without doubt, the concern and agitation over equitable distribution of rent derived from the oil has remained a source of contention over the years in Nigeria. Following this agitation, the concept of Niger Delta has assumed varied meanings and uses in different ways to suit political interest. With this circumstance of frequent change of name, Tekena Tamuno opines that the area has transited from oil River (palm oil) protectorate to Nigeria new protectorate of oil (crude oil)<sup>4</sup>

Generally, the word delta could be taken as the mouth of many rivers often roughly triangular especially where it flushes down to the ocean. Christopher Ogbogbo explained

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Professor S.A. Ajayi of the Department of History, University of Ibadan, at Ibadan, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

<sup>4</sup> Tekena N. Tamuno, *Oil Wars in the Niger Delta, 1849-2009* (Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publisher, 2011), 4.

that the first word “Niger is used to describe the great river covering about 4148km which rises from Sierra Leone and cuts through republic of Mali and Niger into Nigeria through the North Western Flank.<sup>5</sup> In this vein, therefore, this study examined the concept of Niger Delta and analysed how oil politics has affected Nigeria.

## **2.0 Evolution of the Concept of Niger Delta and Oil Politics**

The word Niger Delta is not indigenous to Nigerian people. It was indeed one of those colonial imposed words on Nigerians since the pre-colonial period. The word, however, connotes an area filled with water body such as river, sea or an ocean with other mangrove features. In this regard, Tekena Tamuno posits that, Niger Delta area was regarded as oil river protectorate by the British imperial authority. Later in 1893 it became the Niger coast protectorate, indicating British more active involvement in the administration of the territories in the Bight of Bonny (Bight of Biafra).<sup>6</sup>

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as affirmed in this discourse, the concept of Niger Delta has remained very fervent with some measures of political undertones. Over the years, therefore, the concept has generated debate due to the nature of Nigerian politics rooted on oil. In line with the foregoing, it

---

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Ogbogbo “Identity Politics and Resource Control Conflict in Nigeria’s Niger Delta,” *Nigeria Journal of the Humanities*, University of Benin, No. 4. (2007), 37.

<sup>6</sup> Tamuno, *Oil Wars*, 4.

would be appropriate to assert that the concept of Niger Delta has assumed different meanings or nomenclature for different reasons over the years. Thus, this is not far from the political machination of Nigerian people and politician. Specifically, the concept was passively used in the early post-colonial era when oil factor and politics were not much heated. At the wake of Nigeria's independence in 1960, the term Niger Delta was just a mere expression for a geographical location in Nigeria totally void of political cum economic sentiment. The region at independence did not represent "national cake" nor invoke mental picture of violence, militancy or agitations as it became in the latter years. The seriousness attached to the area in terms of ownership of its resources was not part of Nigeria's early days of independence at all.<sup>7</sup> However, the action of Adaka Boro in 1966, when he declared a Republic for the people of Niger Delta, the concept (Niger Delta) gained much national and international attention or publicity as the case may be. Consequently, it became a constant news item due to its rich oil deposit which was discovered in 1956 in a community called Oloibiri in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.<sup>8</sup> Karl Maier, an

---

<sup>7</sup> See paper delivered by Obaro Ikemi at a seminar titled *The Niger Delta: The Past in the Present and the Challenges of the Future* Organised by T.A.S. Associates, Lagos, in Collaboration with the Office of the Governor, Delta State, at the Petroleum Institute, Warri, on 2 and 3 November, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> See Karl Maier, *This House has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis* (London: Penguin, 2000), 124-125

American researcher in his book titled, *This House has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis*, sheds light on these facts as thus:

I

n February Boro declared an independent republic and state of emergency in the Niger delta. He announced that all oil contracts were null and void, ordered oil companies to negotiate directly with the new republic, and required all “aliens, “or non-Ijaws, to report to the Volunteer Service within twenty-four hours. On February 23 the Service went into action. Three separate operations culminated in the capture of Yenegoa, whose small police garrison fell easily...By the second day government reinforcements were beginning to arrive. Boro and his men watched the army move into position using pontoon boats provided by Shell, a pattern that would be repeated years later when the oil transnational would finance the security forces in their operations against protesters in Ogoniland in the 1990s.<sup>9</sup>

At the post Nigerian Civil War era, the political climate of Nigeria drastically changed with full political powers in the hands of the military who centrally ruled Nigeria without a single regard for the Niger Delta people who have been bearing the heavy burden of baking the proverbial national cake-oil, for the whole country-Nigeria at the expense of their well-being. The various political leaders at the post

---

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

Nigerian Civil War<sup>10</sup>, who majorly hailed from the Northern Nigeria, rather re-positioned the North to benefit largely from the oil rent. In line with the oil politics before the year 1999 when Nigeria was under the military, mostly, the idea of Niger Delta was rather unpopular. In other words, it was the latest democratic era starting from 1999 that gave more impetus afresh to the concept of Niger Delta as it were. Without gainsaying the fact, the re-awakening of the concept Niger Delta has its own way of creating awareness on the enormous oil resources in the Niger Delta. With this oil politics over the years which has often threatened the co-operate existence of Nigeria, the whole issue has become a national malady despite the fact the Niger Delta has been officially recognized as an oil producing region by subsequent governments in the latter years of post-colonial era. Without doubt, this national problem stems from the desire of the Federal Government to have monopoly over power to control total rent from oil without a corresponding improvement in the living standards of the inhabitants of the

---

<sup>10</sup> See Chinua Achebe, *There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*. (London: Penguin, 2012). In addition, Chinua Achebe clearly provides with abundant facts, how the Northerners took advantage of the Nigerian Civil War (which they emerged victorious with the help of global West) by tightly re-positioning themselves in the Nigerian politics at the post war era. They, therefore, dictate the affairs of Nigeria with enormous political advantages which other sections of the country are insisting that there must be a restructuring of the entire political arrangement/ structure. The control of oil is one of their political manipulations which had given them much advantage in benefitting more than other regions in the country whereas the oil is mainly flowing from the soil of the Niger Delta people who do not benefit as much as the Northerners.

oil producing area. Its attitude to the inhabitants of the area is a direct reflection of its policies which causes agitations in the Niger Delta.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the major challenge associated with the oil politics of Nigeria in the post-colonial era is no doubt the manner of distributing oil wealth. The communities of Niger Delta are of the view that since oil is mined in their land and because they suffer from environmental degradation emanating from oil production, they therefore deserve the right to adequate compensation which also should ensure a clean and safe environment with a fair share of oil rents. However, the state and its partners (the multinationals), insist on the optimization of rents and profits on the basis of the modalities defined exclusively by the partnership.<sup>12</sup> To this end, a report released on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2009 by Amnesty International, a London-based global human right lobby has labeled the situation in Nigeria's oil rich Niger Delta a human right tragedy.<sup>13</sup>

Again, Olusegun Obasanjo, one of the Nigerian ex-Presidents and a leading political figure on African affairs, lent his voice on this foregoing in his book titled: *My Watch: Political and Public Affairs*:

---

<sup>11</sup> Wunmi Williams, "Citizenship Question and Environmental Crisis in the Niger Delta: Critical Reflection," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 11, no.3 (2002), 382.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> A CNN Report Released on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2009 by Amnesty International

. . . The Niger Delta, an area that was described by a colonial special commission even before the discovery of oil in commercial quantities as a difficult terrain requiring special attention. Exploration and exploitation of oil had made things worse rather than better. Oil spillage and pollution made agriculture less profitable, more difficult and impoverishing. The international oil companies built their camps in luxurious comfort side by side with despicable poor local communities that had no pipe-borne water, no electricity and no roads. And nothing was done to improve on their waterways or transportation. The Federal Government had not paid enough attention to the plight of the area.<sup>14</sup>

Residents of the Niger Delta have benefited little from the oil industry. Most of the population is poor. The region is a byword for misgovernment and corruption at all levels. Resident have long complained that Abuja<sup>15</sup> is tone deaf to their particular concerns...<sup>16</sup> Thus, these are clearly some of the features of Nigerian oil politics. Corroborating these facts again, John Campbell, a one-time United States of America's Ambassador to Nigeria from 2004 to 2007, acknowledges in his book titled, *Nigeria Dancing on the Brink* thus:

---

<sup>14</sup> Olusegun Obasanjo. *My Watch: Political and Public Affairs* (Lagos: Kachifo Limited, 2014), 301-302

<sup>15</sup> Abuja is the capital of Nigeria.

<sup>16</sup> John Campbell, *Nigeria Dancing on the Brink* (Ibadan: Bookcraft, 2010), 64.

In 2007, a fellow ambassador in Abuja, an African, who was himself a veteran of the insurrection that lasted many years, made an incognito visit to the Delta. Upon his return, he told me he had no doubt that an insurrection was under way and that it enjoyed significant popular support, even though it was highly decentralized with its political goals muddled by gang warfare, ethnic strife, and criminal significant opportunism. His meetings with militants and community representatives as well as a number of trips into the swamps led him to conclude that it would be impossible for the federal government to suppress militarily the insurrection. The only solution, he said, was to address politically the region's deep-seated grievances and restore popular confidence in government.<sup>17</sup>

Going by the highlighted factors as seen above, it is evident the oil politics greatly influence the concept of Niger Delta in many ways. The paper through its analyses interrogates this subject matter.

### **3.0 Conceptual Clarification of Niger Delta**

The place or area called Niger Delta has been defined by various scholars based on certain factors over the years. The definition of the area has been flexible due to some reasons which this paper considers in its analysis. One of the most visible strands holding its definition has remained the

---

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 65

enormous oil wealth as well as its rich environment. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to assert that the area and the name have existed before the discovery of oil. Kenneth Dike, in his work, "Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830 – 1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of the Niger Delta" highlights more on this claim<sup>18</sup>

According to Kenneth Dike, the Niger Delta may be defined as the region bounded by the Benin River on the West and Cross River in the East including the coastal areas where the Cameroon Mountains dip into the sea. It covers an area of 270 miles along the Atlantic Coast and is 120 miles deep. The two mouths of the Niger are the Facades and the Nun, but the River Benin, Brass, Bony, Kwa Ibo, the cross and other separate streams are linked to these by a Labyvinlt of creeks and lagoon.<sup>19</sup>

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) formed in 2000, defines Niger Delta as such area or state that has crude oil mineral in its domain. The states that fall in this category are; Rivers, Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Edo, Imo, Abia and Ondo State.<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that the NDDC definition is based on the administrative mandate given to the agency by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It is a fact that apart from the identified states as seen above,

---

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of the Niger Delta* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995)

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Tamuno, *Oil Wars*, 4

there are a number of states that have discovered oil in their domain in a commercial quantity which have not been officially recognized and integrated into the Niger Delta States. Such states are Anambra and Lagos States. More states could join the league of oil producing communities or states as soon as oil is discovered in such places. This lends credence to the fact that the definition of Niger Delta is oil-related. The geographical Niger Delta is inhabited by different ethnic groups such as Ijaw, Itsekiri, Ogoni, Urhobo, Igbo, Ikwerre, Efik, Oron etc.

Niger Delta is also defined based on Nigerian geo-political zone or arrangement. In line with this perspective, Onosode defines Niger Delta in his own words as “states of Nigeria that border the coastal waters of the Atlantic...” They are the oil producing states such as; Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Edo, Ondo, Rivers, Abia, Delta and Imo.<sup>21</sup> According to Ikporukpo, Niger Delta is defined as the territory extending along the coastal area from the Benin River in the West to the Imo River in the East<sup>22</sup>. The inland apex is at the

---

<sup>21</sup> G. Onosode, “Environmental Management and Sustainable in Niger Delta” in Osuntokun Akintokun, *Environmental Problems of the Niger Delta* (Lagos. Elbert Foundation, 2000), 5.

<sup>22</sup> The Eastern or Southeastern Nigeria has some affinities with the East African countries, such as Tanzania and Zambia. During the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 to 1970, Tanzania boldly recognized the Republic of Biafra and Chinua Achebe, the great African novelist, who was one of the Biafran ambassadors, clearly acknowledged the support of Tanzania to Biafra during the Nigerian civil war in his book: *There was a Country*. Based on the mutual love Tanzanians and Easterners of Nigeria share, the Easterners of Nigeria always long to visit or live in Tanzania till date. This

bifurcation of the Niger into the forcadés and the Nun Rivers somewhere around the settlement of Onyia which are South of Aboh town.<sup>23</sup>

#### **4.0 Oil Politics Verses Local and International Conspiracies in Post-colonial Nigeria**

Over the years since the discovery of oil in a commercial quantity in Nigeria, the partnership between the Nigerian government and the multinationals has increasingly strengthened the kind of oil politics being played by the Nigerian government. The multinationals such as Shell and Chevron, in collaboration with Nigerian government, have denied the oil producing communities their basic rights. When General J.T. Aguiyi Ironsi was the Head of States of Nigeria, there was some feeling of dissatisfaction in the Niger Delta region with regards to oil exploration in the region.

---

explains why a good number of them (Igbo) are found in Tanzania plying their trade in different human endeavours. The Igbo of South-eastern and South Nigeria are eternally grateful to the Tanzania for the sympathy and moral support they offered them during the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 to 1970. This disposition has become a feeling that has become part of their lives forever as they often recount this reality to the younger generations. Therefore, despite the far away location of Tanzania in East Africa, the Igbo and their brethren in Nigeria see Tanzania as an extension of the country home while the people of Tanzania are equally seen as their brothers and sisters. Professor C.B.N. Ogbogbo who once lectured in Tanzania confirmed these facts as stated herein, interview with Professor C.B.N. Ogbogbo of the Department of History, University of Ibadan, at Ibadan, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> O.C. Ikporukpo, "Towards the Development of the Niger Delta Region: Development Policies and Analysis," *Journal of Humanities* 2, (1986), 8.

Precisely, on 23 February 1966, Isaac A.J. Boro, Samuel Owonaru and Nottingham Dick led about one hundred and fifty others under the umbrella of Niger Delta Volunteer Force to revolt against the government and equally declared the Republic of Niger Delta. The group carried out the struggle in demonstration of her stand on the oil exploration in the region by the multinationals in collaboration with the government of Nigeria. Isaac Boro declared, therefore, thus, “Remember your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your veins and fight for your right”<sup>24</sup>

On those days of revolution, Isaac Adaka Boro became the General Officer Commanding the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS). He commanded the three divisions of NDVS with 159 troops which he strategized for the purpose of dislodging the federal police and taking over Yenagoa. The revolution, however, lasted for just 12 days before his men were captured by the then federal government of Nigeria presided by General J.F. Aguiyi Ironsi who was greatly encouraged by the multinationals and British in particular.<sup>25</sup>

In view of the foregoing, Isaac Adaka Boro is undoubtedly a strong factor in the discourse of Niger Delta (as a concept) given the level of international awareness he brought in the area in particular and across the globe in general. As

---

<sup>24</sup> Watt Michael, “Sweet and Sour” in Michael Watt and Ed Kashi eds., *Curse of Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta* (New York: Power House Books, 2008), 37.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

examined, he was the first person ever to raise the bar of the concept to the status of a Republic which quickly sent a signal to both the multinational companies and other international actors with vested economic interest in Nigeria. The fervent usage of the concept has since then made the concept a permanent feature in the geographical description of Nigeria. It also became a common register in the oil politics.

There is no doubt that Adaka Boro was defeated with the assistance of the multinational that had huge interest on the oil in the Niger Delta. These interests, however, transcended the oil of Nigeria. The threat to Nigeria's oneness was indeed a frightening shock to the international community, especially the capitalists and politicians from Britain and America.<sup>26</sup> This could explain the reason they were determined to crush Boro's led agitation as identified above.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the swift reaction of Aguiyi Ironsi in crushing the rebellion of Adaka Boro was borne out of his personal interest. It should be noted that Nigeria was created to become the biggest country in Africa. Establishing the Republic of Niger Delta then would have reduced the old Eastern Region which comprised of the Igbo and other Niger Delta people. This, therefore, demonstrates that the oil politics has actually been a factor in Nigeria and it is as old as Nigeria itself. However, at the wake of the

---

<sup>26</sup> Frederick Forsyth, *The Making of an African Legend: The Biafra Story* (London: Penguin, 1977), 156- 184

Nigerian Civil War, the defunct Eastern Region where General Aguiyi Ironsi hailed from tried to break away from Nigeria which was vigorously resisted by the rest of Nigeria including her immediate Niger Delta neighbours in collaboration with Britain, Russia and the United States of America.<sup>27</sup>

Be that as it may, though the revolution in the Niger Delta failed but its impact created a global awareness on the concept which necessitated some prompt politics at the wake of the Nigerian Civil War. It was, therefore, the oil politics that encouraged the granting of amnesty to Isaac Adaka Boro's and his men before the Nigerian Civil War by the General Yakubu Gowon's government in 1967. It should be recalled that it was his predecessor (J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi) that crushed the rebellion of Isaac Adaka Boro group which was shortly before Gowon's ascendancy to the national leadership of Nigeria<sup>28</sup>. Going by the foregoing, it could be inferred that Gowon's moves at that desperate and challenging moment was politically motivated and not driven by genuine passion to restore the confidence of the people of the area or vigorously initiate plans for future development of the region. Since the agitation was the first

---

<sup>27</sup> R.M. Melbourne, "The American Response to Nigerian Conflict," in *A Journal of Opinion* 3, No 2 (1973) 33-42; J.J. Sremalan, "The International politics of the Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970," in *African Affairs* 78, No. 310 (1979), pp. 125-126, C. Uche, *Oil, British Interest and Nigerian Civil war. The Journal of African History*, Vol. 49, No. 1, (2008), 111-135.

<sup>28</sup> Forsyth, *African Legend*.

pronounced revolt in Nigeria and his amnesty declaration was the first ever made by government in that direction, a prompt action in 1967 guided by foresight would have gone a long way in laying down precedents as solution to the problems in the regions for successive governments of Nigeria in the post war era. Yakubu Gowon's government before and after the Nigerian Civil War did not initiate action plan for the development of the region in the future in view of the agitation of 1966 led by Isaac Adaka Boro. Though Isaac Adaka Boro fought on the side of the federal government during the Nigerian Civil War and played a prominent role in guiding the federal troops into the Biafran enclave (and even lost his life during the war) but such commitment did not influence Gowon's administration or successive regimes in the post war years to design a programme that would transform the region successively. This, therefore, implies that the politics of oil gained its root from the consciousness of the value of the national treasure which influenced many actions of the stakeholders in Nigeria including other foreign partners like the multinational companies and world Super Powers.<sup>29</sup>

It is evident the consciousness of oil in the Niger Delta made the oil politics witnessed shortly before the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War very complex. Based on the analysis as articulated previously, these oil politics factors pitched

---

<sup>29</sup> J.J. Sremalan, "The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War," 125-126; C. Uche, "Oil, British Interest and Nigerian Civil War," *The Journal of African History* 49, No.1. (2008), 11-135.

various oil stakeholders against each other. As a result of these factors, the Northern elites who were not previously bothered on the dissolution of Nigeria suddenly became “apostles of one Nigeria” due to their interest on the Niger Delta’s oil and the influence of Britain and America on Nigeria’s oil politics.<sup>30</sup> One could, therefore, argue that the granting of amnesty by Gowon’s government to Isaac Adaka Boro and his men was a product of oil politics. In this regard also, Obaro Ikime affirms that the oil in the defunct Eastern Region encouraged the Igbo to seek for a separate nation out of Nigeria in those days of turmoil preceding the Nigerian Civil War.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, Ikime also reiterates that besides the encouragement by the presence of oil in the defunct Eastern Region, there were other main factors that also compelled them to seek for their own separate nation.<sup>32</sup>

The effort made by the multinationals and other international actors (especially Britain) was as a result of their economic interest which then was greatly threatened by the dissolution of Nigeria. These foreign players involved in the oil politics of Nigeria swiftly tutored the Northern elites on the danger and disadvantages of having a

---

<sup>30</sup> A.K. Essack, “Biafra Holds Out”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 5, No. 1. (1970), 8-10; Steven Jervis, “Nigeria and Biafra”, *Africa Today* 14, No. 6, (1967), 16-18.

<sup>31</sup> O. Ikime, *History, The Historian and The Nation: The Value of a Nigerian Historian* (Ibadan; HEBN Publishers, 2006), 291-317.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

dismantled Nigeria.<sup>33</sup> On realizing the potential loss of enormous economic gains when Nigeria dissolves, the Northerners hurriedly championed the idea of one Nigeria with support from the Britain. It is also important to note that the British also offered an unprecedented support to Nigeria during the Nigerian Civil War, of which all was because of their interest on the oil in the Niger Delta.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, there are many factors identified as the remote causes of the Nigerian Civil War. From the perspective of foreign interest, however, the oil in the Niger Delta was the biggest factor that triggered the international dimension of the Nigerian Civil War. In this regard, scholars have argued that the Civil War attracted an immense international publicity and attention majorly due to the economic interest of such nations at that point in time. On the other hand, it could be said that oil politics/interest earned Gowon support from the Super Powers of the world during the Nigerian Civil War. Such interest was, notwithstanding, at the expense of

---

<sup>33</sup> The British educated the Northern elites on the danger of not having a sea port and oil which was to be the Nigerian economic main stay. They also pointed out other dangers which fully convinced the Northern elites on championing the course of one Nigeria at any cost. This was simply because the British envisaged their national interest will be best protected if the Northerners are in charge of political powers of Nigeria. See Forsyth, *African Legend*.

<sup>34</sup> L. Fay Myles, "Priest and Politics: Biafra a year After", *The Furrow*, 22, No.2 (1971), 114-117; Achebe, *There was a Country*, 229-236.

proffering enduring solutions to the challenges at the Niger Delta Region.<sup>35</sup>

Based on the findings of this research, it is abundantly clear that the bulk of Nigerian challenges often leading to periodic violence and threat to the existence of its entity are traced to the oil politics right from the early 1960s. The problem has remained unabated and persistently kept on rocking the boat of Nigerian polity. Oil consciousness created Nigerians without a single sense of genuine nationalism. From the early stage of Nigeria's independence, the effort to build a nation based on single national ideology/ patriotism was not realized. Each ethnic group rather devoted more effort on how to position herself in the oil politics for the maximum benefit of her group. This situation, unfortunately created Nigeria without "Nigerians"<sup>36</sup> as Obaro Ikime has often argued.<sup>37</sup>

A careful look at all the major national problems Nigeria had ever had could be traced to the kind of politics being deployed by Nigerian politicians due to the influence of oil or the interest to control the oil rents through the government at the centre /federal might. This national question often times forces people to ask whether the oil

---

<sup>35</sup> M. Davis, "Negotiating about Biafran Oil," *A Journal of Opinion* 3, No. 2, (1973), 23-32.

<sup>36</sup> This implies that Nigeria is gradually becoming an entity comprising of people without any form of nationalistic feeling or patriotic allegiance attached to it as a result of the oil politic

<sup>37</sup> Ikime, *History*, 83-141

given to Nigerians by God is a curse or a blessing. Unfortunately, even after 57 years of Nigeria's independence, the oil politics is still a big contentious issue in Nigeria. The Civil War was fought over 50 years ago but unfortunately, the same section of Nigeria (southeastern Nigeria) whose people lost the war are still agitating for the realization of the same sovereign state of Biafra. People have attributed the calls for their own separate nation to the level of marginalization the zone and people are being subjected to since the end of the war in 1970.<sup>38</sup>

The area is said to suffer greatly from infrastructural decay among other visible political marginalization. One of it is that even after 57 years, despite their enormous contribution to the socio-economic developments of Nigeria and their status of being one of the major ethnic groups; they have not been allowed to produce the president of Nigeria. However, it is important to note that many other agitations are being witnessed across Nigeria. This reality also indicates that apart from the present south east of Nigeria, other sections of Nigeria are equally victims of marginalization. All these indicate that some fundamental things are wrong with the foundation of the country<sup>39</sup>.

Given the spate of agitations and feelings of marginalization across the nation, experts in different fields have called for

---

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Dr Marklene Ogbogu of the Department of History and International Studies, University of Ede at Ede, On 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

the restructuring of the nation so as to fix the anomalies weighing the country down but a section of the country (North) who benefit more from the oil politics have always resisted the move vehemently. In another vein, it is believed the rest of the country calling for the restructuring do so because the present structure of Nigeria is not in their favour. This implies the North whose people have majorly been in power since the end of the Nigerian Civil War<sup>40</sup> have so much skewed the system in their own favour with maximum economic benefit.

In view of the foregoing, Nigeria is regarded as one of the most unsafe countries in the world due to the constant agitations across the nation, coupled with the issue of security exploited by the dreaded terrorist group-Boko Haram. All these are products of oil politics. This fact has made Nigeria's election a war-like adventure which the late Nelson Mandela of South Africa confirmed at the last phase of his life. It should be recalled also that due to the much-heated political atmosphere in Nigeria, the former Secretary of States of the United States of America (John Kerry) visited the Northern part of Nigeria for a sensitive deliberation with the political leaders of the region. The actual content of the meeting was not disclosed to the public but it is believed such visit was done in line with their national (Western) interest and perhaps due to the frightening political

---

<sup>40</sup> National Archives Enugu (N.A.E.), MM IX 9 Proclamation of the Republic of Biafra, 1967. 3

atmosphere of Nigeria. The rest of Nigerians, especially from the southern part did find such action (visit) uncomfortable as it appeared discriminating. This further strengthens the notion alluding that the Western countries have always been teaming up with the Northern part of Nigeria since Nigeria's independence as a result of oil politics as seen in the days preceding the Nigerian Civil War<sup>41</sup>, during the War and at the post war era. Similarly, the former Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair, also paid Northern leaders a visit in the same pattern John Kerry of United States of America toed within the same period in 2017. All these facts underscore the role of world politics and the conspiracy of Western world in the oil politic of Nigeria.

### **5.0 The Place of Nigeria's Oil in the Global West and Asia-China**

Historically, Nigeria's creation coincided momentarily with Churchill's switch of Britain's battleships to oil. <sup>42</sup>The British therefore found it crucial to explore the heavy oil deposit in Nigeria. Western countries around the world for similar economic interest eyed Nigeria's oil deposit after her independence. Indeed, Nigeria has a big strategic importance for the multinationals- and their home countries- because of the size and quality of its energy reserves, its geographic

---

<sup>41</sup> National Archives Ibadan (N.A.I) CWC CWC 1/2/3 Federal Republic of Nigeria/ Government Statement on the Current Nigeria Situation, 1967, 1-4

<sup>42</sup> Michael Peels, *A Swamp Full of Dollars: Pipelines and Paramilitaries at Nigeria's Oil Frontier* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009), 88.

position and its government. Its crude is much prized because of the ease with which it can be refined into petrol, while its huge and still expanding proven gas reserves are already playing a big part in the worldwide shift towards the fuel. Nigeria is physically closer than the Middle East to the USA, reducing shipping costs. It is also more of a political friend. In 2007, Washington launched a special military command, known as Africom, partly to improve the security of oil reserves in Nigeria and elsewhere on the African continent.<sup>43</sup>

During times of full production, Nigeria is the largest oil exporter in Africa and one of the top ten in the world. According to the US Government's Energy Information Administration, in 2006 it was one of half a dozen countries that had net average exports of between 2m and 2.6m barrels a day, compared with the mega-exporters of Saudi Arabia, which exported 6.87m. Nigeria's peers at that time included Iran, Kuwait and Venezuela, all centres of great geopolitical interest. The Niger Delta's oilfields are explored and drilled by a group of foreign multinationals from the Western world and-increasingly –elsewhere. The largest operators are Shell, Exxon and Chevron of the USA, France Total and Eni of Italy. Much of the crude is drilled and processed through unguarded wells and pipelines in the creeks, passing onwards through junctions known as flow stations to export terminals on the coast. The inherent vulnerability of these

---

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 6-7.

production and distribution networks is part of the reason the companies have begun to develop operations offshore, hoping that attackers would not fancy an assault on deep ocean fields of oil and natural gas.<sup>44</sup>

As the world oil price climbed steeply between 2004 and 2008, so the battles over Nigeria's crude became more violent, the Niger Delta turning ever closer to a Mad Max world of roving bandits. Yet, paradoxically-and worryingly-Nigeria and the broader West Africa region were at the same time assuming an increasingly important role in the energy security policies of Washington and Washington and Western allies such as Britain, who are keen for a bulwark against troubles in the Arabian Gulf. Nigeria has historically sent about half its oil production-between 2m and 2.6 barrels of oil daily- to the US, where it has accounted for about 10 per cent of total imports. Nigeria crude oil is particularly prized, because its low level of impurities makes it ideally suited for refining into gasoline.<sup>45</sup>

The craving for Nigeria's oil has grown also outside the West, reflecting shifts in the global economic balance of power. China is capturing exploration contracts and promising investment in infrastructure projects. In September 2008, Russia's Gazprom signed an agreement to form a joint venture with the state Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation; within a fortnight, the European Union,

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, xix.

anxious to reduce its dependence on Russian gas that can be cut at a moment's notice, offered Nigeria financial and political support for a 15bn dollars 13.3bn pipeline to send its gas across the Sahara to Europe. In September 2009, the *FT* revealed that the Chinese state-owned oil company CNOOC was offering tens of billions of dollars to buy 6bn barrels of oil, or one-sixth of Nigeria's proven reserves.<sup>46</sup> Foreign oil companies operating in a joint venture or under joint production contracts with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation extract most of the oil and natural gas. Shell, Exxon-Mobile, Chevron, Total, and Agip are the largest producers.<sup>47</sup> These realities are clear indications of the vital place Nigeria occupies in the world oil economy. And historical trajectories have shown how these Super Powers countries alongside their multinationals have consistently exploited the region in collaboration with the Federal Governments of Nigeria since the independence of Nigeria in 1960.

### **6.0 The Re-Construction of Niger Delta as a Concept in the Oil Politics of Nigeria: Post Biafra War Glimpses**

The years between 1980 and 1990 gave serious impetus to the re-construction of the concept Niger Delta. Unlike the pre-war era where the term was passive without much economic

---

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, xix-xx

<sup>47</sup> John Campbell, *Nigeria Dancing on the Brink* (Ibadan: Bookcraft, 2010), 64.

undertone attached to it, this era rather became associated with long agitation that laid the foundation for the unending agitations in the Niger Delta geo-political zone of Nigeria. The perception attached to the region necessitated the reconstruction of the concept from mere geographical expression to an area synonymous to the treasure base of the entire nation. The agitations and the renewed reconstruction of “Niger Delta” made the area prominent and well-known to not only Nigerians but to the whole global community. In this era, the usage of the term Niger Delta became very apt and appropriate for the pressing home of demands mainly for the oil producing community, especially those in the present South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria.<sup>48</sup> Having separated the peoples of Niger Delta of today’s South-South from the Igbo people of present-day South East by Gowon’s government at the wake of the Biafra War, their identity marker became more of Niger Deltans and no more “Igbo” as some referred to them before.

Their quick embrace of Niger Delta as a new zone at the post war era, speaks volume on their fear of domination by the Igbo who were the major ethnic group in the defunct Eastern Region. Going by this, therefore, one could argue that this singular act of fear of domination was responsible for their withdrawal of support for Biafra. These tendencies clearly demonstrate the influence of oil politics which had serious

---

<sup>48</sup> Matthew H. Kukah, *Witness to Justice: An Insider’s Account of Nigeria’s Truth Commission* (Ibadan: Bookcraft, 2011), 89-157.

grip on the sub-consciousness of Nigerians. The naming of the stadium at Rivers State after the name of Yakubu Gowon who played a vital role in their “liberation” from the Igbo in the former Eastern Region by establishing states which automatically altered the hitherto regional arrangement of Nigeria speaks volume on the feelings of the Niger Deltans of today’s South-South on the issue being discussed.

Furthermore, 1980-1990 was indeed characterized by protests, mass rallies and demonstrations against the oil companies by their host communities. For instance, in 1981, large numbers of villagers in Rukpokwu, Ikwerre community in Rivers State blocked the route to about fifty Shell oil wells.<sup>49</sup> The features of this phase were protests, rallies and boycotts. The early 90’s witnessed the activities of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). This group spearheaded by Ken Saro Wiwa moved the struggles of the Niger Delta people towards the international community. Ken pleaded the case of the Niger Deltans at the United Nations general assembly through the Ogoni Bill of Rights. His activities were curbed when he was killed ex-judicially alongside seven others for allegedly committing murder. Nevertheless, the killing of Ken and his kinsmen created a wider publicity and awareness in the international scene on the challenges confronting Niger Delta. Thus, this

---

<sup>49</sup> CBN Ogbogbo, “100 Years of the South-South Zone in the Political Economy of Nigeria: The Pains and Gains” (PhD Diss., University of Jos, 2014).

situation thereby advanced the concept of Niger Delta in the international arena.<sup>50</sup>

Based on the foregoing, the last phase of agitation started from late 1990's till the present era. The agitation in this era is characterized by armed struggle between the federal government and the Niger Delta youths. At this stage, the concept of Niger Delta was solidified and totally embraced by the Niger Deltans in the South South region of Nigeria. It could be added also that this era highly popularized the concept of Niger Delta such that even the militants in the region saw it as a source of inspiration and used it religiously for their campaigns. In the words of Nitel "the guns were carried because people were not happy and they have been cheated."<sup>51</sup> This ugly situation, however, resulted in the emergence of different armed groups such as the Egbesu Boys (EB), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and a host of others. A look on how the names of these militant groups were crafted indicates their obsession with the concept "Niger Delta" which also influenced their actions. This situation, however, gave some unrecognized and insincere groups the impetus and room to carry out criminal activities in the name of agitation. Such activities centre on hostage taking, oil bunkering and bombing of the federal government properties. According to Shell, within a

---

<sup>50</sup> A Report Delivered by Amnesty International on Petroleum Pollution and Poverty in the Niger Delta in Year 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Nigeria Tribune, Wednesday, Not Seared to Fight, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008 p.5.

space of three years, in the phase considered in this foregoing, 133 Shell Petroleum Development Company (Shell's subsidiary company in Nigeria) employees and contractors were kidnapped while five people working for its joint venture were killed in assaults and kidnapping.<sup>52</sup>

### **7.0 Interrogating the Policies and Politics of Oil in Nigeria at Different Phases**

Without gainsaying the fact, the whole issue surrounding oil exploration in Nigeria derived its foundation from the policies and politics of various governments of Nigeria. It is this phenomenon that has given rise to the projection of Niger Delta concept and all forms of struggles in the Niger Delta region, particularly in the present South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A critical analysis in this direction will definitely shed some lights on the foundational issues rooted in policies and politics of oil of Nigeria.

The various laws promulgated at different epochs of Nigeria's history, vested the ownership of all minerals (including the Niger Delta region's oil resources) in the federal government. Section 1 of the 1969 Petroleum Decree provides that:<sup>53</sup>

The entire ownership and control of all petroleum in, under or upon any lands to which this section applies shall be vested in the state. The section shall apply to all land

---

<sup>52</sup> *Op cit.*

<sup>53</sup> Ogbogbo, "100 Years of the South-South Zone in the Political Economy of Nigeria" 116

(including land covered by water) which is in Nigeria or is under the territorial waters of Nigeria, or forms part of the continental shelf.<sup>54</sup>

Ironically, the sons and daughters from Niger Delta minimally featured in the federal government. It is to be noted that while the Civil War was still on, opposition to the actions and policies of the federal government could be interpreted to mean taking sides with the Biafrans. The minorities in the Niger Delta of today's South-South zone, therefore viewed the Petroleum Act as "a dispossessional Act" against Biafra. It is against this background that the Petroleum Act of 1969 was enacted with little or no resistance from the oil-producing communities of Niger Delta of today's South-South geo-political zone. The last legal straw was the Land Use Decree of 1978. By this decree, which has continued to be preserved in subsequent Nigerian constitution, the occupier of any land merely enjoys surface right while the federal government owns the mineral rights. These laws dispossessing the oil-producing communities of Niger-Delta of their mineral resources have been a source of pain to the Niger Deltans. Its abrogation remains one of the demands of the activists from the oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 116-117

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 116-117

Another source of economic discomfort is how the revenue generated from the sales of crude oil has been shared over the years. Before the discovery and exploitation of oil, the derivation principle was very important in the determination of revenue allocation. The derivation principle implies that each unit of a federating state should receive revenue from the federal government in proportion to its contribution to the centrally-collected revenue. In Nigeria, this principle became operative in 1946. From this period when it became operative, most of the Niger Delta states of today' South-South suffered a disadvantage as they were not frontline cash crop-producing units of the federation. The principle of derivation as a formula for revenue allocation was entrenched in the 1954 constitution.<sup>56</sup>

By the second half of the 1960s when oil was fast becoming a significant factor in Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings, there was significant reduction of the derivation principle as a formula for revenue disbursement. In 1966, crude oil figure had increased to 112,419,500 barrels. In 1969, the percentage allotted to derivation dropped to 45%. This shrinking of the derivation principle at a moment in time when revenue allocation was almost synonymous with oil revenue did not augur well in the psyche of the oil-producing states. The pain from the lop-sided application of the derivation principle was further worsened by the Decree No. 9 of 1971. By this

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 118; Tamuno, *Oil Wars*; Ogbogbo, "The Legal Basis for Ownership and Control of Oil Resources in Nigeria, 1960-2000", *African Journal on Economy and Society* 8, No. ½ (2008).

decree, the federal government introduced a dichotomy between offshore rents and royalties and that derived from onshore. While onshore revenue paid to oil-producing states further dropped to 20 percent. This was at a time when revenue from oil sales had increased astronomically due to OPEC price rise in 1973. Indeed, by 1980 derivation principle had ceased to feature in the country's revenue allocation formula.<sup>57</sup>

It is therefore realistic to argue that in the post-civil war years, when revenue from crude oil continued to increase, the idea of fiscal federalism was gradually jettisoned. Control of oil revenue became more centralized and so fell under the whims and caprice of those in power. The effect of the political powerlessness of the Niger Deltans, especially those in the present-day South-South zone became manifest to them in the economic sphere. Today the picture is not fundamentally different. After series of acrimonies debates and eventual adjustments in the formula, since 2005 and as at 2014, derivation principle is allotted a paltry 13% to the oil-producing states. The percentage allocated to derivation principle has remained a source of grievance to the Niger Deltans.<sup>58</sup>

In a nutshell, various governments have used the instrument of governance (politics and policies) to marginalize and

---

<sup>57</sup> Ogbogbo, "100 Years of the South-South Zone in the Political Economy of Nigeria", 118-199

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*

sideline the people of the Niger Delta. The successive military governments of the Federal Republic of Nigeria have altered the revenue allocation indiscriminately. For example, it was reduced from 50% to 45% in 1970, while in 1975 it became 20%. It became 1.5% in 1982 and 1992. Their perceived position as minority has been used against them in terms of revenue allocation. Based on the structure of Nigerian federalism, larger percentage goes to the “majority” in accordance with the formula for revenue allocation. In most cases, their protest is labeled criminality and military force is used to keep them silent especially those Niger Delta states in today’s South-South geo-political zone.<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, the nature of the present Nigerian federalism avails the opportunity for those in power (“majority”) to gain more from the oil rent or revenue. This explains why those that have been in power ensured that their region (North) has more states than any other geo-political zone in the country. Writing in the Guardian Newspaper on this issue, Pat Utomi, a seasoned Economist and a one-time Nigerian presidential aspirant in 2007 observes that:

Nigeria in 1963 had four regions, three in the South and one in the North. Then came 1967 when new states were created, six in the South and six in the North. The permutation continued until by 1995 there were 36 states, 19 of them, with

---

<sup>59</sup> CBN Ogbogbo, “Historicizing Minority Agitations in the Niger Delta up to 1995,” *Journal of History and Diplomatic Studies* 2 (2005)106.

419 local governments in the North whereas in the South, there were 17 states and 355 local governments. The writer then comments: "You do not have to be a genius to tell that what has happened was that soldiers who had political powers, and were predominately more Northerners, saw oil revenue and wanted to get more to their part of the country through the instrumentality of fiscal transfer. Net result, the North got more..."<sup>60</sup>

Having examined the oil politics and policies created and sustained by most Nigerian leaders, it would be apt at this juncture to also interrogate the roles of Niger Delta peoples in this regard. Although the peoples of Niger Delta have not been given equal opportunity to participate in the national politics of Nigeria, it is however, important to state that they are to be blamed to an extent for being involved in the politics of oil in one way or the other as examined in this paper.

Over the years, various militant groups have emerged, especially from the late 1990's, making serious demand on behalf of the Niger Deltans. Nevertheless, it could be argued that their mode of operation and hypocrisy portray their selfishness and lack of collective interest in their so-called struggles. This, therefore, implies that most of the militants

---

<sup>60</sup> P. Utomi, *The Guardian*, 21 August, 2008; G.A. Akinola, *Leadership and Post-colonial Nigeria Predicament* (Ibadan: Book Wright Publishers, 2009), 17.

in the area are only out to enrich themselves with little or no concern for the welfare of their own people whom they claim to fight for. Events have shown that such movements lack ideological frame work as well as passion for genuine humanitarian activism. What drives them is selfish agenda like what they claim to fight against. In this regard, these militant groups easily compromise their stand on issues bothering on the plights of the Niger Deltans whenever their leaders are engaged in negotiations with political leaders. It is worthy to note that these leaders of militant groups have amassed enormous wealth for themselves through many illegal activities, especially oil bunkering which has further devastated the Niger Deltan environment. Yet the masses of Niger Delta have over the years remained in their tattered penury and advanced squalor even in the midst of black gold (oil) with no meaningful effort ever made by the super-wealthy militant groups to improve their standard of living.<sup>61</sup>

Given the realities of the discourse, it is apparent that the issue of oil politics in Nigeria is a complex one. The narrative has proven that the stakeholders involved appear too powerful and at the same time very much entrenched in the oil politics of Nigeria. One could, therefore, assert that the

---

<sup>61</sup> See “Ex-militant Tompolo Breaks Silence over Alleged Ownership of War Ship,” *The Nation*, December 20, 2014; “Minister, Niger Delta Monarchs, Others Meet over Oil Theft,” *The Guardian*, April 25, 2014; FG Earmarks N155 Billion to Tackle Oil Theft, Other” *The Guardian*, March 24, 2014; “JTF Shut 17 Illegal Refineries,” *The Guardian*, Monday, March 3, 2014. 3

politics was heated by the international gladiators who even turned blind eyes to the humanitarian disaster of the Biafra War due to their national interest in Nigeria's oil. As a result of this said oil politics from the international perspective, these Super Powers ensured they maintained influence that would constantly guarantee their interest even in the post-war era. Of course, the multinationals became their "ambassadors" in the Niger Delta and across Nigeria. The local politicians in the Niger Delta and the militant groups could be described as the last "actors" that emerged in the mindless oil politics of Nigeria. On the whole, it is, therefore, evident the masses of the Niger Delta have no place in the oil politics of Nigeria notwithstanding its complexity. Michael Peel, a legal correspondent for the *Financial Times* affirms all these points being made here<sup>62</sup>. He reiterates thus:

Together, Odili,<sup>63</sup> the state assembly and the region's ruling party-dominated local governments controlled about £500m a year of oil money, about twice the entire national annual income of Liberia, a little further down the West African coast.<sup>64</sup>

The observation made by Michael Peels shows how governors and various political leaders from the region have access to stupendous oil rent, yet the region remains neglected and lacks basic social amenities. It should be

---

<sup>62</sup> Peels, *A Swamp Full*.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Odili was a one-time Governor of Rivers State in Niger Delta.

<sup>64</sup> Peels, *A Swamp Full*, 170.

recalled that ex-President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan who was Nigerian President for good six years is also from the Niger Delta. Unfortunately, it is a common knowledge that the people of Niger Delta benefited less from his government. He did little or nothing to remedy the politics and policies of oil in Nigeria throughout the period of his reign as the president of Nigeria. Goodluck Jonathan was rather pre-occupied with the interest of second-term tenure such that he channeled his energy in granting the request of Northern region at the expense of his own people. Unfortunately, due to the factor of oil politics in Nigeria, strong political forces in the same North ensured he lost the election as an incumbent president.<sup>65</sup>

### **8.0 Reflections on the challenges of Niger Delta: The Product of Oil Politics**

The United Development Programme (UDP) describes the Nigeer Deltan region as suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty, squalor and endemic conflict.<sup>66</sup> The destruction of the vegetation during exploration and production activities compounds the already hard environmental situation. Itse Sagay has noted that by 1995, about 95 percent of gas produced along with crude oil was flared to the detriment of the environment. At other times, unburned carbon is transported into the homes

---

<sup>65</sup> An Oral interview with Dr Olatunji Alao of the Department of History and International Studies, at Ede, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

<sup>66</sup> *Nigeria Tribune*, "Not Seared to Fight," March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

and working areas of the Niger Delta inhabitants.<sup>67</sup> Still on the effect of oil exploration, Mrs. Chizoba Gabriel Onumonu in Oguta area (Nnebukwu) of Imo State lamented thus: “before the exploration of oil in our area, our farm produce, especially cassava, was always big but now we no longer enjoy that because of the effect of the exploration on our soil.”<sup>68</sup> This situation is a common phenomenon in such places oil exploration takes place. In some cases, the soil is rendered useless due to the adverse effect of the oil exploration on the land. Yet, these areas do not enjoy the proceeds of oil nor have a feeling of government presence despite the displacement of the people from their traditional fishing and farming exercise due to the adverse effect of oil exploration in their environment. Hence, unemployment is, therefore, the order of the day in such areas. In Oguta area, many water bodies including the Oguta Lake are part of the features of the environment. Till date, one of the major means of transportation is canoe, speed boat and pontoon. Appeals have been made to the governments at various levels by the people for the construction of a bridge but this is yet to be realized. Unfortunately, this development has led to the loss of lives in periodic boat mishap. The economy of the

---

<sup>67</sup> Ogbogbo, “Historicizing Minority Agitations” 106.

<sup>68</sup> An interview with Mrs Chizoba Gabriel O. of Nnebukw Community, c. 70 Years on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

area is also affected due to the lack of a single bridge in the area.<sup>69</sup>

In the view of Rufus Dieworie, an Ijaw youth leader, the Niger Delta has continued to be marginalized in the citing of amenities by the federal government. This explains why cities like Lagos and Abuja where no oil well was ever sunk have abundantly fly-overs, bridges, roads, and skyscraper buildings etc while others like Oloibiri, Nembe, Bomadi, Kwale and Aboh (all in the Niger Delta) have remained forgotten, neglected and grossly underdeveloped. The situation is one in which the inhabitants of the Niger Delta, which produce the bulk of Nigeria's wealth, live in abject poverty and tattered penury.<sup>70</sup>

Generally, the activities of the multinational companies, especially Shell and Chevron have actually brought serious calamities on the people of the Niger Delta. The most notorious action of both companies (Shell and Chevron) has been the flaring of gas, sometimes in the middle of villages or very close to human habitation. This action has destroyed wildlife and plant life, poisoned the atmosphere and

---

<sup>69</sup> An interview with Mr Ndupu Chukwudifu of Oguta Ameshe community, c. 80 Years on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2017

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

therefore, inhabitants in the surrounding areas are made half-deaf and prone to respiratory diseases.<sup>71</sup>

The heat generated in the course of flaring creates considerable discomfort and scotches the flora and fauna around the flaring site. Also, thick soot from the flaring site is washed off and black-like water running down the roofs whenever there is rain is believed to contain chemicals that adversely affect the fertility of the land.<sup>72</sup> The gas-flaring, in emitting atmospheric contaminants, affects adversely the quality of rain. The gas-flaring, in emitting atmospheric contaminants, affects adversely the quality of rain water, surface water, and ground water. It produces acid rain, which suppresses the growth and flowering of plants and the depletion of the ozone layer.<sup>73</sup>

The consequences of the massive degradation of the environment as an outcome of the activities of the oil industry, has been the destruction of vegetation, farmlands, human settlements, and a major disrupting influence on the ecosystem. The inhabitants of these oil producing communities in the zone are subjected to considerable health challenges. The production of poisonous gases like

---

<sup>71</sup> Ogbogbo, "100 Years of the South-South Zone in the Political Economy of Nigeria"; K. Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy* (Port-Harcourt: Saros International, 1992), 1-6

<sup>72</sup> Obioh, Oluwole, Akeredolu, "Atmospheric Lead Emissions and Source Strengths in Nigeria: 1988 Inventory." In *Heavy Metals in the Environment*, eds. R.J. Allan & J.O. Niragu (Edinburgh, 1993), 271-274.

<sup>73</sup> Ogbogbo "100 Years of the South-South Zone in the Political Economy of Nigeria"

nitrogen oxides, ammonia and sulfur dioxide accounts for the prevalence of diseases like sore throat, sore eyes, nausea, and running nose. Thus, apart from the negative effect on the people's source of livelihood, their health is also directly jeopardized. Therefore, the neglect/failure of the government to enforce its environmental laws has made the South-South an ecological nightmare. The peoples of the zone groan from the deleterious consequences of the continuous denigration of their environment. It has remained a persistent pain in their being part of the Lugard's house-Nigeria. This is because these negative externalities of oil production are not only borne by them, but there is complete failure of government to empathize with them and then take steps to address the issue.<sup>74</sup>

Before leaving the arena of pain, it is pertinent to briefly mention the ones being felt in the socio-cultural life of the people. Emma Wonodi asserts that the activities of the multinational oil companies have led to the desecration of religious places and shrines of the people. This, invariably, is tantamount to the subversion of their customs and traditions. Places of traditional worship have had to give way to oil wells, oil pipelines or even roads leading to the wells of black gold. The psychological distress/damage arising from the dislocation of the people from their traditional practices and sacred places remains immeasurable.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*

## 9.0 Conclusion

The concept of Niger Delta and oil politics in Nigeria are unarguably the most forceful factors that have shaped the history and destiny of Nigeria from the pre-colonial era. The Nigerian Civil War has remained the biggest historic event that greatly turned around the course of Nigerian history and shaped it into the present ugly form.<sup>76</sup> The War indeed recorded the highest humanitarian disaster in African history.<sup>77</sup> Nigerian Civil War is, therefore, the source of many challenges Nigeria is grappling with till date.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> AHM Kirk-Green, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Sourcebook 1966-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 463; Akachi Odoemene, "The Nigeria-Biafra Civil War, 1967-1970: Reconsidering a 'Rejected History' in CBN Ogbogbo, *Perspectives in African History* (Ibadan: Book Wright Publishers, 2011), 91.

<sup>77</sup> See Zdenek Cervenka, *A History of the Nigerian War 1967-1970* (Ibadan: Onibonjo Press, 1972) 149; Emma Okocha, *Blood on the Niger: The First Black-on-Black Genocide-The Untold Story of the Asaba Massacre* (New York: Gomslam Books, 2012); Alabi-Isama Godwin, *The Tragedy of Victory: On-the Spot Account of the Nigeria-Biafra War in the Atlantic Theatre* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2013); Diliolah Chukwurah, *The Last Train to Biafra: Memoirs of a Biafra Child* (Ibadan: Constellation Publishers, 2015); E. Ezeani, *In Biafra Africa Died: The Diplomatic Plot* (London: Veritas Lumen Publishers, 2013); Gould Michael, *The Biafran War: The Struggle for Modern Nigeria* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); AA Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and Biafra War* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co., 1980); Bola Ige, *People, Politics and Politicians of Nigeria* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1995)

<sup>78</sup> See Achebe, *There was a Country*. The bulk of the estimated three million persons that died during the Nigerian Civil War were children who died of kwashiorkor due to the extreme scarcity of food and protein owing to the blockade imposed on Biafra by the Federal Government of Nigeria within that period of War. This humanitarian waste during the War and other forms of conflicts in Nigeria since she gained

Without doubt, this ugly historical fact was due to oil politics this paper has examined. Without the oil politics in Nigerian history, the avoidable Nigerian Civil War would not have taken place. It should be noted, therefore, that the national/international interests of various actors as has rightly emphasized earlier on, were the underpinning factors that fueled the political climax of Nigeria, which eventually led to the fratricidal encounter with the full support of Britain and her Western allies in favour of Northern Nigeria. It is interesting to also assert that if Nigeria did not experience the War, the whole of Niger Delta in today's South-south geo-political zone with the exception of Edo and Delta States, would most probably have remained as area under the defunct Eastern Region like in the days before the Civil War. Be that as it may, it is the oil politics as have explained before that changed the political equation of Nigeria at the eve of the War<sup>79</sup>. This marked the era of "de-structuring" of Nigeria which many people are now agitating and calling for the re-structuring of Nigeria to guarantee equity, justice, fairness, peace and patriotism.

In line with the foregoing as clearly articulated, the concept of Niger Delta with regards to oil consciousness gained

---

independence is traced to her very faulty political foundation laid by the British and consolidated by Nigerian political class.

<sup>79</sup> N. A. E., CW/A/20/CP/X9 CW21/4 Introducing Biafra, 1967, 6; N.A.E., FRP/D2 The Biafran Possibility, 1968, 3; N.A.E., SD/O/6 As We Go to Kampala: Speeches by His Excellency Lt.-Col. C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Republic of Biafra, 1968, 4-5.

prominence as injustice of Nigerian state grew as touching oil politics with oil producing communities at the receiving end. As a result of this, it could be argued that the oil politics was the very basis upon which Niger Deltans found it most necessary to project their “Niger Deltanness” instead of their “Nigerianness” for the purpose of advocacy. It should be noted also that it is the nature of Nigerian oil politics that has encouraged the rise in ethnic consciousness at the expense of national consciousness or nationalism. It could be, therefore, inferred that if the right structure has been in place, the quest and drive for the projection of Niger Delta would have not emerged in the first place. Indeed, its constant projection reminds Nigerians of the politics and benefits of oil, thereby establishing that oil is the most important thing in Nigeria and everything humanly possible must be done to possess it at any cost. This kind of understanding is rather wrong and does not encourage development in any human society as it fervently breeds and nurtures all kinds of negative vices capable of collapsing any existing socio-political structure of any society. More interestingly also, some experts have rightly indicated that in the nearest future, oil will become irrelevant in the world economy considering the aspiration of leaders from the global West to replace the use of oil with renewable source of energy and ensure that electronic cars are massively produced.<sup>80</sup> In order words, one could infer that this “global

---

<sup>80</sup> *Punch*, “A Nation of Churches, Mosques, and Petrol Stations”, July 25, 2017

West aspiration” is genuinely driven by their desire to achieve great technological advancement that would in turn usher in a new era in the global system. Surely, this is rather not good news for countries like Nigeria whose leaders are not thinking towards the direction the world is moving. Ironically, while the Western world is seriously making serious efforts at exploring newest technology that guarantees alternatives for oil and gas, the Nigeria government in her national news broadcast that, Aliko Dangote, the richest man in Africa, would soon build an oil refinery in Nigeria so as to end the importation of refined crude products into Nigeria.<sup>81</sup> What will become of Nigeria when the aspirations of the West are realized? And what will particularly become of Niger Delta region whose environment has been badly destroyed with serious damages for more than 50 years? This is a food for thought for all Nigerians (especially her political class) and her sincere friends around the world.

It is also interesting to note that prior to the presidency of Barack Obama of the United States of America, he had already designed a blue print for his government which he actively talked about across the United States of America. His speeches reveal that he even talked about the issue of renewable energy/ solar power so much and seriously indicted leaders in the category of Nigerian leaders. He in

---

<sup>81</sup> National Review of Newspaper on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017 in Splash F.M, Ibadan, Nigeria

this regard relentlessly promised to help make oil less depended on in the global economy in order to slow global warming and achieve some goals related to the American dreams.<sup>82</sup>

Obama clearly reiterates his commitment and promises to take some steps as seen below:

Launch a new energy policy that will help ease the burden of high gasoline prices, free us from relying on monarchs and tyrants for our energy supplies, and slow global warming. The Obama plan will make significant investments in clean, renewable sources of energy, and create up to five million new jobs.<sup>83</sup>

Nigeria is indeed one of the major suppliers of oil and gas to the United States of America. In view of the above, what is Nigerian leadership doing as a counter measure to cushion the effect that will definitely affect Nigeria in due course in the nearest future? What are the plans of Nigerian leadership with regards to technological advancement?

Finally, it could be argued that the root cause of the problem in the Niger Delta is inherent in the contradiction regarding the nature of federalism in Nigeria<sup>84</sup>. There is, therefore, a

---

<sup>82</sup> Barack Obama, *Change We can Believe in: Barack Obama's Plan to Renew American's Promise* (London: Canongate, 2009), 21-24

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 21

<sup>84</sup> See Peter P. Ekeh & Eghosa E. Osaghae ed., *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books 1987).

need to localize resource control and make provision for practical democratic policies that would in turn have a direct impact in the lives of the inhabitants of Niger Delta. Put differently, there is a need for the adoption of true federalism. Each unit of a federating state is supposed to receive revenue from the Federal Government in proportion to its contribution to the centrally collected revenue.<sup>85</sup> Contrarily in Nigeria, the reverse is the case. No nation under the sun can develop and survive for too long under the influence of injustice and inequity. The need to consider restructuring Nigeria is now more urgent than before given the degree in which things are falling apart. In the words of Obaro Ikime, there is the need to build the Nigerian citizenship based on fair play and equity.<sup>86</sup> There is the urgent need to build Nigeria based on lasting principles with strong ideology that would endure turbulence and any form of human challenges. All humans are equal and every human life is very much sacred before God. Instead of saturating the atmosphere with intense hatred, bitterness, nepotism, tribalism, chaos, bloodshed and all sorts of barbarism, the leaders should seek for ways of truly uniting every section of the country by upholding the principle of justice, equity and fairness while the politics of oil should be jettisoned as quick as possible.

---

<sup>85</sup> Ogbogbo, "Citizenship and Resource Control Issues in the American Constitution"

<sup>86</sup> Ikime, *History*, 324

## **Rock Art Recording and Documentation in Ikungi, Singida (Tanzania)**

Makarius Peter Itambu  
*University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*

### **Abstract**

*Although several research projects on rock art have been conducted in northern Tanzania, the Lake region and central Tanzania in the past, none of them has discovered cupule and gong features. Also, these early research undertakings did not document and interpret the rock engravings, cupules, hollows and gongs from the local people's perspectives. This study sought to fill that gap through a fresh look at the rock art. It investigated and recorded ten sites in Singida region, and collected oral accounts from the local people. The fieldwork entailed systematic reconnaissance surveys which helped to discover and document more rock art sites that were not known by the scientific community as well as by the locals. Ethnographic inquiries were conducted to explore the varied meanings of the noted artistic features within the culture of the communities associated with them. Although the neighbouring Kondoa rock art sites are on the UNESCO World Heritage List, no single study has hitherto reported cupules and gongs rock engravings. Thus, this research is the first to report and discuss in detail the occurrence, types, and spread of rock paintings together with the engravings of the Singida region.*

**Keywords:** Rock Art, Documentation, Conservation, Community Engagement, Central Tanzania.

## 1.0 Introduction

The Singida Region in Tanzania's central plateau is endowed with exceptional and ubiquitous rock painting sites; together with the Dodoma Region (and especially the Kondoa Irangi, and Usandawe areas), they form a famous belt in central Tanzania with rich and diversified rock paintings. Also, the region is a key locale and a one-of-a-kind resource for inquiries into the emergence of modern human cognition from the Middle Stone Age (MSA) period to the present time. The area is very rich in granitoid outcrop- rock shelters which contain prehistoric and historic rock art sites.<sup>1</sup> There are some rock art studies which were conducted in Kondoa and Singida<sup>2</sup> that have focused on the rock painting stylistic motifs, nature, techniques of execution and preservation status of the rock art. Nevertheless, community engagement in the management, conservation and preservation of rock

---

<sup>1</sup> Makarius P. Itambu et al, "Rock Engravings and Paintings: Rethinking of the Cupules, Gongs, and Grinding Hollows of Siuyu and Ughaughu in Ikungi District (Tanzania)," *Journal of Geoscience and Environment Protection* 6, no.6 (2018)

<sup>2</sup> H. Mahudi, "The Use of Rock Art in Understanding of Socio-economic Activities and Cultural Values: The Case of Matongo-Isanzu in Iramba District, Tanzania" (University of Dar es Salaam, MA Dissertation, 2008); Fidelis T. Masao, "Some Common Aspects of the Rock Paintings of Kondoa and Singida Central, Tanzania," *Tanzania Notes and Records*, 77-78 (1976) 51-64.

art and other archaeological sites were not put in place by these previous studies. None of these previous studies found rock engravings; therefore, they only studied the rock shelters with painted art.

During the early archaeological expeditions in the region, some rock art site names were not referenced on maps and therefore current researchers were not able to trace the locations of some sites. Again, community engagement in the conservation and management of these sites wasn't deeply employed by early researchers. However, previous work conducted by the pioneers of archaeology in the region is appreciated and this research stemmed from their initial efforts to record and document the rock art sites. Thus, this study was conducted to ensure long-term survival and incite community appreciation of the community's heritage. Community engagement was carried out to protect the sites from vandalism to preserve the rock art to boost tourism in the Ikungi District as well as to ensure its contribution to Tanzanian and global education, research, and pride in human past accomplishments.

Upon reading some important work<sup>3</sup> it was deemed necessary to study rock paintings of the Singida region, with

---

<sup>3</sup> Makarius P. Itambu and N.M. Hongoa, "Archaeology and Heritage Resource Management in Siuyu, Singida Region (Tanzania)," *Journal of Geoscience and Environment Protection* 4, No.6 (1976); Makarius P. Itambu et al., "Rock Engravings and Paintings: Rethinking of the

special emphasis on the Singida eastern-axis (Ikungi area) through digital recording and documentation. This is because early conventional methods of recording and documentation were mainly focused on the northern-axis sites in Iramba, Mkalama, and Singida North Districts, and there have been very few research projects that enacted digital documentation on the rock art of the Ikungi District.

The paucity of research that has been conducted in Singida, even though the area's landscape is composed of isolated hills with rock shelters, caves, and overhangs that may have been potential canvasses for rock painters, necessitated this research project. This study focused on surveys, digital recordings, and documentation of the rock art of the Ikungi District, and a few sites within the borders between the Singida Municipality (i.e., Ughaughu sites: Nkere/Kihade), whereby all the rock shelters with rock art and rock art styles and types were recorded. Consequently, this study intended to rescue these important cultural heritage sites of national value by involving local communities to protect these sites. Digital recording and documentation of rock art, as well as implementing a community conservation program is

---

Cupules, Gongs, and Grinding Hollows of Siuyu and Ughaughu in Ikungi District (Tanzania)", *Journal of Geoscience and Environment Protection* 6 no.6 (2018).

4 Mahudi "The Use of Rock Art in Understanding of Socio-economic Activities"; Masao, "Some Common Aspects of the Rock Paintings".

considered by contemporary scholars to be the first step towards their management and conservation<sup>4</sup>.

## 2.0 The Study Area

The Singida Region is one of the regions in central Tanzania. It lies in the semi-arid zone of Tanzania's central plateau between longitude 33° 24' and 35° 12' E and latitude 3° 42' and 7° 06' S (Figure 1). This study was undertaken in the Ikungi District, specifically the eastern -axis of the region. A large part of the Singida Region occurs on the high plateau overlooking the Wembere-Manonga Depression. This high plateau rises to about 1,000 meters above sea level (m.a.s.l)<sup>5</sup>. The Iramba plateau in the north of the region rises to about 1,500 m.a.s.l. The area south of Singida is exceptionally flat, lying with little relief except for the granite intrusions that form prominent tors.<sup>6</sup>

This area lies within the southwestern part of the Gregory Rift of the East African Rift Valley System. Raised blocks, fault escarpments, and basins are characteristic features of the Ikungi District landscape. Generally, Singida's undulating landscape is punctuated by small boulder outcrops and rocky hills of granite with reliefs of up to 30

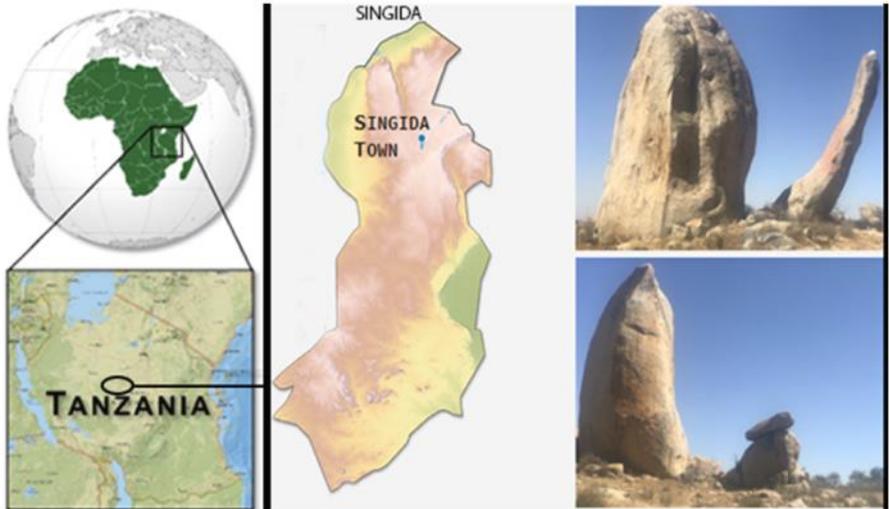
---

<sup>4</sup> Itambu and Hongoa, "Archaeology and Heritage Resource Management".

<sup>5</sup> W.C. Schaniel, "The Wahi Wanyaturu and the Market", in *Journal of Economic Issues* 16, No. 2 (1982), 445-452.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

meters high.<sup>7</sup> These granitoid rocky outcrops, overhangs, rock shelters, and caves may have formed the canvas for prehistoric and historic painters.<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 1:** Map of Tanzania Showing the Location of the Singida Region

### 3.0 Literature Review

The existence of rock paintings in the Singida Region has been known to the World since the mid-1930s when

<sup>7</sup> Y.K. Oliech, “Rural Spatial Re-organization: The Case of Singida District” (MA Thesis, University of Dar Es Salaam, 1975)

<sup>8</sup> Makarius P. Itambu, “The Rock Art of Iringa Region, Southern Tanzania: A Descriptive and Comparative Study” (M. A. Dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, 2013); M.P. Itambu, “Rediscovering the intriguing patrimonies depicted in rock shelters of Iringa, Tanzania,” *Palaeoecology of Africa* 33: 10 (2015).

recording and documentation were undertaken.<sup>9</sup> In the “Deutsche Afrika-Expedition 1934-1936”, Ludwig Kohl-Larsen and his team made some intensive and extensive early recordings when they travelled through the northern parts of the Singida region, especially the Isanzu, Iambi and the Iramba plateau areas. Kohl-Larsen recorded and documented more than 70 rock painting sites, made sketches and tracings of the paintings and excavated some of the rock painting sites.<sup>10</sup> Inconveniently, all the important works by Kohl-Larsen were published in German, and therefore, read by very few African scholars of archaeology. Moreover, rock painting site names were not referenced on maps and some sites could not be ascertained by other researchers because the technology of taking GPS coordinates from the sites did not exist by then.

In his archaeological survey of the Singida Region, Masao recorded more than 15 Later Stone Age (LSA) sites in the Iramba district, five of which contained rock paintings.<sup>11</sup> Over again, between 1976-1979; he conducted an archaeological survey of central Tanzania (Dodoma and Singida Regions) in which he covered a total area of 64,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Although his major focus was on LSA assemblages, he also recorded and documented both new and previously

---

<sup>9</sup> Culwick (1931).

<sup>10</sup> Kohl-Larsen and Kohl-Larsen (1938, 1958).

<sup>11</sup> K. Odner, “An Archaeological Survey of Iramba, Tanzania” *Azania* 6 (1971), 151-198.

known rock painting sites. Between 2005 and 2007, Masao conducted more surveys in Singida and revisited sites they studied in 1976 and 1979 as well as other known sites and recorded new sites that they found. So far, he has recorded more than 50 rock painting sites.<sup>12</sup>

Then followed a hiatus in terms of archaeological voyages in the region until another research project led by a H. Mahudi<sup>13</sup>, who essentially re-visited the sites that were recorded and documented.<sup>14</sup> These early undertakings are acknowledged and they have inspired scholars to revisit the area for further archaeological investigations of which he recorded more than 10 new archaeological sites and more than 15 previously documented rock art sites.<sup>15</sup> Among those newly recorded rock painting sites, Masao and colleagues discovered no single site with engravings, cupules or gongs. What is so significant about this research is that it has discovered the rock cupules, gongs, grinding hollows, engravings and rock paintings that were never before reported.

---

<sup>12</sup> Fidelis T. Masao, *The Rock Art of Singida and Lake Eyasi in Tanzania* (London: Duggan Foundation, 2007)

<sup>13</sup> Mahudi, "The Use of Rock Art in Understanding of Socio-economic Activities".

<sup>14</sup> Masao, "Some common aspects of the rock paintings"; Masao, *The Rock Art of Singida and Lake Eyasi*

<sup>15</sup> Itambu and Hongoa, "Archaeology and Heritage Resource Management"

#### **4.0 Research Methods**

Before the commencement of fieldwork, background research was carried out, including a review and evaluation of palaeontological, archaeological, historical, and ethnographic literature pertinent to the heritage resources and the archaeology of the Singida Region in general. In addition to historical sources, this research also relied on oral traditions. To accomplish the goals of the research, both surface surveys and inquiries about known rock painting sites were conducted.

#### **4.1 Survey Strategies**

In the field, the archaeological surveys involved both intensive and extensive pedestrian surveys on areas identified as having potential for the presence of archaeological materials. We recorded and documented in detail both the existing and new rock paintings, engravings, and sites using a handheld Global Positioning System (GPS), aerial photographs as well as topographic and geological maps. GPS instrumentation is very accurate in locating sites, and therefore, it helped in reducing the variations that can be introduced to site recording through manual measurement errors. Also, it helped to speed up site recording as manual measurements are often slow and time consuming.

Furthermore, potential areas which were selected for surveys were meticulously examined based on the occurrence of cultural heritage materials, these surveys were performed in coordination with selected pedestrian survey traverses. Spacing between individuals during the survey depended on the archaeological potential, terrain, and landform, and ranged from 5 to 30 m spacing. A selected sample of low-potential areas was also surveyed. Artefacts identified on the surface during the pedestrian survey were mapped out, recorded/photographed and left in situ unless they were determined to be threatened by developmental activity or if they were unique or diagnostic. Ground surface exposures were examined for future archaeological excavations. In an attempt to accomplish research goals and objectives in a short period, both surface surveys and inquiries were applied in combination so as to gather more complementary data about known rock-painting sites. Three teams were formed, each with ten crew members supervised by myself. We implemented a full coverage (100%) surface survey of hilly and rocky areas that contain rock shelters, overhangs, and caves. Significant archaeological sites were identified and recorded via field notes, photographs, and GPS coordinates.

#### **4.2 Ethnographic Inquiries**

An inquiry to the locals of the area about known rock painting and engraving sites was another technique employed. Random surface surveys were conducted in potential areas that yielded rock painting sites through

informants. This technique was chosen instead of systematic surveys because of the nature of the terrain of the region, which is composed of granitoid boulders and outcrops. GPS was used in describing and locating landmarks, survey areas, and rock painting sites. This approach helped in evaluating and analysing the state of preservation of the paintings and sites. GPS also helped in assessing the sources of potential threats to their integrity and survival due to modern usage of rock art sites, the shelter's/overhang's size, exposure to sunlight, slope, and suitability for public display. The researcher's experiences and knowledge of rock paintings and the sites of the Kondoa World Heritage Site and the Iringa, Ngorongoro, Eyasi, and Simiyu regions were utilised to develop this undertaking.

By and large, this approach is a conservation and management strategy. This is the first step towards saving these priceless national and international cultural heritage materials from vanishing. Inquiries about known rock painting sites were the main technique used for finding rock art sites. Cooperation with local people formed a baseline for implementing this study, this is especially true because while traversing the landscape, local people constantly inventory their resources for future use, including painted rock shelters. Considering the rough terrain of the granitoid rock shelters and outcrops of the region, with limited funds, labour, and time, local people's knowledge of rock art sites

facilitated and expedited the finding and documentation process discussed in this paper.

### **4.3 Focus Group Discussion**

This study also employed the “focus group discussion” (FGD) technique whereby several meetings were conducted to have some informal discussions with major stakeholders, especially those with heritage interests in the Singida Region. The FGD was a pivotal element in community awareness programmes because it served as a vehicle for public outreach campaigns and community conservation. These included collaborations with the Singida Regional Museum, cultural institutions, traditional practitioners, and district and local leaders. On top of that, the results from ethnographic inquiries provided extra information that complements the meetings and interview results. The information was collected mainly from the stakeholders and the local people’s opinions and views about heritage conservation and the need for archaeotourism development in Singida. Touristic activities in archaeological sites will boost the current socio-cultural lives of the people living in the region. Lastly, the consultations were carried out with major stakeholders such as the Antiquities official in the Antiquities Division, the National Museum of Tanzania, Cultural officers in Singida as well as the officials from the nearby wards and villages where sites were discovered.

## 5.0 Field Work Results and Discussion

From the local people's perspectives, the study went above and beyond the known 'rock paintings' to unravel the types, uses and meanings of the art including the engravings, whilst working hand in hand with the local community. The research was also designed to understand the meanings entrenched in rock engravings, cupules, hollows, and gongs that scholars of rock art have rarely interpreted as rock art sites in eastern Africa. Informal discussions with individuals aged 70 years old and above were held to get interpretations of the meanings of rock art. In studying the rock paintings and engravings of Singida, our major goal was not only to record and document the paintings; but also, to try to decipher the meanings and/or the motives behind the paintings or engravings. Accordingly, the paintings and engravings to be conserved were ranked according to either their rarity/uniqueness or potentiality in terms of research, education, tourism, significance to the community, and long-term survival.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Pastory GM Bushozi, "Challenges and Prospects for the Rock Art of Mumba Rock-shelter", *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 11, no.1 (2022), 1-19; Makarius P. Itambu & Pastory GM Bushozi, "Rock Art Conservation and Tourism in Iringa Region, Tanzania", *Tanzania Journal of Sociology* 7, No.2 (2021), 68 -92; Itambu, "The Rock Art of Iringa"; Itambu, "Rediscovering the intriguing patrimonies"; AZP Mabulla and A. Gidna, "The Dawn of Human Imagination: Rock Art of North- Central Tanzania." *Cradle of Humankind, Vol II, Museo Arqueologico Regional, Alcala de Henares*, (2014), 99-119.

### **5.1 Rock Art Data Recording and Documentation**

We recorded and documented in detail the rock art sites and the surrounding landscapes in the Ikungi District sites. Nevertheless, opinions differ on how to record and document rock paintings and engravings, some scholars argue that tracing is superior.<sup>17</sup> On the contrary, others believe that photographs and video recordings are the best methods of rock art documentation. “Photography and tracing fulfil the fundamentally different purpose of recording and documentation, they are not competing and are certainly not incompatible”.<sup>18</sup>

This study went above and beyond the conventional approaches for rock art recording as the study dwelt much on indigenous knowledge. From local people’s perspectives, we derived the meanings of the painted figures and objects from contemporary material cultures. Such decorations/incisions on traditional and ceremonial gourds/calabashes and paintings on walls of traditional houses were compared and correlated with prehistoric rock paintings to decipher the possible meanings of prehistoric rock art. Most of the informants argued that the decorations from the ceremonial contemporary gourds have some ritualistic representation the same as the rock art, for example, the moon and other concentric rings and circles

---

<sup>17</sup> Fordyce cited in Itambu, “The Rock Art of Iringa”

<sup>18</sup> Smits 1991

symbolize fertility among married couples and some instances of predicting a bright future to married couples. Some of the information from the elders of the Wanya-Turu tribe about the meanings of rock art were audio-video-taped and other valuable findings plus the visual images were later transferred to an image-based Dell computer database program. The video and digital cameras provided some features which can readily be put into context by panning in or out or detail investigated by zooming in. The complementarity nature of these techniques for rock art recording and documentation helped to infer meanings attached to different rock art traditions. By tapping and utilising indigenous knowledge and perceptions about rock art traditions, this approach has been considered by some scholars as the first step towards cultural heritage resource management and preservation.

### **5.1.1 Itramuka Rock Paintings Site (*UTM 36 M* *0713662/9457880*)**

Itramuka rock painting sites occur in the Itramuka hills, Misimbwa village in Siuyu Ward. The northeastern side of Misimbwa village is dominated by scatters of isolated hills and rocks that continue eastward to join the rift escarpment. These hills and the associated rift escarpment are what is known as the Itramuka hills and escarpment. The painting site is located on the foot slope of the Itramuka rift escarpment overlooking Mugori valley and the village. The site occurs on the escarpment's slope in woodland vegetation

and at an approximate elevation of 1,454 m a.s.l. Loose exposed boulders characterize the area. This is a combination of a rock shelter and an overhang. The shelter faces southeast and is about 6.5 m long and 5.8 m wide from the modern dripline to the back wall, and offers just less than 25 m<sup>2</sup> of directly sheltered space due to a large rock on the western edge of the floor. This large rock within the shelter is climbable and may have been used by the painters to paint the images high up on the shelter. The height is about 4.3 m high. About three pieces of Iron Age slag were found on the surface of the shelter's floor. The overhang faces east and is about 6.8 m long, 2.4 m wide and 7.4 m high. A large rock slab occupies the entire floor of the overhang and prehistoric painters may have stood on this slab to paint the images on the overhanging wall. Overall, the slope of the painted rock is steep, about 45°.

The paintings at this site belong to Hunter-forager rock art traditions. The panel on the shelter contained more than 50 clearly visible images, while the panel on the overhang had 35 clearly visible images. All the paintings are in monochrome, weak red colour, and painted with fine brushes. The painted images are in both frontal and profile aspects and naturalistic and geometric forms. Single and scenic images occur at this site. The subject matter includes human figures, wild animals and geometric designs. Human figures dominate and are all in stylized form (Figure 2). The panel on the rock shelter contains most of the human

images. Of particular interest is a line of about 35 human images with rounded heads, arguably men and some of whom are carrying sticks. The western end of this line of human images circles an antelope.

Also, of interest, is a large human figure with a round head with spikes painted in outline. The hands of this human figure originate from the neck, one can argue that this monstrous figure could be a form of the beginning of ancient belief systems, and this figure could have been portrayed as their God, or a symbolic belief system regarding life after death or super powers/ an omnipotent being. By considering the views and information from the local people on what they think about these rock art features, this study found that some elders still have connections with the latter art tradition (Bantu speakers' art), and they have connections and attachments to them. Some houses in the Singida region still bear the white paintings that they normally paint during weddings, rituals, and initiation ceremonies every year.

The panel on the overhang is largely composed of naturalistically painted images of wild animals. Giraffes are represented by four images, one jackal, two wildebeest and many antelopes. The Itramuka rock painting site provides a vantage point with an expansive view of the Mugori valley. Also, it offers a sheltered area, but with little flat space. We also discovered human and animal skeletal remains and stone tools from this site. The analyses of these materials are

underway, and some are currently housed at the Max Planck Institute of Science of Human History, Germany and thus cannot be discussed in this paper momentarily (appendix 4). This discovery at Itramuka needs further analysis and dating.



**Fig. 2:** Stylized Monster-like Human Figure with Spiky Hair at Itramuka Rock Shelter

### **5.1.2 Misimbwa Rock Paintings Site (UTM 36 M 0711402/9459216)**

The Misimbwa rock painting site occurs in an isolated kopje, about kilometres west of Itramuka hills, Misimbwa village in Siuyu Ward. This is a huge rock shelter facing the north and overlooking a valley of cultivated farms. The shelter contains

a few faded paintings of animals in red colours. Due to this, no detailed documentation was done. However, the floor of the shelter contains deep archaeological deposits. The centre of the floor has been dug by treasure hunters, exposing a deep sequence and large quantities of lithic artefacts, bone and pottery. Yet, the shelter floor still has intact sediments ideal for future controlled excavations by archaeologists.

### **5.1.3 Nkere/Kihade Grinding hollow, Rock Paintings, and Cupules: Cluster of Sites (UTM 36Mo710930/9460158)**

The Nkere Village is located about 4.5 km west side from the Siuyu Ward, this village is also known as Kihade and is characterized by typical semi-arid vegetation type of semi-arid Singida. On both sides, it is surrounded by a few bushes and thickets. Also, the area is surrounded by granitoid rock outcrops of the Precambrian era on both sides. Two rock shelters contain well-preserved rock paintings (Figure 3), depicting pictures of animals such as elands, giraffes, and elephants. Rock art belongs to the 'Hunter-foragers' art tradition'. The first rock shelter is facing eastwards and the second one is facing westwards. Unfortunately, there are large holes dug by treasure hunters who believe in the myth that the paintings were made by Germans during the colonial period, and thus the local people destroyed the sites. This notion that the rock art is signifying locations or beacons-cum-landmarks that Germans used to hide their precious gems and coins after they were defeated by British

during the WWII is not restricted to Singida only, but to other parts of Tanzania with similar rock paintings<sup>19</sup> (see Itambu, 2013, 2015; Itambu and Hongoa, 2016; Itambu, 2017; Itambu et. al. 2018; Itambu and Bushozi, 2022; Bushozi, 2022). Six archaeological sites were discovered in this area, amongst those six sites: two contain rock paintings, two with rock engravings (cupules and gongs), and two other sites are characterized by LSA artefacts that are scattered across the surface of the landscape. As to the newly discovered rock engravings in Nkere village, ethnographic inquiries and data analysis utilized to decipher the meanings and the motivations behind this petroglyphic art on the rock boulder 'surface (these features are engraved on the granitoid rock), suggest that the cupules art could be perhaps of the same age as the rock paintings of the area at the time., When we did interview elders of the area, one named Wilbroad Makiya, aged 83, told us that his grandfather claimed he did not know when the cupules/engravings were executed and that when he grew up as a kid, the engravings were already there. This would make the engravings minimally at least more than 200 years old or probably beyond LSA.

---

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid* 17.

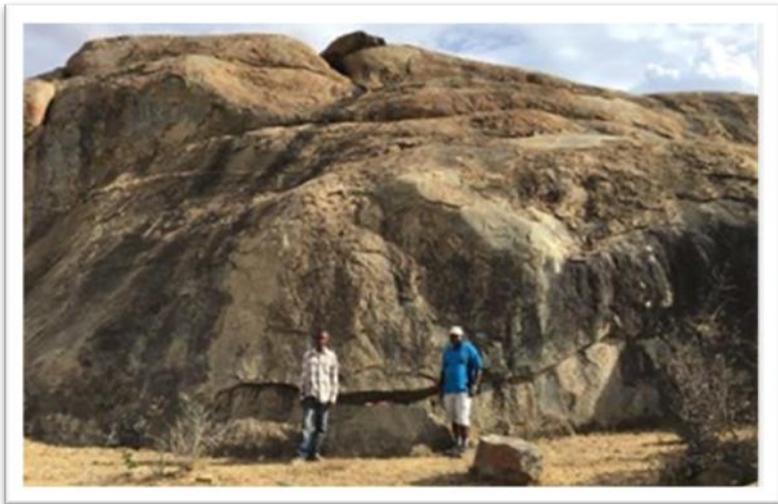


**Fig. 3:** Naturalistic Elands are Painted at Nkere Rock Shelter

There is an isolated granite slab with a single depression (hole) larger than a cup mark (cupule). The depression is almost circular, measuring 28 x 29 cm. In cross-section, it is basin-shaped and about 10 cm deep (Figure 5). The hollow may have been formed through pecking or grinding with a hammerstone. Many grinding hollows have been found in the Mwanza and Geita regions.<sup>20</sup> The sites in this locality are perfectly suited for public display and tourism because they are in a very good state of preservation. The roads and accessibility to the sites are reliable although they are surrounded by farmlands alongside the homesteads (Figure 4).

---

<sup>20</sup> RC Soper and B. Golden B, "An Archaeological Survey of Mwanza Region", *Azania* IV (1969), 15-80.



**Fig. 4:** Rock Engravings (Cupules Art) in Nkere Village



**Fig. 5:** An Isolate Granite Slab with an Engraved Hollow/Cupule at Nkere/Kihade Village

#### **5.1.4 Ng'ongo a Mau-Mukheku Rock Painting Site (UTM 36 M 0722101/9434878)**

This is a huge cave with an opening to the southeast in the Ng'ongo Mau hills, located about 3.7 km northeast of Ntuntu Village, in Ntuntu Ward. The site exists on the foothill of the miombo woodland at an approximate elevation of 1,547 m a.s.l. Nonetheless, trees are being cut in this area for clearance for farmland. The cave is about 23.3 m long, 18.5 m wide and 5.6 m high. The floor of the cave contains LSA lithics and pottery fragments. A ground stone was found on the slope's surface, about 5 meters from the cave entrance. The site has two painted panels, on the ceiling of the cave at the entrance and on the wall of a boulder in the middle of the cave, and also at the entrance. Paintings in the former belong to the Bantu language speakers' art. All the paintings are in monochrome, dirty white, and painted with finger

stencils. The painted images are in semi-naturalistic forms and in both frontal and profile aspects. The subject matter includes wild animals, 11 giraffes and 1 elephant (Figure 6). There are also a few anthropomorphic figures. Stylistically, the pictographs fall under what, for want of a better term, has been referred to as the Bantu speakers' art tradition ('the dirty white' paintings), in which the pigment turns out to be ashy or dusky white due to weathering or other chemical and biological factors. The animal friezes, which decorate the ceiling and a wall of the cave, are semi-naturalistic silhouettes in which details are missing, borders vague and the finished product moderately fine.



**Fig. 6:** Dusky-White Paintings at Mau Site

### **5.1.5 Kinyamberu Rock Painting Site 1 (UTM 36Mo720978/9421722)**

This rock shelter occurs in the Kinyamberu hills in Mang'onyi ward approximately 5 km south of Mang'onyi village along the Ikungi-Londoni road. The Kinyamberu hills

are composed of isolated granite kopjes/inselbergs. The vegetation is typical- composed of tall grasses and miombo woodland. The Kinyamberu rock painting site 1 is a huge shelter with three faces. Face 1 faces to the north, measuring 14.5 m long, 4.2 m wide and 2.9 m high and had no visible paintings. Face 2 faces northeast, measuring 6.3 m long, 3.7 m wide and 6.2 m high and had painted images. This face contains about 20 visible paintings of Hunter-foragers' artistic tradition. All the paintings are in monochrome, faded red in colour, and painted with fine brushes.

The subject matter includes humans and wild animals. About 6 stylized human images were clearly visible and painted in stylized form. These include 2 big human individuals about 35 cm long and painted close to each other. The left human image is painted wearing a headdress while that on the right has a rounded head. The other 3 human images are of small individuals, painted standing in a single line. These also have rounded heads. About 10 images of wild animals were clearly visible. The wild animal images are rendered in a naturalistic form and include 1 elephant, 2 zebras, 1 baboon, 2 lions, 2 antelopes and 3 giraffes. The occurrence of a lion image at this shelter painted during the Hunter-foragers' art tradition contradicts Masao's claim that "no lions have been reported in Singida region other than the seemingly relatively recent one at Kitaturu and the obviously

recent one at Kinamulula”.<sup>21</sup> The painted images are depicted in both frontal and profile aspects. There is no image overlies, suggesting few painting episodes were done here by hunter-foragers. Face 3 faces southeast, measuring 16 m long, 8.1 m wide and 4.5 m high and had no visible painted images. The shelter has archaeological deposits and LSA lithic artefacts and pottery were observed on the shelter’s floors and slopes, indicative of human habitation of the shelter.

#### **5.1.6 Kinyamberu Rock Painting Site 2 (UTM 36Mo721097/9421602)**

The Kinyamberu Rock Painting Site 2 is a rock shelter occurring within the Kinyamberu hills and about 200 meters southeast of Kinyamberu 1. The shelter opens northwestward and is 1449 m above sea level. It is 10 m long, 10.5 m wide and 4.7 m high. The shelter’s slope and floor contain LSA lithic artefacts and pottery fragments. Future research in this area is needed to excavate this site. The paintings occur on the right-side wall upon entering the shelter. The painted images are semi-naturalistic in form and are depicted in both frontal and profile aspects. The subject matter includes wild animals and a geometric pattern. The painted wild animals include 3 giraffes in reddish brown and an elephant in light red. The geometric design is a painting of a filled-in circle with radiating lines in pale brown.

---

<sup>21</sup> Masao, *The Rock Art of Singida and Lake Eyasi*.

Though painted in reddish and light red colours, the wild animal images are stylistically similar to those at Ng'ongo, a Mau-Mukhekuu rock painting site. Thus, this rock shelter contains both Hunter-foragers' and Bantu speakers' art traditions.

### **5.1.7 Kinyamberu Rock Painting Site 3 (UTM 36Mo721327/9421470)**

This is a combination of an overhang, shelter and cave, occurring about 300 km southeast of Kinyamberu 2. The site borders a farm and homestead with a kraal on the eastern side. The overhang faces to the northwest, measuring 6 m long, 6 m wide and 5.5 m high. This face contained faded images of Hunter-foragers' art tradition. The visible images are of wild animals, including 4 antelopes and a giraffe. The shelter and cave both face southwest and contains faded paintings in various shades of red. Archaeological deposits and many lithic artefacts and pottery fragments were spotted on the surface of the slop and cave floor.

### **5.1.8 Ng'ongo a Taru Rock Painting Site (UTM 36Mo723479/9423280)**

This rock painting site has also been reported<sup>22</sup>. It occurs in the miombo woodland vegetation area and on the southern slopes of Taru hills. The site is an overhang facing southwest and measuring 12.5 m long, 2 m wide and 4.5 m high. The

---

<sup>22</sup> Masao, *The Rock Art of Singida and Lake Eyasi*.

floor has archaeological deposits, part of which has been dug by treasure hunters. The painted slope is steep, 40-90°. This site has very impressive and relatively well-preserved images of H-F, FFL art tradition. Over 30 painted images of naturalistic wild animals, birds and ideograms are clearly visible. Two panels were observed. The first panel covers at least a quarter of the overhang's wall to the east. This panel contains 2 big elephants on the top, a bird in front of one of the elephants, 3 elands below the elephants, a rhinoceros, two ostriches on top of the rhino and a giraffe facing one of the ostriches (Figure 7). The second panel occurs in the middle of the overhang's wall. The panel is composed of a painted giraffe on the top east part, ideograms/symbols in the middle and a large giraffe in outline, about 1.5 m long. The front legs of this giraffe are superimposed on a filled-in giraffe, about 0.71 m long. Below this giraffe, there are about 4 zebras. This is perhaps the most inexhaustible and the best-preserved site in the region. It is located in the same kind of undisturbed vegetation as the previous site but on the slopes of Taru hill. The site is a straight-faced rock shelter on the southern face of which are depicted several animals in a very elaborate style employing two shades; deep red and light ochreous red. The subject matter includes animals such as elephants, giraffes, eland, ostrich, monkeys, porcupines and so forth as well as anthropomorphic. Since we do not know how long it will remain in this state of preservation, it is strongly recommended that it should be

digitally documented for possible preservation and reproduction at the Singida Regional Museum<sup>23</sup>

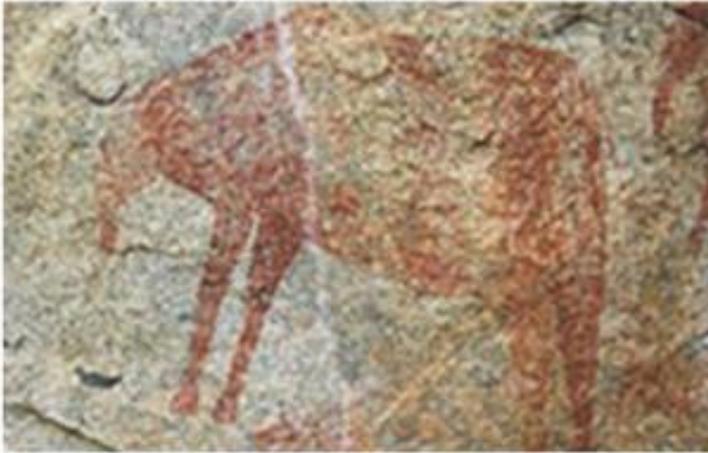


Fig. 7: A Painted Frieze of Naturalistic Rhino at Taru Rock Shelter

#### 4.1.9 Misughaa sites (S $-5^{\circ}10'35''$ / $5^{\circ}6'13''$ and E $35^{\circ}04'79''$ / $35^{\circ}2'52''$ )

There are two important rock art sites located in this area; the first is located at Musule village and it contains the Hunter-foragers' art tradition depicted in dusky-red colour and black pigments which are in monochrome fashion. In the whole panel, the animals have been executed in three styles; boldly filled-in silhouettes like the eland and giraffe on the lower left and right of the panel, the thick line open line profile infilled with different motifs as in the case of the eland on the right side, and the thick line profile without infilling. There is also a geometric representation resembling

<sup>23</sup> Masao, *The Rock Art of Singida and Lake Eyasi*.

a sun, moon, complex concentric rings or cycles. The site is in a relatively good state of preservation. The highest painting, an anthropomorphic with a bow and arrow is 1.9m high, another one is a shamanic depiction of a man and a woman having sex. The painted panel is 3 wide and 6 m high. This hunter-foragers art site is located on the steep slopes of the Misughaa escapement approx 2.5 Km southwest of Musule Primary School (Figure 9).

The Musule II rock shelter is approximately 3.5 km northeast of Minyighi-Musule hot springs and is dominated by Bantu speakers' art tradition (Figure 8). The white paintings on the rock shelter exhibit various friezes and other zoomorphic silhouettes and were executed by a Bantu-speaking community. Most of the painted figures are representations of reptiles portrayed in white monochrome pigments.



**Fig. 8:** Bantu Speakers' Rock Art in Musule Village, the White Zoomorphic Figures are Executed in White Colour



**Fig. 9:** Naturalistic, Schematic, and Stylized Figures as well as Geometric Designs, Concentric Rings, and Circles at Misughaa-Musule Site

Although fish on the whole have been rarely found painted by these prehistoric painters, they have been found painted together with reptiles in the Misughaa cluster of sites (Musule II rock shelter). In addition to animal and human depictions, symmetric and asymmetric designs were found.

Suggestions as to their meaning include that they represent ethnographical objects such as fish weirs, bird cages, traps, or the skeletal woodwork of a hut. In descending order of frequency, rock faces were also seen to have lines, squares, ladders and circles. However, the most interesting are the signs and symbols such as a circle and rays, the spiral, concentric rings, and what, for want of a better term, we refer to as schematic, geometric, and amorphous (SGA) designs or symbols. These would be comparable to the pastoralists' cattle ownership signs (see also Masao, 2007).

## **5.2 Community Conservation in Rock Art Sites**

We conducted community outreach programmes to promote awareness of the conservation and preservation of heritage resources in the Singida region, this was done solely because many sites are facing vandalism by treasure hunters who think that the rock art in this region is the marks/beacons made by German colonialists indicating where they hid precious gems and rupees during Colonial Tanganyika. In order to fight this critical problem, some key stakeholders were invited to the sites during fieldwork in order to assist in promoting conservation awareness in the region. These include the Antiquities Division of the Tanzanian Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, represented by the Conservator (DoA) Dr Christowajja Ntandu who actively participated in fieldwork in the Singida Region. Similarly, she participated in community conservation outreach

programs. The University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), the leading research institution in the country also played a crucial role in the conservation and protection of archaeological sites whereby the Vice Chancellor Prof. William Anangisye spearheaded the heritage conservation campaigns. He visited the sites and provided public education and stressed the importance of the management and conservation of heritage patrimonies across the country. We worked side-by-side with local village authorities in collecting, documenting, conserving, and developing Singida's cultural heritage resources outreach programs. This opportunity has provided an exceptional experience for Secondary school students who would like to pursue graduate degrees in archaeology or heritage management in the near future.

In addition to the academic importance of better understanding rock art types, this study expanded the horizons of the known sites, and newly discovered sites plus their locations, distribution, and scale of rock art preservation status. Currently, we are creating an online repository system which will be implemented through a digitized cataloguing computer program in the form of a database that is easy to use and maintain by the stakeholders. Sustainability is ensured by involving the Singida Regional Museum staff and Cultural Officers in Singida during the creation of this online database. Although the focus of this project is on the archaeological sites,

specifically rock art, the database will be generated so that it that would be available online for all stakeholders to access and share information pertinent to rock art studies and community engagement with the aim of conservation of archaeological sites.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

During fieldwork in this region, we engaged Singida Primary Schools as part of community engagement and public outreach strategy of management, conservation and preservation of heritage resources in the region. Through public archaeology and knowledge dissemination, we aimed at engaging all members of local communities and individuals interested in archaeology or heritage management and conservation. Our goal was to raise the profile of archaeological sites with local cultural/political authorities, visitors, and communities by focusing on integrating education, outreach, and community engagement. This was accomplished by designing a program to capacity-building programmes through collaborative learning. Throughout fieldwork, we offered pro-bono training regarding cultural heritage management and conservation as part of a transfer of knowledge and capacity building. Importantly, this study liaised with government ministries and institutions in order to introduce our ideas, observations, and key frameworks of potential Singida heritage management plan. During the preliminary fieldworks and in carrying out this research, all relevant

national policies and laws as well as international requirements, including those of the World Bank, IFC, and IUCN standards on cultural heritage, were reviewed. For instance, EMA Act of 2004, Environmental Impact Assessment and Audit Regulations of 2005, the Antiquities Act of 1979, Tanzania Cultural Policy of 2008, the Land Act of 1999, Land Village Act of 1999, and others more reviewed.

All such regulations were observed during this study in order to be able to collect archaeological, environmental and cultural data while in discussions with regional and local authorities concerning the preservation of archaeological and heritage resources. Also, the study carried out consultation with representatives of the local communities around the Singida Region in order to integrate their requirements into our research endeavours. Local people's perceptions and interpretations of the rock art were recorded for future use. The local media were also engaged i.e. Standard Radio FM to promote conservation awareness in the region because most of the sites we discovered, especially those with rock paintings, have been vandalized by treasure hunters who believe the myth that those rock paintings were made by German colonialists hiding their precious gems when they were defeated during the World War II. Therefore, the incorporation of the media in this research was an invaluable collaboration and resource in the promotion of archaeological sites, heritage protection and

public awareness about the management and conservation of heritage patrimonies in the region.

### **7.0 Rerecommendations and Future Research**

The Nkere Kihade sites are very close to Singida Municipality, and very close to the Njiapanda weekly market, at least 5 km southwest. Due to their proximity to the Njiapanda business hub and the Municipality, these sites are suitable for public displays and archaeotourism. New data garnered from this research will help to create a digital platform to share information on local participant involvement in fieldwork and meetings. Furthermore, through community engagement the data from this study, apart from this publication will encourage future heritage management studies that will stem out from here and be able to produce site monographs, a series of brochures, and the creation of an online repository. It will also generate new data through an interdisciplinary collaboration working at some truly unique locales that host rock art of various traditions as well as stone tools. The cross-disciplinary research in Singida will illustrate the differences and similarities in tool technologies and ecological settings in a greater, Tanzanian-wide archaeological framework. Dating of the early human bone collagens and teeth of two individuals (*Homo sapiens*) we discovered last year under the rock shelters of Singida (Appendix 4) will shed new light on the history of humankind and evolutionary trajectories in the region.

## Book Review

Joshua Grace. *African Motors: Technology, Gender and the History of Development*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021

By

Jethron Ayumbah Akallah  
*Maseno University, Kenya*

As global histories of technology and technology adoption emerge, there has been general emphasis on STS scholarship to be decentred from the bastions of the global North to global South knowledge frontiers. Part of this development has been the growing interest in technology stories of repair and maintenance. Africa finds itself positioned within such scholarship that focuses on the everyday experiences of ordinary people with technology in use. On this backdrop, *African Motors: Technology, Gender and the History of Development* by Joshua Grace (2021) comes in handy to lend a great contribution to the discourse on the appropriation of motor vehicles as tools of mobility in the socio-cultural context of Tanzania in the colonial and independence periods respectively. Joshua Grace, through this work, aims at showing that both social and technological shaping applied differently for garage work and urban transport. The garage becomes a space where things could be reworked into viable, even desirable, worlds of socio-technical interaction.

The book comes out as a well-researched work that taps into the great potential of anthropological and other ethnographic methodologies to represent the history of urban mobility as a complex sociocultural and technopolitical space that is also gendered. The book is organized into five well-structured chapters with an introduction and conclusion as well.

*Chapter One* introduces readers to the main components of the book's mechanic complex that encompasses cars as incoming technologies for mobility, roads and paths as socio-culturally constructed and utilized; and people as users (African walkers and drivers) who forged their own institutions of training and validation on street corners and loading docks, as put by the author. The author explores the mobility landscape in the precolonial era where portage emerges as integral. It actually persists into the early 1900s during the advent of European imperial consolidation of power in Tanganyika (modern day Tanzania) despite the onset of automobiles. According to Joshua Grace, officials in Tanganyika had hoped to use vehicles to free up rural labour by shifting work from human transport (portage) to increased agricultural production in a sedentary space. Production "efficiency" and social change was by extension attached to the assumption that labour freed portage would align to colonial cultures of technology, movement and production. The question of labour migration assumes centre stage in the development of forms of mobility within the colonial context. The contrast between the vernacular *njia* (road/path) and the incoming British transport

technologies brings to the fore the dynamics of imperialist control vis-à-vis indigenous and localized modes of human and material movement.

It is in *Chapter Two* that the reader gets to interact with a lengthy history of car repair in Tanzanian cities. Repair and maintenance of cars becomes a landscape of masculinizing automobility. The government, right from colonialism into independence, controls the mobility techno-space through training, standardization, certification and creation of a certain breed of drivers, operators and motor vehicle mechanics. The question of technological artifacts as political entities and tools for economic exploitation of colonies is demonstrated by the indication that railway transport was given preference and the construction of motorable roads that would have challenged the railways monopoly on haulage forbidden. Funding requests were denied to fulfil this objective. Joshua Grace vividly tells a history of garages as landscapes for making and remaking both cars and men. Also garages, to a crop of young African men migrating to urban areas, offered opportunities for them to forge alternative cultures of expertise and validation of their newly acquired knowledge as they built, remodelled and fixed cars.

In *Chapter Three*, the author offers a history of urban mobility in Dar es Salaam as the capital of Tanzania. Nation building and the creation of a specific form of citizenship is ideologically navigated through the everyday technologies of transport as a mark of departure from that which had characterized the colonial political economy. The

expectation is that technologies, in this case buses, would be decolonized and adaptable to the vision of a socialist city space. Technological citizenship manifests through the objective of creating efficient workers and more humane socialists as a state demand. Chapter Four explores the chaos occasioned by the 1970s oil shocks and a dwindling economy juxtaposed on the socialist utopia that represented State failure. Technological citizenship is extended to the link between refined petroleum and rural modernization. Chapter Five relies on oral histories to illustrate that mobility as a gendered space was personalized to the making of lives and livelihoods for self and families. The author states that motorized domesticities required not only intimate knowledge of regional transport landscapes but also what drivers and passengers called a “cowardly” approach to motor mobilities.

For this work, the author employs a wealth of anthropological and historical methods to bring forth a detailed history of automobility that is premised on repair and also explores the garage as a production space. The remodeling, repurposing, redesigning and modification of cars and car parts relied on a mechanic’s ability to not only read a dynamic landscape of used parts but also make parts from different makes and models commensurate with a broken vehicle. Unionizing as the bringing together of different car parts is seen by the author as a form of resurrection or giving back life. The idea of place and location in technological representation comes out clearly as rural mechanics see their urban counterparts as simply

lacking in skill as they only “take off and put on”. This is because they can access spare parts from the many spare part shops in the city while in the rural areas that lack readily available spare parts, the mechanic has to bring to the fore novel expertise of repurposing, remodeling and sometimes simply bringing together of various parts to inject life back to the broken-down vehicles. The garage is also a techno-political space where identity is shaped, status earned and raised. Nick-naming reinforces the created identities that are forged within these landscapes of motor vehicle repair and maintenance.

Joshua Grace not only shows mastery of research methods that help bring to the fore this detailed history of motors in Tanzania and that which is hinged on the location of repair garages as in-between places linking producers and consumers but also undertakes an active role in one of the repair garages. This offers a first-hand experience through which the detailed account is made possible. It is also obvious that the author as a researcher benefits from the deeper understanding of Kiswahili as a local language. Through *African Motors*, Joshua Grace helps provide a knowledge base for understanding African mobility landscapes and also augments repair and maintenance studies within STS in general.