Introduction

In the late 1960s, the nationalist politician Lameck Bogohe set out to record his role in Tanzania's nationalist movement and to reflect on the changes which had happened since independence in 1961. In a text which straddles the genres of autobiography, nationalist history and political treatise, he considered the relative advantages of alternative political systems, the nature of government, the importance of law and the meaning of citizenship. Had political independence made a difference, or had one group of illegitimate rulers simply been replaced by another?[1]

By this point, Bogohe had suffered arrest, and had, he believed, been deprived of political office by the postcolonial Tanzanian state. He might have had good reason for adopting a critical tone. Yet Bogohe remained optimistic. While all governments, he believed, had a tendency towards oppressing their citizens, such oppression was less likely in an independent African state than in a colonial African state. For although colonial officials might forget the suffering of poor villagers struggling to make a living, African politicians would not. They might live in the capital, far from the trials and tribulations of poor harvests and overzealous tax collectors, but they had relatives in the countryside who would alert them to the injustices of government, remind them of their duties to kin and locality and, in doing so, hold them to account.

Bogohe was asking questions about the nature of politics, the concept of freedom and the meaning of citizenship. It is the contention of

[1] Lameck Bogohe, *Historia ya TANU*, CCM Archives, Acc 5/686. The text will be referred to as Bogohe, *Historia ya TANU* although no title page was found when the file was consulted in November 2005.

this book that such questions were being debated across the decolonizing world of the mid-twentieth century, but that the richness of these arguments has been masked by a still dominant grand narrative of decolonization. The questions posed by African politicians and African writers engaging in the public sphere were prompted by the intersection of the deep politics of the locality and the global political ruptures and realignments of a decolonizing world. The answers that they developed similarly drew on and engaged with global discourses to provide locally meaningful political narratives. The arguments and discussions that took place within the United Nations Trusteeship Territory of Tanganyika between 1945 and the Arusha Declaration of 1967 serve as a good example of this process, and it is these arguments and discussions that this book explores.

HISTORIES OF DECOLONIZATION

The conflict between two opposing forces, imperialism and nationalism, once seemed to define the history of the colonial and postcolonial world in the mid-twentieth century. Early accounts of the passage from colonial state to postcolony took this clash of forces as their starting point. While some accounts told the story from the perspective of imperial powers facing the loss of their empires, others took the opposite perspective and documented the rise of the new mass nationalist parties charged with leading new nation-states into the modern world.[2]

In the past decade our understanding of the era of decolonization has begun to change radically. Frederick Cooper's groundbreaking work has reframed our understanding of both the motor of decolonization and the breadth of options open to the political thinkers of the mid-twentieth century.[3] The imperative of development drove political reform and sparked a conversation between European colonial powers, the new international institutions of the post-1945 era, and African political thinkers and activists. In forums such as the French Parliament or the Trade Union movement, certain shared fundamental assumptions permitted a

[2] Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 1957); Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

[3] Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (eds.), *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

space for debate, and the lines of alliance and conflict were not always those of colony versus metropole.[4] The final outcome remained radically uncertain until the second half of the 1950s, and was the result of a 'messy give-and-take process between people with different expectations and objectives'.[5] Within a wide spectrum of political possibilities, '[n]ationalism was part of the repertoire of political opposition, but not necessarily the most important one'.[6]

If the process of decolonization was far more open than was once assumed, so too was twentieth-century nationalism. When nationalists wrote their histories, they imposed uniformity on intellectual, social and political movements that were in reality wide-ranging and often mutually contradictory. This formed part of their own claim to legitimate authority. Reading events through the lens of modernization theory, nationalist histories privileged the role of Western-educated elites and squeezed out those aspects of the story which did not fit a narrative of secular, modernist progress.[7] This narrative was reinforced by later interpretations. In Benedict Anderson's still powerful account, new conceptions of nationhood were first thought out in Latin America, then exported back to Europe, and from there to the rest of the world.[8] But as Partha Chatterjee asked, 'If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?'[9]

In fact, as new work has shown, the nationalisms of the late colonial era incorporated a wide range of competing perspectives and ways of imagining the nation. In India, the spectrum of nationalist thinking ranged from the conservative Hindu cultural nationalism of Vallabhai Patel on the right to M. N. Roy's Indian Communist party on the left.

[4] Frederick Cooper, 'Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective', *Journal of African History*, 49 (2008), 167–196; Frederick Cooper, *Decolonisation and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[5] Ryan Irwin, *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 10.

[6] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2005), p. 156.

[7] George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952).

[8] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991); Benedict Anderson, *Spectre of Comparison: Nationalism, South East Asia and the World* (London: Verso, 1998).

[9] Cited in Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 11.

As Maria Misra writes, 'Gandhi had mixed a compound national vision that was either startlingly radical or deeply conservative, depending on the political proclivities of the beholder. However, despite his determination to eclipse enemies left and right, rival ideologies flourished on both flanks, invoking visions of the nation wholly at odds with Gandhi's ashramite utopia'.[10]

A new body of literature now shows that where once nationalism seemed unitary, the creation of elites who then mobilized a mass movement, it was in fact far more disparate. There was not one nationalism but many nationalisms.[11] And nationalism could divide as much as it could unite. Taken together, these new histories of decolonization and postnationalist histories of nationalism have reminded us that the narrative of a smooth path from colonial dependency to independent state conceals lively intellectual debate. More fundamentally, they remind us that not everyone who engaged in political thinking was a nationalist, and that there were many different types of nationalism.[12]

But we can go further. As we begin to probe beneath the meta-narrative of decolonization, we find a rich vein of political thinking to which familiar accounts of the mid-twentieth century fail to do justice. What did freedom mean, and was it a universal good? What forms of political engagement were open to late colonial subjects or postcolonial citizens? What did democracy mean, in theory and in practice? These fundamental questions of political theory were debated not only by colonial or nationalist elites, but by all those who engaged in colonial and postcolonial public spheres. And while the answers they gave to these questions may have engaged with and been shaped by global discourses, they also drew on local experience and responded to local circumstances. This book traces the history of some of these debates in the United Nations Trusteeship Territory of Tanganyika which, after 1964, joined with Zanzibar to create Tanzania.[13]

[10] Maria Misra, *Vishnu's Crowded Temple: India since the Great Rebellion* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), p. 154.

[11] See, e.g., Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[12] For example., Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). Timothy Parsons argues in a similar vein that the 'political influence of East African veterans has been largely overstated.' Timothy Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902–1964* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), p. 260.

[13] In accordance with general usage, I shall use the term 'Tanganyika' when referring specifically to the colonial period, and otherwise will use the term 'Tanzania' or 'mainland Tanzania'.

HISTORIES OF EAST AFRICA BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL

To explore these arguments, this book builds on recent local histories which have radically transformed our understanding of colonial Africa and the intellectual currents operating at the grassroots in the locality. The impression was often given, both by nationalist leaders recalling their path to power and by the first generation of historians who analysed that rise to power, that peasants had little interest in politics until 'awakened' by their leaders. As Paul Landau explained in his study of popular politics in South Africa between 1400 and 1948: 'Quite often in historical literature, Africans are depicted as pre-political or as politically naive, mired in irrational beliefs, and they are imagined to have stayed that way until modern nationalism began to pull them free.'[14] But the development of African social history has demonstrated very clearly that the intellectual and political cultures of rural and urban Africa were far from those imagined by nationalist leaders and their historians.

Building on this tradition of Africanist social history, intellectual historians have demonstrated that local idioms, often demonstrating significant continuity over time, provided a means of critiquing illegitimate power and holding leaders to account. In Steven Feierman's study of the Shambaa kingdom in north-eastern Tanzania, political battles dismissed by colonial authorities as anticolonial agitation or resistance to progress become part of a long running contest over political authority in the region, in which the right to rule depends on the balance struck between healing and harming the land. Feierman traced arguments over the meaning of terms like freedom and slavery and uncovered the salience of the term 'democracy' in mid-twentieth-century Usambara, meanings and terms picked up by national leaders like Julius Nyerere.[15] While Feierman's focus is specifically on the local politics of the Usambara Region, the point that peasants in the locality and nationalists operating at the centre were connected has wider significance.

This scholarship has taken on board the attention paid by social historians of Africa to cleavages of gender and generation within African society, and integrated these dynamics into local political histories.[16] It

[14] Paul Landau, *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. xii.

[15] Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

[16] Derek Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c. 1935–1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial*

has explored the duties which the young owe to the old and the old to the young, as well as the centrality of gendered identities to local politics. Attempts by elder men to control women's sexuality and defend their right to make decisions about women's bodies against interference from younger men, colonial officials or missionaries is shown not to have been a straightforward battle between the forces of tradition and the forces of modernity, but an arena in which political ideas were fought out. This work stresses that such concerns are not separate from the true domain of 'political' history, but are central to it, and when political historians ignore them or relegate them to a separate sphere of social or gender history, they do so at the expense of impoverishing their understanding of African political history.[17]

More generally, this scholarship has shown that colonial regimes were not strong enough to impose their political philosophies on Africa. They shaped struggles over power and authority, but they did not end those struggles.[18] Nor did nationalist parties silence debate. Nationalist parties succeeded when they could enter into and shape local conflicts over power and authority.[19] They did not, and could not, end these debates, which were at once local and particular, and national and universal. Political debates were local, in the sense that they attacked corrupt chiefs, tax collectors who enriched themselves, district officers who imprisoned unjustly, or denied aspirant politicians a voice. Yet they were also universal, because these were debates about the nature of authority, including political authority, and the relationship between individual and community.

Kenya (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004); John Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence: The War within Mau Mau's Fight for Land and Freedom', in John Lonsdale and E. S. Atieno Odhiambo (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), pp. 46–75; John Lonsdale, 'The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty and Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought', in John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman (eds.), *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa. Book Two: Violence and Ethnicity* (Oxford: James Currey, 1992), pp. 315–504.

[17] This is not unique to African history. There is a tendency more broadly to assume that questions of morality or ethics belong in the 'private sphere' and are secondary to more classically 'political' concerns. See Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 32.

[18] On which see Sara Berry, 'Hegemony on a Shoestring: Indirect Rule and Access to Agricultural Land', *Africa*, 62 (1992), 327–355; Frederick Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History', *The American Historical Review*, 99 (1994), 1516–1545; Benjamin Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn and Richard L. Roberts (eds.), *Intermediaries, Interpreters and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

[19] Gregory Maddox and James Giblin (eds.), *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence in Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005).

This strand of research, which we might term 'intellectual history from below', has reinvigorated the intellectual history of twentieth-century Africa by opening up new perspectives. Yet it has remained largely separate from the concerns which animate political historians and social scientists such as, crucially, the political transition from colony to independent state and questions of political legitimacy within these two state formations. More broadly, because it privileges research in the locality, where possible conducted in the vernacular, it is necessarily self-limiting in terms of the potential for broader comparative research.[20]

Alongside these localized studies, Tanzania also benefits from a rich secondary literature detailing its twentieth-century political history. In the early 1960s, the History Department at the University of Dar es Salaam was home to a dynamic group of historians setting the agenda for a new postcolonial African history. One result of that productive period was John Iliffe's magisterial *A Modern History of Tanganyika* published in 1979, making Tanzania one of very few countries in sub-Saharan Africa to have a thoroughly researched political and social history covering the period from 1800 until independence.[21] In recent years, scholars such as James Giblin, James Brennan and Paul Bjerk have built on this foundation to revise further the history of nationalism and begin writing the history of the early postcolonial state in Tanzania, offering perspectives from below, revisionist accounts of the importance of race in nationalist thought and new accounts of Julius Nyerere's leadership.[22] For the first decade of independence, there is also a substantial body of work written at the time. A great many researchers were drawn to Tanzania by the personal charisma of Julius Nyerere and his ambitious development ideas, and their work provides a rich seam of evidence collected on the

[20] For example, Peter Pels, 'Creolization in Secret: The Birth of Nationalism in Late-Colonial Uluguru, Tanzania', *Africa* 72 (2002), 1–28.

[21] John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[22] James Giblin, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey, 2004); James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012); James Brennan, 'The Short History of Political Opposition and Multi-party Democracy in Tanganyika, 1958–1964', in Gregory Maddox and James Giblin (eds.), *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence in Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005), pp. 250–276; Ronald Aminzade, *Race, Nation, and Citizenship in Post-Colonial Tanzania* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); R. Aminzade, 'The Politics of Race and Nation: Citizenship and Africanization in Tanganyika', *Political Power and Social Theory*, 14, 2000, pp. 53–90; Paul K. Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanganyika*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin (2008).

ground in the 1960s.[23] As enthusiasm for Nyerere's policies later turned to disillusionment in some quarters, this prompted revisionist accounts which have further contributed to our knowledge of the period.[24]

The combination of these two bodies of literature, intellectual history from below on the one hand and the rich secondary literature relating to Tanzania on the other, provides an important basis for this book, which builds on existing scholarship but moves in a new direction by going back to the core political concepts which were at issue in the mid-twentieth century. It explores these concepts as they were debated in Tanzania's sphere of public debate, debates which were often, though not exclusively, conducted in the Swahili language which increasingly served as a shared *lingua franca* for an emerging literate elite, and which were situated at the cross-section of wider currents.

CONCEPTS OF POLITICS

For a long time, historians interested in exploring the ways in which colonized peoples reflected on and engaged with shifting intellectual trends focussed on how leading thinkers in the colonial world thought about the challenges posed by the growth of European power. For Robert July, writing in 1968, the challenge was to understand a 'fundamental confrontation of two ways of life', of Europe and of Africa. He approached this question through a study of great men and their writings, and his reading of the encounter he perceived was situated firmly within the framework of 1960s assumptions about trajectories of modernization.[25] Similar studies of other parts of the world were also concerned with great men and their thought. While Albert Hourani's classic study of political

[23] For a helpful review of the literature, see Paul Bjerk, 'Sovereignty and Socialism in Tanzania: The Historiography of an African State', *History in Africa* 37 (2010), 275–319. Within this literature, see in particular Cranford Pratt, *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945–1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Lionel Cliffe (ed.), *One Party Democracy: The 1965 Tanzania General Elections* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967); Henry Bienen, *Tanzania: Party Transformation and Economic Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).

[24] Leander Schneider, 'Colonial Legacies and Postcolonial Authoritarianism in Tanzania,' *African Studies Review* 49 (2006), 93–118; James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Priya Lal, 'Self-reliance and the State: The Multiple Meanings of Development in Early Post-colonial Tanzania', *Africa*, 82 (2012), 212–234.

[25] Robert W. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought: Its Development in West Africa during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 19.

thought in the Arab world was less tied to a theory of modernization, it similarly focussed on the thought of leading intellectuals, particularly on their development of theories of nationalism – religious, territorial and ethno-linguistic.[26] But if limited to longer texts written by known authors, we find ourselves with a very narrow view indeed of Africa's mid-twentieth-century intellectual history.

An alternative route into the intellectual history of the colonial and postcolonial world is to turn instead to a wider corpus of texts, and to trace continuities and change in political languages within that corpus. By doing so we are able to explore a broader swathe of society than we would otherwise reach.[27] As C. A. Bayly explained in his 2007 Wiles Lectures, '[f]rom the elite to the poor, colonized people argued and debated, trying to understand their world and to improve it.'[28] In Tanzania, the pages of Swahili-language newspapers and other texts allow us access to these debates among people far below the governing elite.[29] In this way, working with corpora of texts and the voices of often unnamed and unknowable authors enables us, even given the relatively small proportions of colonial and postcolonial populations who were literate and who engaged in the public sphere through their writing, to move beyond an intellectual history limited to elites.

Through these texts we can trace individual words which travel the world and take on new meanings in different contexts, as well as broader political languages of freedom or democracy. This offers us a path towards elucidating vernacular understandings of fundamental political concepts. Historians have increasingly found that a focus on political concepts is a productive route into the intellectual history of the colonial and postcolonial world.[30] As Sudipta Kaviraj has argued with respect to

[26] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 342–343.

[27] Iain Hampsher-Monk, 'Speech Acts, Languages or Conceptual History?' in Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans and Frank van Vree (eds.), *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), pp. 37–50, p. 59.

[28] C. A. Bayly, 'South Asian Liberalism under Strain', *Wiles Lecture* 4, p. 25.

[29] Working with newspapers presents its own specific problems, dealt with in the text that follows and in Chapter 1.

[30] Reinhard Koselleck, '*Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History' in Reinhard Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 75–92, p. 81; Keith Tribe, 'Translator's Introduction' in Reinhard Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. vii–xx, p. xvi. Melvin Richter, *The History of Social and Political Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995),

nineteenth-century India, this approach is preferable to alternative modes of doing intellectual history because it focuses 'less on theoretical constructs, more on practical meanings of individual concepts', allowing us to write intellectual history about times and places where 'there is no self-conscious tradition of social theorizing in the Western sense'.[31]

Studying political languages and, through those languages, political concepts, also enables us to see the interaction of the global and the local. Work by A. C. Milner on the 'invention of politics' in Malaya, by Rhoderick Chalmers on the concept of *unnati* in the Nepali public sphere, by C. A. Bayly on liberalism in India and by Benjamin Zachariah on development discourse in India has reminded us of the entangled nature of the history of political thinking in the twentieth century. Indeed, as C. A. Bayly has argued, '[all] modern political languages have mixed together global and local discourses.'[32]

In the mid-twentieth century, political concepts often appeared universal and claimed universality. But apparent uniformity and homogeneity of concepts and discourses can mask significant local divergences and debates. Not only did words and concepts change as they moved from one context to another, the ambiguity which characterizes all concepts by their very nature ensured they experienced friction and provoked argument within local contexts.[33] In this respect, this book draws inspiration from a recent book edited by Carol Gluck and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing which explores the ways in which words travel. Their volume offers a cogent case for a greater attention to the movement of words and the reconfiguration of key concepts in the global twentieth century.[34]

This book is an intellectual history, which means that a full account of the underlying political processes and the messy cut and thrust of day to day politics would go far beyond its purposes. But revisiting the debates around core political concepts also allows us to reinterpret and

p. 10; Terence Ball, 'Conceptual History and the History of Political Thought' in Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans and Frank van Vree, *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), pp. 75–86, p. 8.

[31] Sudipta Kaviraj, 'Ideas of Freedom in Modern India' in Robert Taylor (ed.), *The Idea of Freedom in Asia and Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 97–142, especially pp. 98–99.

[32] C.A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 8.

[33] Koselleck, '*Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History', p. 85.

[34] Carol Gluck, 'Words in Motion', in Carol Gluck and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon* (London and Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 3–10, p. 4.