

Trends in the Development of Patriotism in Tanzania, 1960s to 2020s

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Abstract

This study examined the trend of patriotism and nationalist sentiments in post-colonial Tanzania. It also explored the circumstances behind the changes and continuities in patriotism and nationalism values during the period under review. In Tanzania, patriotism and nationalism were cultivated during the struggle for independence. The hardships of colonial rule and the complexities of the journey to autonomy heightened sentiments related to love for patriotism in Tanzania and across Africa in the 1950s. The study employed a qualitative research methodology, drawing insights from in-depth interviews with selected academicians and former public leaders in Dar es Salaam. The documents reviewed helped reconstruct the fluctuations of the patriotic spirit, highlighting the socio-political and economic contexts behind these shifts. The collected data were analysed using content and thematic frameworks typical of qualitative analysis. The findings suggest that the rise of nationalist movements marked the peak of patriotic fervour in Tanzania and across Africa. Africans in Tanzania and elsewhere sacrificed their lives, employment, families, and nations to free their continent from imperialistic powers. In Tanzania, patriotism was further strengthened when early leaders, under Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, promoted national values rooted in the philosophy of Ujamaa and self-reliance. This spread patriotic values nationwide and played a significant role in nation-building efforts. However, patriotic and nationalist sentiments and awareness gradually declined in Tanzania, especially after the 1990s, as individual interests grew stronger and liberal forces challenged the relevance of patriotism and nationalism against universal values and the pressures of global citizenship. The study recommends a strategy tailored to current advances in science and technology to revive the deteriorating love, loyalty, and pride in our country for current and future generations. Patriotic and nationalist values must be nurtured and instilled among young people to ensure Tanzania remains a politically, socially, and economically strong nation.

Keywords: Patriotism, Nationalism, and Globalization, Post-Colonial Tanzania

1. Introduction

Patriotism and nationalism are considered central concepts in national security and sustainability. Although global interests are strengthening under globalisation, individuals remain attached to their nations, ancestors, languages, and history. Patriotism and nationalism are expressed by a sense of belonging, love, loyalty, sacrifice, and pride for one's nation and individuals sharing the same national identity. (Bar-Tal 1997, 246). However, scholars have been debating the relevance and irrelevance of patriotism and nationalist movements over time. This debate has reached new heights on the eve of a globalized world (Alikulae & Alper, 2018). Some scholars view patriotism and nationalism as conservative and hostile movements aiming to limit the innovation, freedom, and democracy of individuals by assigning them to nations, bringing about intolerance of minorities and migrants (Thomas Blank, Peter Schmidt, 2003). There are powerful arguments against patriotism and nationalism. Paul Gomberg sees patriotism and racism as two sides of the coin (Paul Gomberg, 1990).

Anti-patriotists and anti-nationalists associated nationalism with the rise of anti-immigration and socially excluded practices in many countries, including America, Germany, and South Africa (Thomas Blank and Peter Schmidt, 2003; Richard Arneson, 2020). In this context, patriotism and nationalism are seen as the opposite of globalisation and obstacles to developing a global village. This is partly because ideologies of patriotism and nationalism conflict with those of globalisation. Patriotism and nationalism aim to protect a nation's social, economic, political, and cultural values from foreign competition, while globalisation promotes a uniform culture and the formation of a global village.

Hyper-patriotism and nationalism view patriotism as a tool for national building and security and a source of moral development (Rogers Brubaker, 2024). President Donald Trump's slogans, such as "make America Great Again" and "America First," have become common in the United States of America. In October 2018, President Donald Trump asserted that "we cannot advocate the betterment of the world but not of America first" (Harris Mylonas & Maya Tudor, 2021). Patriotism and nationalism values are still alive, prominent, and dominant in many countries despite the growing influence of globalisation in terms of economic and political liberation, free trade, international interdependence, and connections. Patriotism is essential both at the individual and national levels. Patriotism defines personal identity and unites individuals for national interest. Patriotism defines the obligations of individuals, sacrifice, and commitment to their socioeconomic development. Patriotism and

nationalism are tools for national liberation, building, security, and a source of moral development (Rogers Brubaker, 2024). Patriotism is the cornerstone for nationalist movements and political aspirations in forming national identity. Patriotism values inculcate an appreciation of nationalism and the independence of nations. (Rogers Brubaker, 2024)

Patriotism and nationalism virtues emerge, operate, and decay in response to social and economic conditions. In Germany, nationalist and patriotic values were strong in the 19th century. The Germans became proud to build their nation and spread their culture worldwide. However, the rise of fascism slowed the progress of nationalism and patriotic values, and it became taboo to argue about nationalism and patriotism in Germany (Robert Berdahi 1972). However, there has been a renaissance of nationalism and patriotism in contemporary Germany. The political party Alternative to Germany (AfD) is known for its advocacy of patriotism and nationalism as an opposition to the influence of the European Union and immigration on German national values (Jonah Carlson, 2024).

China has also experienced the rise and fall of nationalism and patriotic sentiments. The revival of Chinese greatness, which was affected by imperialism and colonialism, has been one of the major agendas. The decline of Chinese nationalism and patriotism was also noticed after the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, when China faced increased isolation and criticism from the global community (Ho Wing-Chung, 2022). President Xi Jinping's efforts to make China a great nation have been guided by the ideology that draws its values from patriotism and nationalism, the ancient philosophies of Confucius and other great ancestors (Abanti Bhattacharya, 2019).

Vladimir Putin, president of Russia, adopted and sponsored several programmes to promote the glorification of the fatherland, its greatness, and its distinctiveness for the citizens of Russia. The major agencies of the programme were the educational system, the military, the Russian Orthodox Church, and youth movements (Pravitel'stvo 2001).

Tanzania developed strong sentiments of patriotism and nationalism between the 1950s and 1970s. Mwalimu Nyerere was the major advocate of nationalism and patriotic values in Tanzania through civic education, based on socialism and self-reliance (Nyerere, 1968). Several songs were constructed to instil national identity, social cohesion, and voluntarism in civic duties in Tanzania during the socialist era. However, these sentiments have been declining in

Tanzania since the 1980s. The declining trend of these values can be associated with some social, economic, and political factors. This study, therefore, examined the trend of nationalism and patriotism in Tanzania and the circumstances influencing trends, as well as changes and continuities of nationalism and patriotism in the context of globalization.

2. Literature Review

There is adequate literature on the root causes for the rise of patriotism and nationalism sentiments, as well as on the positive effects of patriotism and nationalism on struggles against imperialism and colonialism, and the contribution of patriotism and nationalism in the history of national building and consolidation. There is also adequate content on the adverse effects of patriotism and nationalism. However, only a few studies exist on the evolution of patriotism and nationalist sentiments in response to various socio-economic and technological changes.

Patriotism and nationalism have been widely explored in political science, history, and sociology. These sentiments are deeply rooted in historical experiences. In the case of Tanzania, the formation and evolution of patriotic and nationalistic values can be traced back to the anti-colonial struggles and the subsequent nation-building process under Julius Nyerere's leadership. This literature review explores theoretical perspectives on nationalism and patriotism, historical analyses of their evolution in Tanzania, and contemporary challenges that have led to their decline in the post-1990 era.

Scholars differentiate between patriotism and nationalism, though they often overlap in discourse (Smith, 1991; Anderson, 1983). Nationalism, as defined by Gellner (1983), is the ideological movement that seeks to promote sovereignty and self-determination, while patriotism is more aligned with an emotional attachment to one's nation-state. The Tanzanian context aligns with these theories, where nationalist sentiments initially focused on liberation from colonial rule, later transitioning into patriotic commitments to nation-building through socialist policies like Ujamaa.

Nathanson (1997) identifies four main components of patriotism: love for one's own country, the sentiment to define oneself with one's country, being concerned with the welfare of one's country, and making sacrifices for the benefit of one's country beyond the nation-state. Scholars identify two types of patriotism: blind patriotism and moderate patriotism. Blind patriotism has been characterized as acceptance of the policies, ideology, concepts, and actions of

one's country without questioning and an unquestioning loyalty because the objective of blind patriotism is to protect the status quo (Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999). Moderate patriotism carries critical and logical components that address negative trends in the development of patriotism (Nataliya, 2019)

Scholars have identified various dimensions of nationalism. These include the political, economic, and social cultures. Politically, nationalism aims to defend the country's sovereignty, the right to govern itself, and protect it from the political, social, and cultural pressures of the modern global economy. Political nationalism may not be held separate from the desire to rule. Economic Nationalism is defined as a set of policies and practices designed to create, grow, and protect national economies in the context of world markets. The root of economic nationalism can be traced to Mercantilism principles of protectionism, militarism, and a trade system based on exportation rather than on the importation of goods. Social-cultural nationalism advocates for national traditions, language, and histories. In this sense, some scholars view nationalism as the antithesis of globalism (Guibernau, 2007).

However, scholars have been debating the relevance and irrelevance of patriotism and nationalism movements over time. This debate has reached new heights on the eve of a globalized world (Alikulae & Alper, 2018). Some scholars view patriotism and nationalism as conservative and hostile movements aiming to limit the innovation, freedom, and democracy of individuals by assigning them to nations, bringing about the intolerance of minorities and migrants (Blank, Schmidt, 2003). There are powerful arguments against patriotism and nationalism. Paul Gomberg sees patriotism and racism as two sides of the coin (Gomberg, 1990). Antipatriotists and ant-nationalists associated nationalism with the rise of anti-immigration and socially excluded practices in many countries, including America, Germany, and South Africa (Thomas Blank, Peter Schmidt, 2003). In this context, patriotism and nationalism are seen as the antithesis of globalization and an obstacle to the development of the global village. This is partly because ideologies of patriotism and nationalism are contrary to those of globalization.

Patriotism and nationalism protect a nation's social, economic, political, and cultural values from foreign competition, while globalization advocates for a uniform culture and the formation of the global village. (Blank, Schmidt, 2003). Anti-patriotic and ant nationalist relate nationalism and patriotism to discrimination and exclusion of migrants as a solution against job competition. For example, President Trump's Mexican border security wall followed his

nationalistic immigration policies against undocumented immigrants who claimed to steal American jobs.

Socio-political and economic factors, including colonial oppression, economic exploitation, and political marginalization, drove the rise of nationalism in Tanzania. Scholars such as Iliffe (1979) and Hyden (1980) argue that nationalism in Tanzania, led by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), was characterized by unity and collective struggle. The nationalist fervour peaked during the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in independence in 1961. In the post-independence period, patriotism was institutionalised through policies of Ujamaa na Kujitegemea (socialism and self-reliance) under Julius Nyerere (Nyerere, 1968). These policies promoted national cohesion, collective ownership of resources, and a shared identity. Scholars have acknowledged the role of ujamaa in strengthening national unity and fostering a sense of belonging among Tanzanians (Shivji, 2009).

The transition from a socialist economy to neoliberal economic reforms in the 1990s marked a turning point in the trajectory of patriotism and nationalism in Tanzania. Globalization and economic liberalisation led to an increased emphasis on individualism, weakening collective national identity (Mkandawire, 2001). Studies have shown that structural adjustment programs (SAPS) imposed by international financial institutions disrupt state-led economic models, leading to socioeconomic inequalities and diminishing state capacity to foster nationalistic values (Wangwe, 1997). Moreover, the rise of global citizenship and transnational identities has challenged traditional patriotic sentiments (Appadurai, 1996).

Digital media, migration, and the integration of global economic systems have further influenced how Tanzanians perceive national loyalty and belonging. Given the decline in patriotic and nationalistic values, scholars suggest policy-oriented approaches to rejuvenate these sentiments. Educational reforms emphasising civic education, historical consciousness, and national service programs have been proposed as viable strategies (Ng'wanakilala, 2011). Additionally, leveraging science and technology, particularly social media, to promote national identity among the youth can effectively foster patriotism (Moshia, 2017).

An examination of the above incidents shows that sentiments of patriotism and nationalism are dynamic and complex. They are fluctuating over time due to the prevailing social and economic conditions. However, patriotism and

nationalism values are still alive, prominent, and dominant in many countries despite the growing influence of globalization in terms of financial and political liberation, free trade, international interdependence, and connections. This study, therefore, examined the trend of the development of nationalism and patriotism in Tanzania and the circumstances influencing trends, as well as changes and continuities in the development of nationalism and patriotism on the eve of globalization.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the development, transformation, and persistence of patriotic and nationalist sentiments in post-colonial Tanzania. The qualitative approach is appropriate for capturing in-depth insights into historical, political, and socio-economic influences on patriotism and nationalism in Tanzania. It employs a historical and descriptive research approach, enabling an analysis of changes and continuities over time. The study utilizes primary and secondary data sources to examine the research problem. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with selected respondents, including academicians from Tanzanian higher learning institutions with expertise in history, political science, and sociology, and former public leaders who played key roles in governance and national development, particularly those active from the 1960s to the 1990s.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants based on their knowledge and experience with Tanzanian nationalism and patriotism. Interviews were conducted in Dar es Salaam, considering its historical and political significance as Tanzania's former capital and current economic hub (Iliffe, 1979). Secondary data was gathered through document review, involving the analysis of government reports and policy documents related to nationalism and patriotism in Tanzania, archival materials from libraries and national records, academic books, journal articles, and dissertations on post-colonial Tanzanian history and governance, as well as speeches, memoirs, and biographies of key national leaders, particularly those of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and other independence-era figures (Nyerere, 1968; Bjerck, 2015). Data was analysed using content analysis and thematic analysis. The content analysis involved systematically reviewing the collected textual data from interviews and documents to identify patterns and trends in patriotic and nationalist sentiments over different historical periods. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The thematic analysis categorised emerging themes based on historical phases, political events, economic conditions, and socio-cultural influences affecting

nationalism and patriotism in Tanzania. Themes included independence struggles, the Ujamaa socialist policies, the shift to multiparty democracy, globalization, and contemporary national identity challenges. Ethical approval and informed consent were obtained from all participants before conducting interviews. Confidentiality was ensured, and respondents had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. The research adhered to ethical standards in historical and social sciences research, ensuring the integrity and reliability of findings (Israel & Hay, 2006).

4. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the evolution of nationalism and patriotism virtues in post-colonial Tanzania. It analyses factors for the rise, consolidation, and deterioration of nationalism and patriotism sentiments in post-colonial Tanzania.

4.1 Development of Nationalism and Patriotism

The development and transformation of nationalism and patriotism in post-colonial Tanzania are deeply rooted in the struggle for independence. Nationalism surged as Tanzanians demanded self-rule from British colonial powers, with key figures like Julius Nyerere playing a pivotal role in shaping national pride.

The other factor that contributed to the rise of nationalism and patriotic sentiments in Tanzania was the army mutiny of 1964. Individual ambitions triggered this event. It indicated that patriotism and nationalism spirits were deteriorating in some critical sections of the nation, and the government had a role in reviving the nationalism and patriotism spirit among the military personnel (Kimambo and Temu, 1969). Since then, the army's contribution to developing nationalism in Tanzania has been greater. The military can influence the growth or decay of nationalism and patriotic sentiments. Military institutions, traditions, and personnel may influence the development of loyalty, national identity, voluntarism, and pride in different ways.

Historically, military service has been intertwined with nationalism and patriotism. Military institutions mould collective expressions of loyalty and pride. Military services shape national identities and foster belonging (Harvard Baekken, 2022). Military rituals, courage. Parades encourage love of saluting the flag, and national anthems are integral to promoting a patriotic spirit. Military influence on patriotism has evolved significantly throughout history. Historically, militaries have served as symbols of national strength (Aviel

Roshwald, 2023). While processes and effects of the World Wars reinforced the development of nationalism among African countries, they contributed to the deterioration of nationalist spirits among the European nations (Money Jacob, 2018).

The development of nationalism and patriotism reached its height in the late 1960s and 1970s. Nyerere's speeches, particularly his ideas on self-reliance and unity, fostered a sense of collective national identity (Nyerere, 1962). Archival materials from the 1960s, including government reports and policy documents, underscore the significance of nationalism in the fight for independence and national liberation (Tanganyika Government Archives, 1961). An academic respondent had the following to say-

"Nationalism surged as we demanded our right to self-rule. It was more than a political fight; it was a fight for our identity, for our right to determine our future," reflecting the intense patriotic sentiment of the independence era (Interview, 2025).

The Ujamaa socialist policies introduced by Nyerere in 1967 marked a pivotal moment in Tanzanian nationalism. These policies, aimed at promoting collective farming and national self-reliance, sought not only economic transformation but also to strengthen national unity (Nyerere, 1967). The findings suggest that Ujamaa was central to the sense of shared identity and collective responsibility. Several respondents, especially former public leaders, highlighted how "Ujamaa was meant to unite us under a common vision of self-reliance and equality. "We saw it as a way to define ourselves as a nation free from colonial influence." In 1979, Uganda, under Idi Amin invaded northwest Tanzania, prompting the Tanzanian military to mobilise to expel Ugandan forces and overthrow Amin. Defending its territory became Tanzania's duty at any cost. Tanzanians participated in this conflict in various ways. Some served as soldiers, while others provided material and moral support. Several songs emphasized national identity, social cohesion, and voluntary civic duties. Military victory was regarded as a demonstration of military strength and national pride (Msabaha, 1985). However, this military achievement had significant implications for post-colonial politics.

4.2 Deterioration of Nationalism and Patriotism Spirit in Tanzania

Socioeconomic conditions, particularly poverty and economic inequality, shaped patriotism in the 1980s. Informants noted the financial challenges and the later abandonment of Ujamaa, which led to some disillusionment with the policy and

the patriotic sentiments it was supposed to inspire (Kariuki, 2015). The economic failures of Ujamaa, reflected in the 1984 Tanzania Ministry of Finance report, significantly affected long-term patriotism, as many felt that the ideal of national unity was compromised by economic hardships (Tanzania Ministry of Finance Report, 1984).

While the early nationalist movement was grounded in the aspiration for a better life and economic equality, later economic hardships, such as those caused by structural adjustment programs in the 1980s, eroded much of the early optimism (Mkandawire, 2000). The disillusionment felt by many Tanzanians is evident in interviews, with one academic sharing this:

"There was a time when we believed that our nation could rise through collective effort. But after years of economic hardship, many young people no longer felt the same pride. It was hard to maintain a sense of unity and pride when economic realities were so harsh" (Interview, 2025).

The disconnect between the early vision of a united, self-reliant nation and the economic challenges faced in the 1980s significantly impacted the continuity of patriotic sentiments. Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's legacy plays a central role in shaping Tanzanian nationalism. His vision of a united, self-reliant, and socialist nation remains a source of national pride, even as some aspects of his policies, such as Ujamaa, have been critically re-evaluated due to their economic challenges and limited success (Mkandawire, 2000). Nyerere's speeches and writings are essential for understanding Tanzanian nationalism (Nyerere, 1967). One interviewee pointed out that-

"Nyerere's legacy remains strong in our hearts. He helped us understand the value of unity and self-reliance. But the reality of our current economic challenges sometimes makes his vision seem distant, even though his ideals still guide us." (Interview, 2025).

The above statement reflects the complex and ambivalent feelings many Tanzanians have regarding Nyerere's enduring influence. The transition to multiparty democracy in the early 1990s brought new political dynamics that affected the nation's sense of unity. While it expanded political participation and led to a more pluralistic political environment, it also fragmented national identity. Regionalism, ethnicity, and party loyalties began to supersede the collective national identity that had previously been the cornerstone of Tanzanian patriotism (Pottier, 1996). A former political leader remarked,

"The multiparty system brought new energy to politics, but it also divided us. The nationalism we once felt seemed to be replaced by regional and party loyalties" (Interview, 2025).

This implies the tensions that arose with the new political system. Academicians have also noted that while democratisation increased political freedom, it posed significant challenges in maintaining a unified national identity (Harrison, 2010).

Globalization has also had a profound influence on contemporary Tanzanian nationalism. As global media and cultural influences permeate, younger generations are exposed to new ideas about identity and citizenship, often diluting traditional nationalistic ideals. This has made fostering a strong national pride more difficult, as young people are increasingly focused on global rather than local issues (Gellner, 1983). During interviews, one academician mentioned that-

"Young people today see the world differently. They are connected to the world, not just Tanzania. Their sense of national pride is shaped by global influences, which makes it harder to promote nationalism," (Interview, 2025).

This statement acknowledges the challenges of preserving patriotism in the context of globalization. Another youth, a graduate from a public university in Tanzania, had this to say:

" I can live anywhere, provided there are green pastures. And I can even apply for citizenship if such opportunities arise. A long time ago, before continental drift, the world was one, and before the Berlin conference, no boundaries were separating African countries" (Interview, 2025).

Contemporary challenges to national identity are further complicated by regionalism, political polarization, and ethnic diversity. These factors significantly hinder the unity and patriotism that characterized early post-independence Tanzania (Shivji, 2003). A former leader shared the following:

"There was a time when we all stood together, united in our vision for a better nation. Now, divisions based on ethnicity and political affiliations are tearing us apart. It is difficult to cultivate true patriotism when the nation feels so divided," Interview, 2025).

A good number of the informants seem not to be aware of economic nationalism. However, a few youths critically questioned the influence of foreign investments and trade liberalisation policies on national economic interests. They even question government expenditure. When asked about the consumption of domestic over foreign products as a part of being nationalist, one youth had this to say;

"I buy a lot of goods from China; they are cheap, and goods from China help to keep some coins for other needs. I was unaware that consumption of our local products is a part of nationalism and patriotism."

This statement indicates that the young generation is unaware of economic nationalism and the effects of the massive importation of goods from another country on national pride and identity.

3. Conclusion

A multifaceted relationship exists between nationalism, patriotism, and Tanzania's post-colonial history. The initial sense of national unity and pride, forged through the fight for independence and the vision of a socialist state, has been challenged by economic difficulties, political changes, and the impact of globalisation. Despite these challenges, the legacy of Nyerere and the early nationalist movement continues to influence Tanzanians' sense of identity and connection to the nation. The findings underscore the complex and evolving nature of nationalism in Tanzania, shaped by historical legacies and contemporary socio-political realities. Patriotism and nationalism are becoming priceless among the young generation due to internal and external factors. The Renaissance of patriotism and nationalism is critical for the construction of Tanzania. This can be done through the involvement of all custodians of nationalism and patriotism, including family, schools, religious leaders, mass media, military institutions, and political parties.

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